

Dr Gheist an autobiography from the Midlands.

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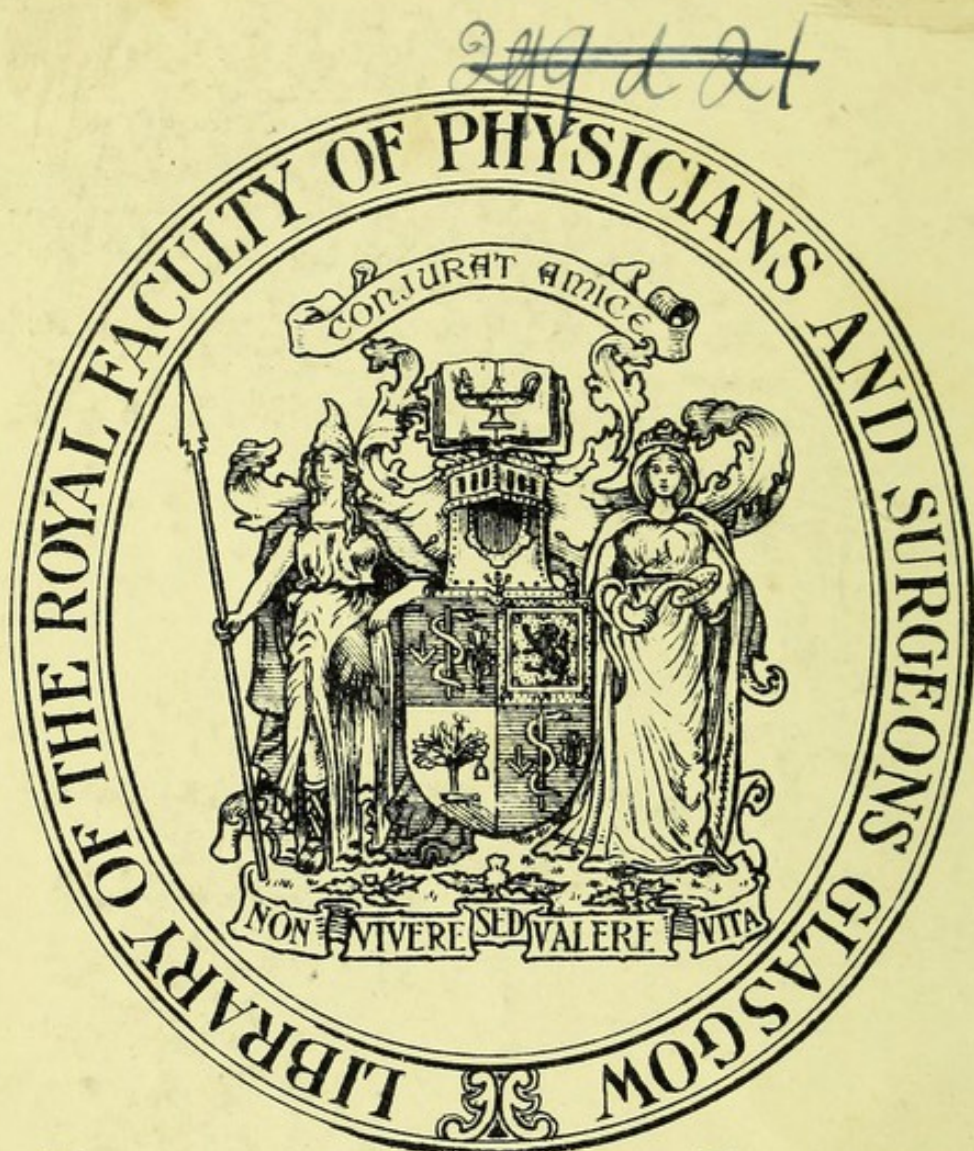


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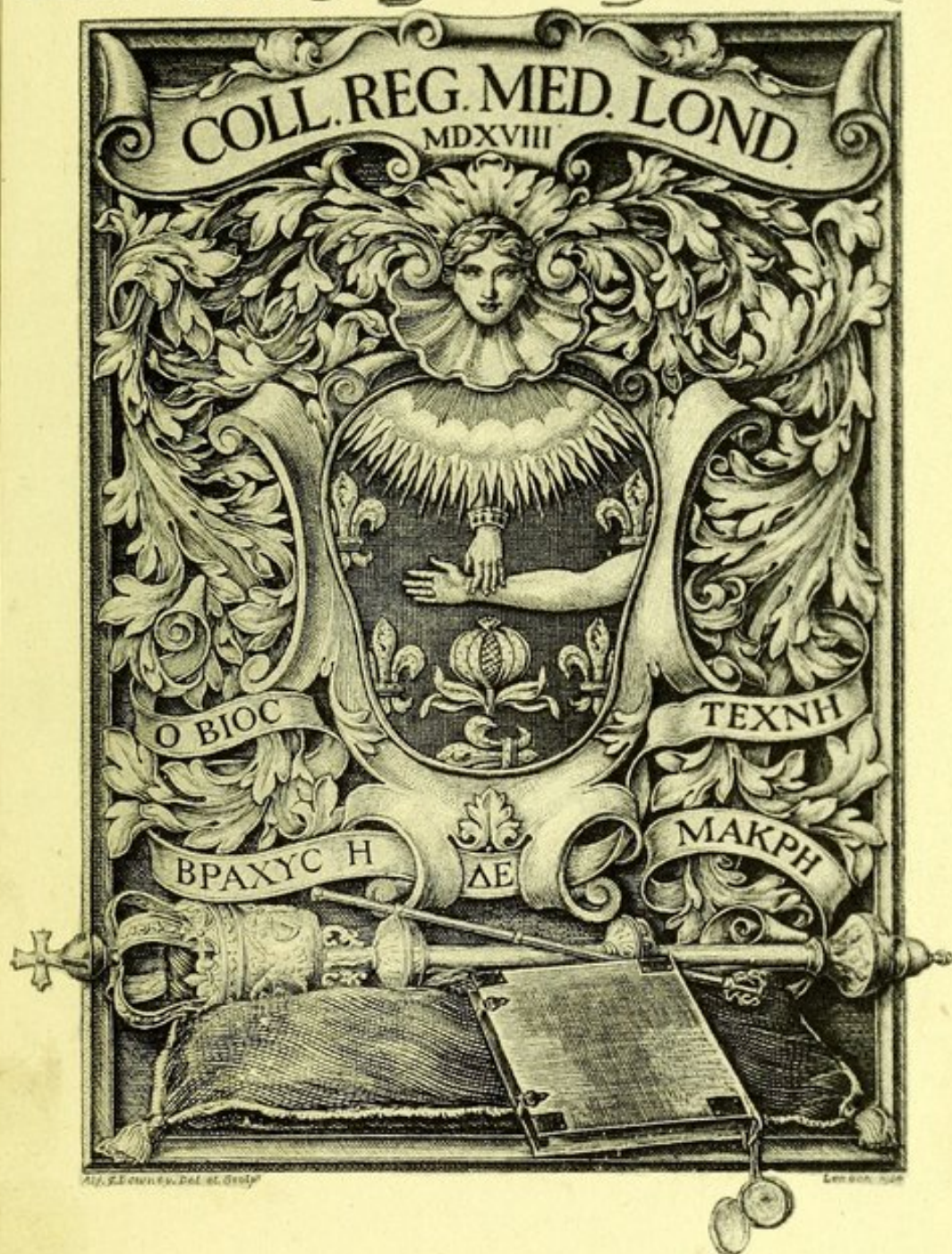
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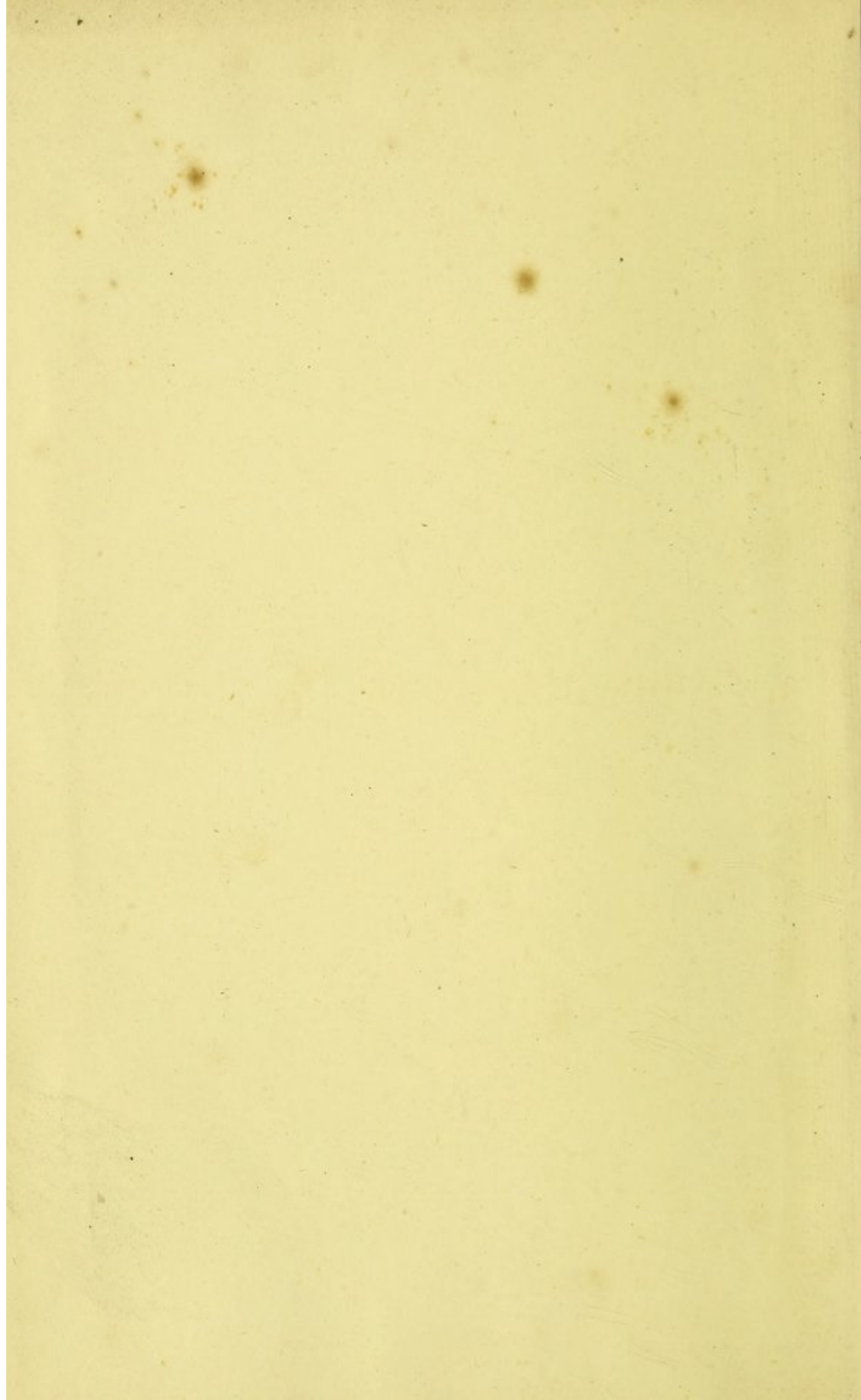
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AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF DR GHEIST



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DR GHEIST

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY FROM THE MIDLANDS

“A good archer is not known by his arrows, but his aim ”



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PREFACE

A BOOK without a preface may, under certain circumstances, take the position of a document in cipher, without the key to unfold its hidden meaning. When this prefatory explanation is furnished, a plea of justification, or apology, for publication may still be craved for by the reader.

Autobiography, to be readable, ought to have certain characteristics. It must be the history of a life, either rich in startling incident, or of a life standing boldly out in the van of literature, science; society, or politics. Or it may simply be the portraiture of life-motive, an analysis of the emotions, a photograph of mind, a picture of manners.

To which of these categories can the autobiography of an obscure village doctor belong? The reader is invited to find this out for himself.

Some of my friends have hinted at the unseemliness of a doctor making use of his patients in the way of "pointing a moral or adorning a tale."

But I tell my friends, as I now do my readers, that this objection has little weight in my case, as it is now some years since I retired from the active practice of my profession, and most of the characters I *have* made use of, are either long since dead, or have drifted far into the misty and undefined regions of imagination.

I am now a very old man; and if the story of my life does not turn out readable, it will, I hope, afford matters of interest (matters on which my age gives me a right to speak), if not food for reflection, to the patients and the doctors of the rising generation.

To the *fair sex* I might apologise for the harsh tints in which I have painted the "female doctor of the period." But age has its convictions all set like a plaster of Paris splint, and one conviction of mine more firmly fixed than all my other beliefs is, that were an apology needed, it is certainly not in that direction that it is necessary.

DAVID GHEIST, M.D.

THE MIDLANDS, 1881

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CHAPTER I.

I WAS neither born of humble parents in a remote part of England, nor am I the son of a clergyman, but it is enough to say that after studying medicine and taking my degree in Edinburgh, I found myself with very little money in my pockets, and no means of turning my newly-acquired medical lore to practical account. Like many of my fellow-students my profession was all I had to trust to, nor had I even the means to buy a share in a practice.

I might, it is true, have settled down in one of the Scotch towns, and taken my chance of getting into practice by degrees; but my old uncle, who was a retired Naval surgeon, had educated me into the belief, that to live, a doctor should go south of the Tweed, and the farther south the better. Scotland, he used to say, was a good place to die in, but a shocking bad place to get a living in, and my own observation had confirmed me in this idea—I used to wonder at the amount of hero-worship displayed by Scotsmen for men who had risen to eminence, and have long noted the fact that this did not show itself till the poor celebrity was in his grave;—as I did not wish to defer this desirable adulation to so remote a period, I cast about for something to do in Merry England.

Being passionately fond of horses, and, indeed, of all animals, I determined, if possible, to settle down in the

country, and with that end in view, looked out for an assistantship in one of the hunting districts in the Midlands.

Not long after I found in the *Lancet* exactly what suited me. "Wanted a qualified Assistant in a Market Town in the Midlands; must be a light-weight, and a member of the Church of England."

Wondering very much to myself why a light-weight, and why a member of the Church were so essential, I rushed off to a neighbouring mill and had my weight taken. I found I was just under ten stone, and being able to give a satisfactory answer as to my religion, I wrote off, and had the luck to secure the appointment at once.

I found my principal a jolly, stout, good-natured country doctor of the old school, with a good middle-class practice, situated in one of the grass counties, not far from Market Harborough.

The market-town, not a large one, was chiefly remarkable for its prevailing smell of burning leather, and for its working population being all shoemakers. Large quantities of army shoes were made all over the district, and it was this very neighbourhood from which, during the Franco-Prussian war, a lot of shoes were sent to the poor French which had brown paper soles, instead of leather, and which, of course, parted company with the uppers, and let the poor soldiers down in the snow.

Though the doctor was considered a successful practitioner, I must say I was not very highly impressed by his ability. I have no doubt, like most young medicals, I was too highly impressed by my own theo-

retical knowledge to credit the value of the old doctor's experience.

Be this as it may, I came to like the genial old gentleman, and must confess to picking up a good many practical hints from him, which stood me in good stead in after years. Theory, I came to find, is all very well as a basis, but it is only after years of observation and experience that a medical man is fit to cope with the sudden and everyday emergencies of a large practice.

The chief cause of his success I found was in having a kindly manner with the sick, giving them great attention, and making them feel that their case was uppermost in his mind, and—shall I mention it?—giving them no end of medicine. When I went, an old lady patient had just died, and he told me, with a chuckle, that she had had a composing draught every night for three or four years. “And what, Dr Gheist, do you think the draught was composed of? Why, gooseberry wine, sir! Why, I was driven to my wits' end with this lady. She could not sleep, and all the usual remedies made her worse. A friend had just sent me a present of eighteen gallons of this wine, and one night, in desperation, I gave her a draught of it. She slept like a top, sir, that night, and she liked it so much, and thought that it did her so much good, that she took the whole eighteen gallon barrel in one ounce draughts.”

I was rather shocked at this story, and hinted to him that it was scarcely fair to his patient or honourable in a professional point of view, and savoured somewhat of quackery. “Not at all, Dr Gheist, not at all; when you have practised as long as I have, you will find cases

where the mind has to be considered as much, if not more, than the body. Now, just take the case of Mrs Bolton (the lady in question); there was not any bodily ailment to speak of, but she was always fancying something or other was the matter. She had visited most of the watering places, and consulted all the celebrated physicians in Britain, in search of health, but had not found it, and when in taking the gooseberry wine draught, she cried *Eureka*, and had a fair amount of bodily and mental comfort in it, I would have been morally wrong not to have kept up the delusion."

This I knew was sophistry, but though young in ethics, I was old enough to have found that it is difficult to convince one of the absurdity of a course which suits his interest.

On coming to England, I was disgusted to find that it was the custom for all general practitioners in the country to dispense their own medicine. It was not that I objected so much to the mere drudgery of putting up the medicine, nor of course to the large bills resulting from such a system, but I soon found to my sorrow that even in cases of high scientific interest, the gooseberry-wine system would crop up, and medicine was often poured into the poor patients when they would have been decidedly better without it. To alter this system was out of the question, for apart from the fact that I was merely the assistant, a custom founded, as this is, on self-interest, I knew to be difficult to change. At best it is an unholy alliance, and to me it always seemed to bring a certain amount of degradation on an otherwise noble profession. The most sensible argument in favour

of the village doctor dispensing his own medicine, was undoubtedly that urged so pertinaciously by the doctor when discussing this question. "It is no use," he used to say; "it is the custom of the country, and, I have no doubt, originated in the urgent necessity felt by both patient and doctor, of having the prescribed medicine made up in an honest way, and of the best material. There are many chemists of repute and respectability in large towns, with whom a medical man would feel perfectly safe, but it is far otherwise in the country. Here you have to deal with ignorant incompetency, and the grubbing dishonesty of a small shop-keeper who, by the way, may be more of a grocer than a chemist." I confess it is rather hard on both patient and doctor when a chemist withholds a certain percentage of a drug, simply because he wants a large profit on the prescription. I remember some years ago, a commission, which had been appointed to inquire into this subject, sent round to various chemists in one of our large towns, a prescription containing a large amount of quinine, and when the returned bottles were quantitatively analysed, only three out of the ten had the prescribed quantity.

Keeping all these things in my mind, I accepted my fate, and worked with a will, not only amongst my patients, but at home in the surgery.

Our patients were chiefly shoemakers, who were all in benefit clubs, tradesmen of the town, and farmers. But besides these we had a fair sprinkling of county people, and hunting men, who lived in the neighbourhood during the season.

The doctor, some of the patients said, was not the man he used to be, and others even hinted that his practice was gradually leaving him, on account of his habits, which, I must confess, were decidedly convivial. A doctor, of all professions, should be absolutely temperate in all his habits. At any moment he may be called upon to exercise his skill, in a case requiring not only coolness, but clear discerning judgment, and when he goes to such a bed-side, perhaps from a convivial dinner table, flushed with wine, and his reasoning faculties in a state of undue excitement, no wonder that he is sometimes unequal to the occasion.

I do not know that I am peculiar in holding such views, but I started in life with the determination to avoid, as much as possible, all dinner and dancing parties, and I have not yet seen cause to regret such a course.

Apart from all other considerations, I believe that if a medical man is faithful to his profession, his time will be fully occupied in keeping abreast of his art, which, I need not add, is advancing with rapid strides.

But to proceed with my story. I had not been assistant above six months, when one night some one knocked at my door with a quick nervous tap. It was old Joe, the groom, with a face the very picture of terror. "Dr Gheist, for God's sake, come quickly to Foxes Lane; the Doctor has had a fit and fallen out of his gig, and I believe is dead." I hurried on my clothes, and, following Joe, was soon at the side of my prostrate master. Fallen he had, in a fit of apoplexy, and he died that night.

CHAPTER II.

MY principal being dead, I was, in a sense, master of the situation ; and visions of having a house of my own flitted before my mind. But the poor doctor's wife had to be considered, and I determined to be guided by her wishes.

I have not attempted to describe Mrs Wymont, for the simple reason that she was rather a sketchy kind of little woman ; and though she was everything that was womanly and gentle in manner, she had no salient point of character to take hold of.

After the funeral we came to terms, and formed a kind of mixed partnership, according to which I was to conduct the practice for her for so many years, at the end of which time it was to be my own.

Not long after the doctor's death, and when I was beginning to make headway amongst the better-class patients, I was having a gallop with the Pytchley hounds, which were running, strange to say, straight to a village where I was going, when I saw an old gentleman on a splendid, long-bodied, short-legged hunter, which seemed very hot and inclined to bolt with him. I had no sooner run my eye over the horse, and envied him to my heart's content, than I saw him charge a bullock-fence, at a rate which plainly told me its rider had lost all control over it. Down both went, and on riding up I found the old gentleman, General Archer by name, had broken his leg. I at once introduced myself, and did all I could to place him in a

position the most favourable for the injured limb. As luck would have it, I found near at hand some pretty stiff bark ; and placing splints of it outside his riding boots, and binding them on with strips of my handkerchief, had him conveyed to his residence in a carriage, kindly lent by some ladies who had been out seeing the meet.

General Archer was about seventy years of age, though he looked very much younger. He behaved, as I have noticed most hunting men do under similar circumstances, with a stoical indifference, and did not seem to feel or care for suffering.

This power of bearing pain has often set me speculating as to its source. I at one time was under the impression it depended, to a great extent, on a low type of nervous organisation ; for I had again and again seen working men come into my surgery, and suffer amputation of one or two fingers without chloroform, and without uttering a groan. This phase of stoicism must undoubtedly be due to a want of sensitiveness, as they often confessed it did not hurt. But, on the other hand, I have seen men, and women too, of the highest nervous and mental development, who, approaching a surgical operation with terror depicted on their faces, have nevertheless so nerved themselves as to be able to go through the torture without a groan. I remember, in the days before chloroform, assisting a surgeon in applying the actual cautery (a red-hot iron) to a young lady's elbow-joint. The beautiful young creature stood in the middle of the room, and without assistance held up the diseased arm till

the hissing iron had seared both sides of the joint. With a kind of shuddering awe I watched her face, expecting every moment to hear a shriek of agony; but she gave no token of what she must have been enduring, and but for one large tear, which rolled slowly over her deathly-pallid cheek, might fitly have represented a statue of suffering resignation.

The General's fracture was a bad one, and as I was young and a stranger to him, I suggested consultation either with his usual medical attendant or some hospital surgeon of repute. This both the General and Mrs Archer objected to; in the one case because, having lately themselves come into the neighbourhood, they had not a family doctor; and in the other, they did not wish to incur any needless expense. Mrs Archer was very decided on this point, and gave me to understand that, if I was sure I could manage by myself, she did not see the necessity nor wish for further advice. "I know pretty well what consultations are, Dr Gheist; and I don't see why we should pay a ten-guinea fee simply to please the world, or confirm your opinion. I leave my husband in your hands, and if you feel equal to the management of the case, what more can be gained by having another doctor?"

Of course I "felt equal to the occasion," but yet what a responsibility for a young man to undertake! I had heard enough of Mrs Archer, within the last few days, to know that if the case went on as it ought to do, my local reputation was assured; but, at the same time, should it not,—and I was dealing with very uncer-

tain elements,—she was the very person to turn round and do all she could to injure me in every way. A young doctor starting in a strange neighbourhood is very much to be pitied; for though he be ever so talented and competent, cases will occur which, in spite of his most enlightened skill, will go wrong, and irretrievably ruin his chance of success. His profession, above all others, depends on his success; and, as a rule, the world does not take the trouble to inquire whether his failure is owing to untoward circumstances over which he could have no control. Under the circumstances, then, I did not hesitate to do what was necessary, though greatly feeling the responsibility I was incurring. I was very much impressed by the cool way in which Mrs Archer assisted me in reducing the displaced bones, and applying the splints and bandages to the limb. She seemed to take quite a scientific interest in the operation, and kept up an incessant rattle about the various accidents she had seen in the hunting-field.

I found out afterwards that she was quite a character in her way, and was known all over the district as one of the boldest riders in the hunt. She was an immense favourite with everybody, and it was said she knew all the horses and grooms for miles round. In her dress she was quite peculiar, and affected rather a masculine style, but in her drawing-room the refined woman showed in every minute detail. Every one acknowledged that her knowledge of horse-flesh was extensive, and nothing seemed to delight her more than to be consulted as to the ailments of some of her neighbours'

horses. She was certainly a strange mixture, and was a rare example of a woman who, though horsey in her tastes, was yet charming in her womanly behaviour.

General Archer, though an old man, had a good physique, and was, besides, in splendid health, and his fracture went on beautifully. He took his confinement to bed, as he did everything, in a most philosophical way, and was always contented and happy. Every afternoon he had hosts of visitors, both ladies and gentlemen. These he received in state in his bedroom, while Mrs Archer did the honours of the house, and attended to the four o'clock "drum." During his illness I was introduced to some of the *élite* of the county, all more or less given to hunting, all in splendid health, all pleasant and *débonnaire* in manner, and bearing in their faces that fresh bloom which betokens life in the open air. As a student of psychology, I was much interested in noticing that amongst these hunting men certain mental characteristics were always associated with certain types of constitution. Thus I remarked that those who had obtained a name for bold riding, and for being, in fact, "first-flight men," were men of nervo-phlegmatic temperament—men of untiring physical and mental energy, of bold, warm impulses, and remarkable for bringing to bear upon the ordinary affairs of life a judgment pre-eminent for its force and clearness. They had more or less of the Norman type of face, black or brown hair, and a grey complexion. These men, when elderly, became soon grey, and had that peculiar thorough-bred look so characteristic of many of our old county families.

This may be considered an entirely fanciful picture, and, I know, does not coincide with the general idea. "A fox-hunting squire" has often been used as a term of reproach; but, like many of the wise sayings which are accepted and pass as current coin, is more remarkable for its ignorant absurdity than for being a true representation of actual facts. To be a bold rider in the hunting-field, a peculiar force of character, both mental and physical, is undoubtedly required.

Some men, from want of physique, never ride well; and others, again, however strong physically, lack that mental something in their characters without which no man is safe across country. With good physique, there must be self-reliance and complete absence of "funk;" and these qualities must be of such intensity as to be communicable and kept alive in the rider's horse. The moment a man becomes nervous, the horse feels the influence, and, though bold-tempered, partakes of the vacillating fears of the rider.

To me this subtle psychical union between horse and rider has always appeared most mysterious. What is its true nature, and how is it communicated and kept up? Is it merely the result of increased muscular vigour in the rider's limbs, or is there really such a thing as psychic force, which, partly physical and partly mental, flows in electrical currents from the rider to the will of the horse? Every one accustomed to horses must have noticed how easy it is to influence the action and temper of the animal he rides, by the will alone. When there is an intimate understanding between horse and rider, how easy it is to make him

stop, by simply willing him to do so ! In a canter how easy to start him into a gallop ! And with a horse of bad manners and uncertain temper, how often do we find that he takes advantage when he finds the rider not in good form for riding ? I have had this again and again exemplified in the case of one of my own horses. He is a high-tempered, impulsive, half-bred Arab, and likes to have more of his own way than is good for either him or me. When from over-work or want of sleep (for, of course, as a doctor I am often in that condition), my nerves become somewhat relaxed and unsteady, this mercurial hack tries all he knows to get the better of me. When, on the other hand, I am all right and in good form, he is quiet as a Quaker and is a most perfect hack.

CHAPTER III.

A COUNTRY doctor, it need not be remarked, depends very much on his horses—to have a “comfortable saddle” is indeed one of the first considerations to him. Having long journeys to take at a moment’s notice, and often when he is tired and wearied from want of sleep or previous work, a horse that can take him over the ground easily and without much muscular fatigue on his part, is a possession almost beyond price. Living in one of the crack hunting districts, I for the most part ride, and seldom drive, except in the heat of summer. After many years’

experience, I am convinced that riding is the least fatiguing to the medical man. The mere exercise is decidedly exhilarating, and as one can take many short cuts by bridle paths and over fields, and besides go at a greater speed than on wheels, so the doctor, by riding, not only saves time, but gains in bodily health.

A country doctor's life is decidedly one of hardship, and entails much more physical fatigue than life in one of our large cities; and though "our sentence is to labour from the cradle to the grave,"—still recommend me to the country. What so glorious or exhilarating as a gallop across some of our deep-green swelling pastures on a bright April morning? or a canter through the burstingavenued woods so common in our dear Pytchley country? Why, mounted on one of my thorough-bred hacks, with the life-giving breeze in my face, I cannot imagine anything so glorious: one is then at peace with the world and with himself; one can feel nothing but joy, a joy born of the gods. Away then with care and anxiety, your horse feels the influence of the movement and neighs with perfect delight! "By Gad, doctor!" an old broken-down farmer said to me, on extolling a gallop across country, "I get quite out of myself; I feel, sir, I feel as if I were out of debt." What more need be said? If a gallop is capable of making a man feel this, truly its influence must be great.

A village doctor never makes money; but who does now-a-days? One of my patients, a fast living hunting man, once made the remark, that "it must be a devilish strange sensation to have a five pound note in one's

pocket, all one's own." I suspect few doctors, except those amongst the upper ten, ever realise this blessed sensation, but surely our mission is not that of the money grubber. I should, for one, be sorry to think so, and I trust I am not singular in looking upon our noble profession as having other and higher aims. Look at many of our poor clergymen, men of talent, education, and high mental culture, voluntarily settling down in some obscure country village, their only aim and work being the spiritual welfare of their parishioners—they are the physicians of the soul, as we are the physicians of the body, and from the very nature of the work done, our lives, to a great extent, must be that of denial and self-sacrifice.

Nor, setting aside the high consideration of duty, is the life of the village doctor one of the least desirable. If he is devoted to his profession, as he ought to be, and fond of horses and country life, his career, though blustering and stormy, is not, by any means, to be despised.

I cannot imagine, on the other hand, a man taking to this kind of work who has been city-bred, or who has a hankering after society and the common pleasures of life—the sooner such a one sells out and seeks his proper habitat the better, for his life will be a burden to himself and certainly not profitable to his patients.

But to return to my horses—I have to keep three, or, as a facetious friend said, two and a-half, that is, two hacks and a miniature cob for night work. This small gentleman is quite a character in horse-flesh. He is a beautiful blue-roan, standing about thirteen hands,

and was bought for me out of a Welsh drove at Rowell Fair. I find him most useful as a night pony in going to the out-lying villages, which are thickly scattered all round my district. Sometimes I find great difficulty in getting stable-room for him during night, but 'Robin' is contented to stand anywhere, and on one or two occasions I have been obliged to take him inside the cottage where I was engaged. In disposition he partakes very much of the Welsh character, and though very susceptible to kindness, shows a good deal of temper when he is harshly used or even roughly spoken to. I believe temper in horses is very often the result of their stable treatment. Some grooms, themselves of a surly temper, always speak roughly, and in a high key, and even strike or ill-use their horses when dressing them down. Some high-spirited horses resent this, and are very apt to have their tempers spoiled in consequence.

One of my Arab hacks—for I happen to have two—is peculiarly liable to be influenced by her stable treatment. My man, though in many respects a perfect groom, is afflicted with a nasty raspy temper, and I can always tell when things have not been right with him, by the irritability and nervous excitement of 'Coquette.'

This mare is a beautiful dark-bay, with a fern muzzle, a skin like satin, and perfect in shape and action. She is Arab by the sire's side. It seems a farmer in the north of Wales bought a broken-down Arab horse somewhere, and turned him out on the hills amongst his Galloway mares, and I was fortunate enough to obtain one of the best of his stock. She is good as gold for

the saddle, and though I have ridden her long journeys, I never knew her show the least indication of fatigue.

My other half-bred Arab, 'Vedette,' is the offspring of an English thorough-bred and an Arab mare. He is the same size as the other, about fifteen hands, and, strange to say, almost the same colour. His manners are perfect, and though gentle as a lamb, he has all the impulsiveness of his race. I had the latter from a horse-dealing farmer, who is a patient of mine. He told me that just before I bought him, a young squire in the neighbourhood had had him on trial as a cub-hunter. Being a hot-headed impulsive youth, "with no hands," he so spoiled the horse's temper that it bolted with him, and it was returned to him as "a brute." Old Sale saw quite well that the fault was not all on the horse's side; and to prove it, sent it to all the available meets, with his little boy, a lad of about thirteen years of age, on its back. Under the gentle handling of the boy the horse went beautifully, and did everything that was asked of it; and it was seeing its quiet behaviour with hounds, with the urchin on its back, that induced me to buy it.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM horses, the transition to grooms is natural and easy. A wonderful race are grooms—naturally civil in their manners (except to their masters), and dapper in dress—they belong to a class of humanity altogether *sui generis*. I, of course,

have lots of them for patients, and rather like attending them; not that they are particularly remunerative, but they have a certain air of aristocratic mystery about them, which is quite refreshing. From the post-boy at the "Angel," up to the classical Tiptop, they all stand boldly out in the matter of dress. Why tight trousers, long vests, and large shawls round their throats, should be the recognised style, has always been to me a point of profound mystery. A still greater mystery is that this peculiar style of dress seems to be hereditary, and can be traced in the children of grooms to the third and fourth generation. General Archer told me that on one occasion a friend of his, when hard pressed for a stableman, was advised by some one to try a certain shoemaker called Osborn. On being questioned, it was found that this man had been a shoemaker all his life, but as he was out of work he was anxious for the situation, and thought he was equal to it. He was engaged, and, strange to say, though he never had had anything to do with horses before, he gave great satisfaction, not only to his master, but to the head groom. Now this man had been recommended simply because he looked horsey, and in dress was the groom all over. It turned out that this man's grandfather had been a well-known groom in hunting stables, and he had simply inherited his sire's horsey tastes. I also know a family of four brothers in this town, who, though all brought up to the "seat" (shoemakers), yet all dress in a "groomy" fashion, attend all the horse fairs in the neighbourhood, and who cannot pass a horse without looking at it with the eye of a judge and connoisseur.

In a time of great depression in the shoe trade, one took to horsebreaking, another bought a horse and cart and turned carrier, and a third became groom to an old lady, who lives near my own house. I was naturally interested in this horsey family; and, on inquiry, was not surprised to find their grandfather lived and died a post-boy. This heredity in dress and taste is a curious subject, and I suppose has its origin in certain fashions and customs peculiar to a class, becoming fixed as tendencies in the nerve centres. Why do tradesmen, who suppose they are getting on in the world, always wear their hats on the back of their heads? This is almost invariable. Why do well-to-do merchants wear mutton-chop whiskers and bunches of seals? Why is the full dress of a navvy, clean high tops and a red knotted neckerchief? Why does Hodge, the labourer, wear a highly ornamental breast to his smock frock? What on earth induces a carpenter to wear a square paper cap? Why do some families take to velvetene and poaching at one and the same time? What is the innate association between brown scratch wigs and snuff? How is it that old maids of a certain type always take to cork-screw curls and bombazine? These and similar questions, though very suggestive, I suppose cannot be satisfactorily answered, unless we subscribe to the theory of inheritance.

CHAPTER V.

THOUGH now fairly settled down in the district, and considered to be getting on fairly well, I had, like many other young doctors, many difficulties to contend with. I found out that the confidence of the general public was a thing not to be gained in a day. It takes a good many successes to give a young man the reputation of skill, whereas one or two failures are quite sufficient to damage him irretrievably in the eyes of Mrs Grundy. With the club people and the general poor, there was little or no difficulty: having contracted with their doctor, they go to him and accept his services, much in the same way as they might go to their butcher or baker, whereas, attention, skill, and great tact were essential in dealing with my better-class patients. I found that kindness and attention were all the poor wanted, and they took all the skill for granted.

When a doctor is lucky, and has met with a fair amount of success, his practice amongst the upper classes, though involving a great amount of time, anxiety, and responsibility, is certainly very pleasant. The great difficulty I had to contend against with them, was the desire many of them had to rush off to town to see some man of note. Lady Grundy had suggested Dr So-and-So as being famed for treating their particular ailments, and often, before the remedies had had time to have effect, they politely told me they would like to see one or other of these celebrities.

Now, consultation in a case of serious import, or where there is the least obscurity in the nature of the disease or its treatment, is not only advisable, but becomes in a sense the duty of the young practitioner; but it seems absurd in the extreme for a patient to ask consultation before such is necessary, and before the family doctor has had the chance to do what, in nine cases out of ten, he is capable of doing as well, if not better, and at less expense, than the consultant.

The family doctor, knowing well the constitution of his patients, and seeing his cases from day to day, is more likely to arrive at a correct opinion, and to find out the most suitable remedies, than the consultant who, often pressed for time, pockets his fee, and gives in return an opinion and prescription which may neither be correct nor suitable. It is true the brightest luminaries in our profession are to be found in the large centres of population, but it is equally true that many able men are found in the ranks of country practitioners, and are simply where they are, because they have not had either the means, influence, or desire to practise in the cities or large towns.

As a family doctor I confess to having obtained great increase of knowledge from some consultations, and in many instances my patients have equally benefited. But as medicine is as yet an uncertain science, its successful practice depends to a great extent on the daily observation of the case, which we all know may at any moment change, not only as to its character, but even as to the intensity and gravity of the symptoms.

Many of my *confrères* have complained to me of the danger of losing their patients altogether when they once get into the hands of consultants. They send a patient up to town for a second opinion, and the consultant simply keeps him and attends him as an ordinary physician, or surgeon, as the case may be. I have suffered once or twice in this way myself, and have two men of repute now in my eye who invariably do this. Of course I do all in my power to prevent my patients seeing such men, and recommend some one equally efficient, and who is yet not so grasping. As a rule, men who treat general practitioners in this way are men who are losing ground in the run, as we say; for the real consultant of eminence is a first-flight man, and is not obliged to resort to such mean and unprofessional practices.

Such annoyances are bad enough, but there are others which, though not so tangible, are still more distressing, and take a great deal out of the doctor.

One morning I received a note by post, asking me to call on a Mrs Waller, who lived at Bixworth manor, about two miles from my residence. The note intimated that she was far from well, and I was to call sometime when I was passing through the village. Not having a patient in that particular locality I did not wait for that contingency, but called at once. Mrs Waller is one of these sketchy individuals, with such a shadowy outline of character, that it is rather a difficult matter to describe her. Apart from the decided want of colouring in her picture, the most prominent feature in her character was a kind of

antagonism to everyone and everything with which she came in contact. "Oh, Dr Gheist," she said, on my being shown into her bedroom, "I am glad you have called, I am so ill." "What is the matter," I asked. "Oh, doctor, I am so ill; it is tic, gout, neuralgia, or something of that kind." I did find that she was very much out of sorts, and recommended some remedy, which after much conversation she agreed to send for. "You need not call specially, doctor," she said on my taking my leave, "but any time when you are passing through the village will do." Some days after I called again, and found she was much the same, neither better nor worse. She thought, however, she would get on now, and did not think she need take any more medicine. I pointed out to her, that according to her own showing, her symptoms were still as prominent as ever, and that, in fact, as she was no better, she ought to continue the medicine. I felt a certain degree of embarrassment and delicacy in urging a continuance of my treatment, as she gave me the idea that she either grudged the expense or did not expect any benefit. She did not grudge the expense, however, as she "would gladly give anything to get well;" but in spite of all this, she did not send for the medicine. Very much against my will I called again, and she seemed to have forgotten that she was to have sent, and she was "getting worse and worse every day. . . . I do wish you could suggest something to do me good; it is so dreadful to be in such constant suffering. . . . What am I to do, Dr Gheist? This misery is more than I can bear." I tried to reason the matter with her, and to show her

that she had not given the remedies a fair trial; but she wound up by saying she was the most afflicted creature in the world, and no one seemed able to do her any good. What could I do with a patient like this? I did not care to call, for she gave me the idea that I need not, unless I liked. I dared not stay away, for she, craving for sympathy and full of self-pity, would be ready, I knew, at a moment's notice, to turn round and blame me for neglect.

I have often wondered what was the cause of this state of mind, for I was sure her behaviour was due to some mental aberration. She wanted help, but seemed to have a morbid pleasure in refusing it, thereby, I suppose, increasing the luxury of self-pity. The same mental phase is seen in the child, who, naughty and under correction, refuses to take its dinner though almost famishing with hunger; and again, in an exaggerated form, we see it in the melancholic or insane patient refusing for days to take nourishment of any kind.

Mrs Waller went on in much the same way for some months, till she became a perfect burden, not only to me, but to her own family; and though I repeatedly urged her to see some one else, she objected, as no one, she thought, could do her any good. She eventually drifted into the cloudy realms of homœopathy, and I lost sight of her.

I have often speculated as to the reason of a system like homœopathy—founded as it is on the grossest error and absurdity—holding a place in the confidence of any one. After a careful analysis of the characters of those

who are generally the adherents of the system, I have noticed, they are for the most part of a highly nervous temperament, and have all that peculiar phase of mind in which anything *outré*—no matter whether in morals, religion, or medicine—is accepted in preference to the regular grooves of thought and action. It is a well-known fact, and one bearing out this idea, that almost all the homœopaths in our neighbourhood are females, all more or less liable to hysteria or other nervous affections, and are as remarkable for their schismatic tendencies in religious matters as they are fond of this kind of medical dissipation.

Some of my better-class patients also have a leaning to the doctrine of Hahnemann, and have their gilt morocco cases of globules and mother tinctures; but I cannot help noticing that their faith in it is rather lukewarm, for when anyone near and dear to them is taken with serious illness, they do not hesitate to call in, and trust to, legitimate medicine.

The man who practised this form of humbug in my district was a tailor in Market Harborough; and between the dignified calling of making and mending clothes, and selling globules, he seemed to make a comfortable living. He was (for he is gathered) a little man, with a coppery complexion, a brown wig, spectacles, and an enormous white choker; and as he strutted about, with the look as if he were always in the most profound study, I have no doubt his mere appearance did duty for many a globule.

The great aim of this worthy (and, I am afraid, of his whole sect) was to produce a decided impression on the

imaginings of his patients. His patients were generally *in extremis* when he was called in, and but for his timely aid must have undoubtedly perished. One night I was sent for hurriedly to see one of his patients, a Mrs Harris, the wife of one of our poor-law guardians. She was a person of delicate constitution and weak moral fibre—a believer in spiritualism, and one of the Plymouth Brethren. I found her in a state of great excitement and terror. The tailor had been seeing her that day, and had told her that she had congestion of the heart, inflammation of the lungs, obstruction of the bowels, symptoms of approaching paralysis, and that she was altogether in a very hopeless state. I saw at once that the poor woman had been almost frightened out of her wits, and, indeed, I had some difficulty in convincing her that there was nothing seriously the matter. I induced her to throw aside her aconite and belladonna globules, and after a little appropriate treatment for mind and body, left her, and had the satisfaction of finding her all right next morning.

The peripatetic tailor called to see his patient next morning, and, I am glad to say, was summarily dismissed. I have always taken a positive delight in exposing the charlatanry of such gentry, believing, as I do, that no man can practise according to the doctrines of Hahnemann without being either an ignorant fool or a downright unmitigated quack.

Many of my patients, speaking about homœopathy, have hinted that we, as allopaths, are jealous of the new sect, and point to the fact that many qualified medi-

cal men are taking to the practice. For the medical men who are so far lost to what is due to their profession, all I can say is, that I am heartily sorry for them ; but as to the feeling of jealousy, it is too absurd an idea to be entertained for a moment. This, or any other form of quackery, can never compete with the noble science which is, or ought to be, the basis of our practice ; and if for a time one of this school enjoys a pseudo-reputation in a place, time generally exposes the rottenness of his system.

CHAPTER VI.

I WAS very much exercised about this time with certain patients, whose lives, I felt, were gradually but surely drifting into invalidism through their absurd mode of life. In looking round, I saw with concern that, from the hind, with his habits of beer drinking, to the lady of fashion, with her tight-lacing and luxurious mode of living, there were influences constantly at work which not only counteracted the most enlightened efforts of the physician, but were gradually sapping the life-springs of society. "The fever called living" is no mere poet's fancy, for in all phases of society life seems more or less at high pressure.

The agricultural labourer, whose life ought to be one long idyll, so far as pure animal existence is concerned,

has very often but a maudlin struggle for existence. He seldom lives at all. He very often barely exists, and this through no fault of his place in the social scale, but because of the insanitary conditions which, from time immemorial, he has gathered round himself.

Almost living in the pure breezy air of our beautiful uplands, we expect to find in him all that is typical of rude health, perfect symmetry, and muscular development. But how different the picture! Alas! we have here no Rembrandt lights and shadows; for we find in the labourer, at least in my district, nothing but the most prosaic lumps of white-washed humanity. Look at our workmen going to or returning from the field. What honest faces! But what forms! Generations of beer-drinking sires, who have lived under the dominion of their appetites, impulses, and desires, have left their traces in the Hodge of to-day, and made him what is aptly called brutal in nature, and stunted as to his muscular vigour and growth. When not under the guiding influence of education and religion, I am afraid his nature partakes of the ancestral taint, and even his more generous impulses degenerate into mere animal instincts. In my district here I may be unfortunate in the type of patients I have amongst the working classes; but the history of crime all over the country, the experience of the poor-law boards, and the statistics of benefit societies, all point to the fact that the agricultural labourer has been undergoing gradual deterioration, both as to his mind and body. The cure for this melancholy state of matters stands prominently enough forward in our compulsory education systems;

but its application must be a work of time, and must be spread over many generations before it can root out those defects which have become grafted on to his very nature.

My experience of the labourer here is decidedly against the received idea that he is a type of health; indeed, in no class do I find so many patients drift into this state of chronic invalidism. It is just possible the club system has something to do with their high rate of sickness; and I believe it is the opinion of other medical men besides myself that many claim their club benefit, on plea of sickness, when there is really not much the matter; but, apart from this adventitious factor, there are adverse influences constantly at work which handicap the working man very heavily in his struggle for existence. The house in which he lives, the food he eats, the beer and liquors he drinks, are all of such a kind as to place him, as regards health, and as compared with the better classes, in very unfavourable conditions.

This as to his body. What of his morals? Overcrowding, and its consequent mixing of sexes, early marriages, with their un-Malthusian results, besides deteriorating his bodily vigour, do no less ruin his moral tone, and keep him where he is—the lowest in the scale of humanity.

What shall I say of my better-class patients? Is their environment all that can be desired? Do they morally, intellectually, and physically live up to their knowledge of what is due to their natures? I am afraid not. Look at the fashionable hours for dinners

and assemblies. At an hour when "Nature's quiet restorer," sleep, should claim all tired humanity, do they not begin their rounds of pleasure, and begin them, too, often suffering great languor and physical depression? To meet the claims of this lurid excitement, the wine-cup, the soothing draught, the pick-me-up come into play; and life, as with the labourer, is at high pressure. The human form divine, too, cast from her pedestal of beauty, conforms reluctantly to the taste of the hour, and yields up her æsthetic nature to the changing eye of the votary of pleasure. Beauty is no longer "a thing of joy for ever," but becomes the passing flash in the eye of the beholder. I have often been distressed at witnessing the idolatry of fashion, wondering how long some of my poor patients would bear up under the worship. It is needless to particularise; but in the riding-habit in the hunting field, in the dress in the drawing-room, the same deformity (physiologically speaking) meets the eye. Truly this is the art, not of living, but of dying. "A measure of perfect health is a man's birthright. He is fully entitled to that. He may not be necessarily entitled to wealth, to honour, or any other distinction; but to health he has a perfect right." How true are these trite remarks, yet how notoriously are they ignored! and ignored systematically, not only by society at large, but by individuals themselves setting at naught the ordinary laws of health. The modern girl of the period (to use a vulgar term for such an enchanting object), though she may be enshrined in the essential element of beauty—youth, does very often in her dress show

plainly that health is a secondary consideration to her idolatrous worship of fashion. Fashion!—fashion is one of the mysteries of life. Whence comes it? Who decides how long one shall prevail, how soon another shall perish? Æsthetically speaking, there is as much a cultivated standard of taste in dress as there is in pictures, in music, or in general literature. How this standard of excellence is initiated and kept up is rather difficult to say. The leaders of fashion in matters of dress very often owe their position as leaders more to the fact of their possessing some extrinsic quality than to the fact of their rigid adherence to the recognised laws of beauty. Transcendent beauty, the possession of great wealth or princely rank, may qualify the possessor to lead the mode in dress. In this age of high æsthetic development, one may naturally wonder why it is that art alone is not sufficient to decide this point. Surely in England art is sufficiently advanced to enable us to discern what is best fitted for English form and beauty. I have read somewhere that fine art and the fashions very rarely converge, but run in parallel lines, and that artists follow the fashions which spring up in their time. This may be so; but what more concerns me as a doctor is, that the styles of dress of the day, instead of running parallel with the ordinary laws of health, strike off at a tangent, and ignore them altogether.

I suppose Darwin would say that woman, like all animals of the female sex, is adorned or dresses to please the eyes of the lords of creation. Two thousand years of civilisation, of æsthetic culture and intellectual pro-

gress, have brought with them certain ideal types of beauty in dress, just as they have revived ideal types in painting, in sculpture, and in art generally.

In the cinctures of the patrician Roman bride, in the zone of the ladies of Greece, in the bodice of the Milanese and Bernese peasant, as in the stays of the French and English *corsétière*, we have different forms of the same ideal type of what is and has been looked upon as fashionable, as beautiful, as the mode.

Amongst savage and barbarous tribes, no such article of dress has been considered necessary to please the eyes of their lords. I have noticed that when a woman becomes sexually degraded in the eye of man, from age, or other disability, she loses the desire to adorn this part of her figure; nay, even among the lower castes of society, this tendency leaves her when she has lost hope of pleasing. A slattern, if she wears stays at all, wears them more as an article of comfort than adornment. Some even think that this was the first use of the corset,—simply as a protective to the chest.

Be this as it may, the art of the *corsétière* has now, in this nineteenth century, almost reached the position of high art, and many of the leaders of fashion vie with each other who shall have the thinnest waist.

To be out of fashion in this respect is next door to being placed on the shelf—to being out of the world altogether. No doubt to be *outré* in dress is like every other eccentric course, bad taste, and there is an undercurrent of truth in the sentiment, “il y a autant de foiblesse à fuir la mode, qu’à l’affecter.” Yet what I have for years tried to impress on the mothers of my

fair young patients is, that tight lacing, when carried to extremes, whilst being questionable as to its beauty, is decidedly dangerous to health, and even to life itself, and may be detrimental to the happy fulfilment of the natural duties of human society.

Not long since I all but quarrelled with Mrs Faxton of Dob Hall on this very subject. Mrs Faxton is a comely, strong-minded English matron, who is blessed with three as comely daughters, and she naturally looks upon them with no little pride and admiration ; and I daresay she felt rather shocked that I, a village doctor, should dare to insinuate anything amiss with her faultless daughters.

However, as the family doctor, I thought it my duty to speak plainly on the matter, and considered I had attended long enough at the Hall to speak with authority. Mrs Faxton would reason the matter out in her own way, which was seizing an idea, and bolting off the course with it, as it were, exaggerating all the points at issue, till she seemed to have all the reason on her side of the argument.

“It is all very well, Dr Gheist,” she said to me one day, when on this sore subject ; “that is only your idea, and a most absurd idea it is, to be sure ; my girls would be perfect frights going into society, as you suggest, without their stays. What *can* you know about such matters ? Why, their dresses are made by Madame Lemoine, and she is considered *artiste* enough to make for royalty.” “But, Mrs Faxton, I do not for a moment suggest your daughters dispensing with this necessary article of dress, but what I wish to point out to you is

(I speak, of course, in a general way), that tight-lacing is decidedly injurious to health, and in the eyes of many gentlemen positively detracts from that grace and beauty of figure, which are nature's most distinguishing corporeal gifts to woman." "Nonsense, I say, doctor; if you had a wife or daughter of your own, you would then see it could not be done. Why, you don't imagine I could dream of my girls going out into the hunting field like a lot of meal sacks?" Argument, I found, was useless, as Mrs Faxton could not realise the fact of there being two sides to the question, and I was heartily grieved, for my professional knowledge told me plainly enough that much of the miserable health of one of these girls was due to this very cause. Miss Faxton had, at one time, a figure perfectly faultless in symmetry and grace, but tight-lacing, with all its concomitants, was beginning to tell, and she was now, at the age of twenty-three, what one might call lop-sided. Her beautiful bust had become preternaturally flattened, and her right shoulder becoming more angular and prominent, she had lost that beautiful roundness of form which, when associated with her graceful carriage, gave her the envied position of being called one of the handsomest women in the county. The second daughter, Mabel, was also very good looking; indeed, by many she was thought beautiful, and even handsomer than her sister. She was a true blonde, with large stacked masses of most beautiful yellow hair, but everybody said that her face, though charming, was as nothing compared to the rounded luxurious beauty of her form. A village doctor, given up body and soul to his profession, is not


likely to become sentimental about his lovely patients, but I could never see Mabel Faxton without all the poetry in my rough nature bubbling up in silent admiration.

When I attended the family first, Mabel was but a girl of sixteen, in short dresses, and even then gave promise of great beauty.

“Standing, with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and childhood fleet.”

She was always gentle and pleasant to everyone, and when attending her for some slight injury received in the hunting field, I was astonished to find that her mental nature was as highly developed as her manners were pleasing, and her general appearance distinguished and charming. Of a highly emotional and sympathetic nature, and gifted to no small extent as to her purely intellectual faculties, she seemed to me one likely to turn out no ordinary woman. But I could see that great care and judgment would be necessary in her upbringing, for she was just the one to go to extremes, not only in the ordinary matters of daily life, but in matters of belief. As events proved, my notion of her character was correct, for though, up to this time, her whole life had been like a beautiful poem, it ended in gloom and misery; but this sad story we must keep for another time, as I am just called away to an accident in the iron-stone pits.

CHAPTER VII.

HAT a weary life is that of a country doctor ! Not a moment that he can call his own. At a moment's notice he may be called upon to exercise his skill on a case requiring presence of mind, prompt decision, and no small amount of scientific knowledge.

Wearied and fagged from want of sleep, all his energy and faculties may be kept on the strain for hours, in a hand-to-hand fight with the great King of Terrors. Apart from the scientific interest he has in saving his patient, the very knowledge that in losing him he is perhaps ruining his own reputation, tends to make these sudden and dangerous cases a heavy trial indeed. And yet all this terrible anxiety must, as a rule, be carefully concealed from the friends at the bedside.

To them this great anxiety means a want of confidence in the means the doctor is using, and is suggestive to them of calling in further help. Now the doctor may not want consultation. He knows the case is one of eminent danger, yet he may not want to be hampered by a second opinion, or by a new treatment. He has found his own treatment successful before, and has faith in it, and, besides, another doctor coming in at once suggests to the patient the gravity of the case, and may even destroy the last hope of recovery. Of course, in cases of obscurity, or where the patient or friends wish for it, most practitioners are generally glad enough to avail themselves of the enlightened skill of a good consultant.

Some such thoughts were passing through my mind when, after a hard night's work, I was sitting moodily over a late breakfast. On riding home yesterday from the iron-stone pits, I was met by Mrs Faxton's groom, with an urgent message to come to the Hall at once, as Miss Mabel had had a bad fall from her horse, and was quite unconscious. I hurried on to the Hall, and found it too true: Miss Mabel was all but dead, and in that condition we doctors call profound coma.

It seems the hounds had met at Harrington, and as the Empress of Austria was out with her suite, there was an unusually large meet. The fox got well away from Larkland wood, and held across Desborough brook, in the direction of Rowell. There was a good scramble for a place, but very soon a few of the boldest riders, despising Cromwell's Bridge, took a line of their own straight for the brook.

Miss Mabel was riding a thoroughbred grey mare of a peculiarly irritable temper. Becoming chafed and excited before clearing the crowd, it rushed one or two of the first fences and fairly bolted. Coming to the brook at racing speed, it cleared it at one of the most impracticable places, but fell heavily forward, and pitched the poor girl violently against a doddard willow. She must have struck her forehead, for there was a small bluish-black wound on her right temple, and this was all the external injury she had. I had all this information from Mrs Colonel, who was riding in the same line, and saw it all. She was lying quite unconscious on a couch in her riding habit, just as she had been brought in. Large masses of her yellow hair

fell over each shoulder down to her waist. Her face, always pale, was now deathly pallid, and but for the wound on her forehead and the surroundings, she looked like one asleep. I sat by her bedside all through that long March night, watching the stertorous breathing and slow uncertain flickering pulse. Once or twice I thought she was dying, but she rallied again, and towards morning the graver symptoms seemed to subside, and I began to hope her wonderful physique would carry her through. All this time her poor mother was half beside herself with grief, and sat in tearless misery at the foot of the bed, watching every indication of hope or doubt in my face. About two in the morning I was startled by Mr Faxton touching me on the shoulder and beckoning me out of the room. "I thought, doctor, you would like to come into the library and have some wine and water," he said. "You must be tired, and as you think Mabel somewhat better, perhaps you will have time to have a cigar with me." Mr Faxton was, I thought, unusually pale, and had a peculiar startled look about him, which I at first attributed to the excitement he had undergone during the course of the day. "Doctor, do you know it is all up with poor Mabel? Her time is come; she will never get over this, I feel sure." I tried to comfort him, and pointed out all the more favourable features in her case, but to no purpose: he seemed quite assured she must die. "Don't misunderstand me, Dr Gheist, I don't think Mabel will die in the ordinary acceptation of the word, but her spirit, as you see, has gone out of her, and what I mean is, that she will be dematerialised.

She may awake to what you doctors call life, but her real spirit (her *pneuma*) will never return to her body." I thought at first that grief had affected Mr Faxton's mind, and stood like a fool, not knowing what to say, but all at once I remembered that he was said to be imbued with the doctrine of what is popularly known as Spiritualism. Mr Faxton was a curious specimen of humanity—a curious combination. I think he was the only instance I ever heard or knew of, of a man given to field sports—for he was a hard rider, and otherwise a good sportsman—being addicted to the vagaries of *outré* belief. As a rule, fox-hunting squires, if not gifted with high intellectual powers, are notorious for their hard common sense; but here was a notable exception, and I chuckled in my psychological sleeve, and enjoyed the study of his *bizarre* character accordingly.

Mr Faxton firmly believed, as I suppose most spiritualists do, that the spirits of the dead may become materialised, and rendered thereby visible to those on earth, but this can only take place through the agency of a medium—that is, some one who, from peculiarity of organisation, is endowed with this spiritualistic power of evolution. Under certain conditions the medium, a mortal man, may evolve or give birth to a spirit form—the spirit form, in fact, of one departed. The dead may thus be restored to life, not as ghosts or vampires, but as "substantial, living, moving, breathing, thinking human beings, endowed with all the attributes of humanity, able to reason, speak, eat, walk about, and write." This is what Mr Faxton calls Materialisation, and I suppose when the "psychic figure" disappears, or

is sucked back into the body of the medium, he calls the process de-materialisation. I told him I could not quite understand how, if Miss Mabel died, and underwent decomposition in the grave, her spirit could appear again in the same bodily form, or a form so similar as to be easily recognised, or how, if she revived from this serious accident, she would not have her own spirit again. "Dr Gheist, I cannot explain all the psychic mysteries of the subject, but I believe we are on the verge of a totally new epoch of thought in such matters. Your physiologists are all wrong as to the process of death. Death ! there is no such thing. It is true the gross material covering of the soul decomposes and is dispersed with its constitutional elements, but the spirit form remains, and simply passes into the inner world, from whence it may be recalled to revisit us, when the conditions for so doing are properly attended to. I believe the time is not far distant, doctor, when the invisible will be very clearly seen, and the intangible very sensibly felt, when matter will rarefy to spirit (as in the case of my poor Mabel), and spirit solidify to matter. I have no doubt, also, that in many cases a form of metempsychosis not unfrequently takes place, whereby one on earth properly qualified (properly qualified, mind you !) may go on a spiritual excursion into the inner realms of spirits, and one of spirit rightly conditioned be able to come on a visit to us for a few days into this world of matter." I tried to reason the matter with Mr Faxton, but besides being a bad hand at argument, I had sense enough to see that where all the steps of argument were gratuitous assumptions, the

thing was useless. He came down on me with such a shower of pseudo-metaphysical terms, such as "molecular agglutinations," "atomic gatherings," "spirit attraction," "Deity's central fact," etc. etc., that I was obliged to give in unconditionally, and say I could not understand him. "You would be a clever fellow if you could, doctor. I don't pretend to understand these mysteries myself, but I have seen such things at these *séances* with Dr Monck and Mr Colley, where there could be no deception, that I would be a fool not to believe them." "Do Mrs Faxton and your daughters believe in these spirit manifestations?" I asked. "No, they do not, doctor. The fact is, ladies are too much taken up with the pleasures of the world to bother their heads about such important matters." I was thankful to hear this, for I have always had a horror of attending patients for brain injury, whose minds are prostituted by such fantastical ideas. The fact is, these emotional manias (for they really have nothing in common with phases of intellectual thought) are like dire epidemics, and are fast filling our lunatic asylums. A spiritualist, with all the emotional side of his nature in a state of exaltation, must be a bad subject under injury to the brain or nervous system, and I knew that my poor patient was naturally emotional and excitable enough, without being handicapped by this additional absurdity.

I left Miss Mabel in the morning still unconscious, but having great faith in her fine constitution, and as some of the graver symptoms were passing off, I felt myself justified in comforting her distressed mother by

giving a more favourable opinion than I could the night before.

Just ten days after the accident I was pleased to find my patient, though still weak and drowsy, quite conscious. Her eyes, always remarkable for their slumbrous beauty, had now that far-away look one sometimes sees in the blind. The pupils were very much dilated, and what distressed and startled her was that she saw everything double. From the nature of the brain injury this was no more than what might be expected, but I was particularly anxious lest Mr Faxton should make this physical aberration of vision a pretext for foisting his spiritualistic ideas on his poor daughter. My reason for this anxiety was well founded, for Mrs Faxton had told me just the day before that Miss Mabel had been very much terrified by her father suggesting the idea that the injury would leave her brain so exalted in function that she would be able to see what was hidden from ordinary eyes.

Poor girl! I could see that she was labouring under some dreadful sense of fear, and it was with difficulty I could induce her to open or use her beautiful eyes at all. "Now, doctor," she said to me one morning, "do tell me if what papa tells me is true. I see everyone double in the room, and he tells me these are the spirit-forms; in fact, the ghostly inhabitants of the unseen world." Of course, I tried to laugh her out of this absurd notion, and showed her that, if this were true, the chairs and tables in her room had also a spiritual existence, for she could see that they were also double.

She laughed at this, and seemed convinced, but I

could see that the idea had sunk into her mind, and as she was both mentally and physically weak, it retarded her recovery in no slight degree. She did recover, however, and as time went on, and her brain regained its tone, I was able to demonstrate to her that the double vision was simply due to the weakened state of the inner muscles of her eye.

At first the double images were very far apart, but gradually, as the effects of the concussion went off, they appeared nearer together, till they finally coalesced, and the double vision entirely disappeared.

Mr Faxton was, of course, delighted at his daughter's recovery, though there seemed to be a lingering regret in his mind that the double vision could be accounted for on purely physical grounds. On subsequent occasions we had many discussions on the vexed subject, and I think I convinced him at last that the wonderful spirit-forms seen at the so-called *séances* of the spiritualists were as much aberrations of mental vision as these double images of Miss Mabel were physical, and due to well-known natural causes.

I confess, however, that his conversion was due more to the witty mockery of a hard-riding Irishman, who was a visitor at the Hall at the time of the accident, than to the force of any argument of mine. When Mr Faxton came out with any story more wonderful than another of the spirits he had seen, all Captain Neale said was, "R-r-r-ubbish. Why, Faxton, with the exception of your own worthy self, all the spirit-mongers are either old women or curates; they go to those dusky prayer-meetings expecting to see the devil and all his

angels, and it would be hard lines if their imaginations did not give them full value for their money." "Then Neale, you think that all that is not deceptive on the side of the medium, is due to a mere trick of the expectant and excited imagination?" "True for you, Faxton. Why, I once imagined a man paid me fifty pounds more than he actually did, and I went and spent it, and enjoyed the possession of it till the bill came in." "I think Captain Neale is nearer the truth than his joke would indicate," said I. "You remember Dick Swiveller and the marchioness drinking orange water and thinking it wine? Imagination plays strange tricks with people, Mr Faxton. A little deception and a lot of expectation will go a long way with some weak-minded imaginative people. Pray don't think that I impute weak-mindedness to you, but you must know that in certain states of the system, mental balance gets disturbed, even in the strongest minded, and they are led into all kinds of fantastical belief in consequence. When such is the case, they may become the victims of one idea, which is bad, or what is even worse, their ideas, if they have any, become too intense and exaggerated, and they become fanatics or bigots in religion, 'pig-headed' in matters of daily life, and have a kind of mental gluttony for matters of mystery, or *outré* belief."

CHAPTER VIII.

“**I**T never rains but it pours,” is an old adage, but a true one, and especially so in reference to certain kinds of accidents which come under the notice of a doctor in general practice.

For example, I had been more than five years in large practice before I met with a case of dislocation of the jaw, and I had two in one night. This may have been a coincidence, but, strange to say, it was four or five years again before I saw another, and I had two occurring in the same week. It has been noticed, again and again, by most surgeons, that there will be a long interval without a particular kind of accident occurring, and all at once three or four will happen about the same time.

Some mysterious under-current of average would seem to regulate the occurrence of some events. Railway accidents, for instance, come upon us at times like an epidemic; the occurrence of murder and suicide would seem also to be controlled by some kind of mysterious statistical law; and even the very instruments used in either can be fortold to a nicety.

Not long after the accident to Miss Mabel Faxton, I was riding along one of the grassy lanes, so characteristic of our beautiful country, when I met a gentleman “in pink,” whom I at once recognised as Captain Lane, one of the many hunting men living for the season at Market Harborough. I say, “at once recognised,” and take no small credit to myself for being able to do so, for besides being plastered with mud from head to foot, he had a peculiar *distrained* expression, which quite

altered his appearance. He had evidently had a fall, for his horse, also covered with mud, was dead lame, and walked with that peculiar trailing gait which horses very often have after a head-over-heels "cropper." I pulled up and asked him what had happened : had he had a fall ? In a sort of blundering way he replied, " Yes, indeed I do, doctor, I fell through the groves of Blarney. Yes, indeed, indeed I do, my horse fell through the groves of Blarney."

This lucid account of himself was sufficient to show me that he must have had a very bad fall, and that he wanted looking after. I turned and rode home with him. He seemed quite unconscious of his surroundings, yet he sat his horse well, and guided him through the intricate bridle paths and gates, in a dreamy and automatic fashion. I did not speak to him much, for to any question he kept on saying, " Yes, indeed, doctor ; yes, indeed I do ; my horse fell through the groves of Blarney."

Concussion of the brain, I mentally diagnosed ; left side of the brain, the seat of language, more shaken than right ; can't formulate his ideas in speech ; the general jumble has set at liberty some long slumbering idea of the groves of Blarney, or perhaps this idea was the last or most forcible one registered in his brain before the accident ; his riding so well, a good example of unconscious cerebration, or what is called reflex-life. He was staying at the " Angel," and, as good luck would have it, on reaching that place, one of his friends, Captain Wells, was just dismounting in the stable-yard. We got Lane up to his bed-room, and after some trouble, his valet succeeded in getting him into bed. I inquired into his

injuries, and found that, besides the evident concussion, he had broken one of his collar-bones. Wells was a kind-hearted, jovial fellow, and seemed to take a positive delight in looking after his friend. This was no sinecure, for besides shouting out every now and again, "The groves of Blarney," he would jump out of bed, seize one or other of us by the hand, and say with great earnestness, "Yes, indeed I do; the horse fell through the groves of Blarney." I prescribed for him, promising to ride over the first thing in the morning. I went over according to promise, and found my patient all right again, but with no recollection of anything that had occurred. He did not remember falling, he did not even remember going to the meet: the day, with all its events, was completely blotted out of his memory. The first thing he remembered was seeing Captain Wells sitting fast asleep by his bed-side. Captain Wells indignantly denied having fallen asleep at all, and laughingly pointed to his friend's forehead, remarking, in a mysterious whisper, "not quite the thing yet."

Captain Lane's head very soon got well again, and he was on horseback, and with the hounds, long before he was able to use his arm. He laughed at the idea of nursing a broken collar-bone; and had he fractured both, I don't know that it would have made much difference to him. He could not get over his astonishment at not remembering the events of the day immediately preceding the accident.

"I can understand not remembering anything after the fall, but to me it seems strange and absurd that all the rest of the day should be a blank. I always had the

idea that memory was absolutely necessary for any mental, and, to a certain extent, for any physical operation. Now, I spoke and answered questions, though not very lucidly, rode on horseback, opened gates, and though unconscious of my actual state, I must have acted in a conscious way."

"There is nothing special in that, Harry," Wells answered. "I have often known you speak without thinking; in fact, you are never very lucid, you know; and as for the riding part of it, you could ride as well asleep as not."

"Nonsense, Charlie, don't talk rubbish; what can you know about metaphysics? Let Dr Gheist explain it if he can; to me, I confess, it seems a mystery."

"I am afraid it is the importation of metaphysics into the question at all, that has shrouded such subjects in mystery," I replied. "It is more a question of physiology than metaphysics, and is easily understood, I think, if we acknowledge the physical basis of memory. Recognising this truth, we see there must be an unconscious as well as a conscious memory—the first coming into play in all the reflex and automatic actions of the body and mind, the latter manifesting its uses only in conscious mental actions."

"Hold hard, doctor, till I get a weed, for I really cannot swallow all that scientific jargon."

"Do keep quiet, Wells, there's a good fellow; go on, doctor, if you please; to me it is interesting."

"Of course, intensely interesting," said Captain Wells; "and no wonder: there has been quite an epidemic of concussions lately—even ladies have fallen."

"Never mind him, doctor."

"No doubt the subject is most interesting, and I wish I could explain it, so as not to offend Captain Wells' unscientific susceptibilities."

"Thanks, doctor ; but pray don't mind my susceptibilities. I'm resigned."

"Well, I was going to mention the fact of soldiers sleeping when on the march as a good illustration of this kind of automatism. Or suppose you set out to walk down to the chemist's shop, you make the start by a conscious effort of your volition. When on your way you begin thinking intensely, say of your lady-love, or your last new hunter, yet the muscles engaged in keeping your legs in motion go on all the same, and you turn into the chemist's without being conscious of the effort ; the walking was thus automatic, and was conducted by the brain, apart from your conscious knowledge, by the process known as unconscious cerebration. Any part of the brain that is being constantly exercised in a conscious manner will, in virtue of this constant repetition, get into the habit of acting so of itself, or by means of what I called, for want of a better term, the unconscious memory—in short, automatically. That special part of the brain grows to the mode in which it is habitually exercised, and thus, when you had concussion, and your consciousness was disturbed, and could not act, your muscles, engaged in riding, etc., were kept going by your unconscious memory. I don't know if I have made it plain to you, but as I have had concussion badly myself, perhaps you will better understand the process of this automatism, if

I relate what happened on that occasion. I was driving with a friend in my gig, when all at once the mare came down on her head, breaking both shafts, and pitching us both on to the hard road on our heads. I got up at once, picked a sharp flint out of the mare's frog (the cause of the accident), and finding that my friend was cut about the face, I took him into a cottage hard by, washed and dressed his wounds, and afterwards walked with him, about a mile, to my own house. In the village I met our rector, told him of the accident, made an appointment to visit one of his children next morning; and all this time I was not conscious of existence, so to speak, for I was delirious most of the night, and I did not come to myself till late the following day. I remember nothing absolutely of the accident, nor did I remember going out in the morning. Being so much accustomed dressing wounds, the sight of the blood on my friend's face suggested or initiated the surgical instinct which unconscious cerebration carried on and completed. The same with the action of lifting and looking at the mare's foot, the walking home, and making the appointment. I once saw a gentleman I knew get a tremendous fall at the beginning of a run with the 'Quorn,' by his horse putting its foot in a rabbit-hole. I helped him up, and he soon apparently came to himself. He mounted and finished the run, which was one of the best of the season, and when he got home he could not tell where he had been, or anything at all about the day's sport. Next morning he did not know he had had a fall, and does not, to this day, re-

member seeing me, or that he had been out at all. One of the stock illustrations on this point is that of a young lady playing a difficult piece of music, requiring great manipulative skill, and conversing freely all the time. The muscles of her fingers being, by constant practice, well up in their work, get along of themselves, so to speak, while her conscious mind is busy flirting or speaking with her neighbour. Some of our wise men have even thrown out the idea that the spinal cord may, of itself, be a centre for guiding the movements of progression. But without accepting this in the case of man and the more highly organised animals, it would almost seem to be true with those animals lower in the scale. A duck will sometimes run about for a few seconds with its head off, and a frog, as Huxley shows, can go through very intricate movements, as swimming, etc., without a brain at all. The truth is, this mysterious part of our nature is like a new country, not yet all explored, and affords a fine field to anyone with talents and aptitude for this kind of difficult research."

Captain Wells, always ready for a joke, remarked "that for his part, he went in for Huxley's notion *in toto*, for he saw lots of men in the world who got on famously without brains, and when at school he himself was believed to have less than his share."

"I can quite believe you," Lane laughingly rejoined; "but never mind, old boy, what you want there is made up to you in the size of your heart, for I believe that same organ of yours is as soft as a woman's, and you have been awfully kind to me."

"By the way, doctor, how is Miss Faxten?" said

Lane, blushing up to the roots of his brown curly hair.

"Don't blush, Harry, don't! the doctor won't mention it. You see, doctor, Lane heard that Miss Mabel had concussion of the brain, and saw everything double, and he naturally is annoyed that he does not see double also. How glad he would be if he could see Miss Mabel double, for, of course, he can never see enough of her."

"Hold your noise, you humbug!" replied Lane; "you too, I have no doubt, would be glad to see double."

"Of course I would. I would willingly undergo concussion to-morrow if I could see my income doubled."

"How would you like to see my fist doubled? I am afraid I must be down on you if you don't take care, Wells! You are incorrigible."

I left them laughing boisterously, and I could not help envying their good health, their large hearts, their joyous lives—everything but the concussion on the one hand, and the empty purse on the other.

As I rode away from Harborough, thinking on the conversation we had had, I began to dread lest I had been boring these young fellows with my quasi-scientific theories, and came to the conclusion that they must think me a precious prig and a fool for my pains.

CHAPTER IX.

ABOUT this time my practice increased so rapidly that I was obliged to get an assistant.

I had had for some years what is called a dispenser, whose duties were to keep in the surgery, make up any prescriptions and dispense the medicine to the club-men and others who were able to come for it, and did not require visiting at their own houses.

This man was well up in years, and was a large heavy-faced, flabby-limbed individual, with a wall eye. I found him in the surgery when I joined my predecessor—indeed he seemed to belong to the place ; and as he knew the medical histories of all the patients, he was, at first, of very great service indeed.

His own history was prosaic enough. Commencing his career as assistant in the sick-bay of a man-of-war, he in time picked up a rough knowledge of drugs and minor surgery, so that when the Baltic fleet came home, and his ship was paid off, he became dispenser to my predecessor, and there I found him.

I said his history was common-place, and just that of an ordinary unqualified assistant, but in time I made a discovery which gave me unusual interest in his career, and that was that he was a confirmed opium eater.

Before I knew that he was addicted to this horrible vice, I could not make him out. He had an air of mystery about him, and the appearance of having something on his mind. He seldom could look one straight in the face, and was very uncertain in his

moods, at times drowned, as it were, in misery and despondency, and again jovial and even defiant in his manner.

It is always refreshing, and indeed soothing, to one's feelings to find anyone in that class of life with any definite ideas. Mr Samuel had two very prominent ideas. One was that, in virtue of the size of his head, he was a most talented fellow; the other, a tremendous dread of his landlady. These two ideas, apparently incompatible, in time gained such mastery over him that his whole life was influenced in consequence.

He had a large head, a ponderous head, a dome-shaped head, without a hair to cover its nakedness, and as he did not wear a wig (for he thought what he lost in hair he gained in intellectual development), his forehead had, of course, a high intellectual "Melanchthon" cast about it. He was very proud of his brain-development, and gauged every one he knew by this test, "Why, so and so is all very well in his way, but look at his head, he has no forehead, no brain capacity." He was very pompous with the union and club patients, and quite offended with anyone who did not address him as doctor. I really believe his large glazed acre of forehead imposed on the hinds who came to the surgery for advice. They believed in him to any extent, and I know many of them preferred him to myself.

I often wondered at his devotion to the surgery work. It did not matter how late I might be in getting home, he always sat up for me; and he even seemed glad of a pretext for missing his meals. He lodged with a

maiden lady in Market Square, a mature virgin of forty or thereabouts. This Miss Harris was a female, not a woman, for she had nothing womanly about her, with tremendous physique, and no particular feature to speak of, except her mouth, which was from ear to ear. She was rather a small female, and walked about with that peculiar jerky manner suggestive of Jack-in-the-Box.

She was always turning up at unexpected times and places, and had that expression on her face as if she had caught you tripping. "Now I have got you," she seemed to say; "I am down on you at last." Samuel, or rather, Mr Samuel (for that was all the name he had), was completely under the control of this little virago. I read lately of a Dr Monck, a spiritualistic medium, who was frequently "under control of Samuel;" but I need not say that my old Samuel was not the individual referred to, for he was the meekest of the meek when under the household care of his mercurial landlady.

It was not that she was unkind to him, but she simply had taken possession of him, body and soul, and in many senses ruled him with a rod of iron. The fact was, as I found out from his after-confessions, she had made up her mind to bestow her forty years of virginity upon him—in short, to become Mrs Samuel. Horrible fate for any man, but doubly so to a man like Samuel, who had the same kind of dread of her ape-like fondlings as a wounded robin might be supposed to have in the presence of a tom-cat. Many connubial failures had soured her sweet temper, and her manner

to her potential, though latent, lover, wavered between the extremes of love and war.

"Now, Mr Samuel," she would say on those occasions when he was late, "I do wish you would come regular to your meals. What's the use of my wearing out my life cooking your vi'tuals if you don't think nothing on them, nor me neither, for the matters of that? What can you know of a man's stomach, when you treat your own in that 'ere way?" "I could not help it to-day, Miss Harris. Dr Gheist was long of coming home, and I had to wait to make up the medicine." "Surely Dr Gheist makes very little on you to keep you working like a galley-slave; but I tells you what, Mr Samuel: I won't be put upon in this way. You must either eat your vi'tuals at ordinary times, like a Christian, or go you must. I am a lone woman, to be sure, but it won't do to scrape my bones in this 'ere way; so mind what you are a-doing on." It might be a question with any one versed in the niceties of the English language whether this term "scraping her bones" referred to the gustatory joy Samuel was likely to experience in getting his dinner off a bare knuckle of mutton, which was all visible of her culinary art, or whether (and we confess to a leaning to the latter opinion) it was a high-flown poetical figure of speech, dimly foreshadowing the probability of her wasting to skin and bones through distress at his brutal conduct.

But however much he dreaded her wrath, her blandishments were worse to bear, and always struck terror into his soul; and it was to meet this terrible strain on his nerves that he kept on, as he confessed to me with

tears, increasing the dose of the opium he took. It was in the evening when these little love passages took place, when, seated by the fire with his glass of grog, and smoking his long "churchwarden," she would try to storm the citadel of his heart. A lover of strong waters herself, she generally got very red about the nose, did this maiden of forty summers, and the loving leer with which she regarded her lodger plainly showed what was the one object of her life. "Now, Mr Samuel," she would say, "isn't it comfortable? What a blessing to have a fireside of one's own, and some one to care for and look after you! Ain't you happy now, my dear?" Generally, by this time of day, Mr Samuel was under the influence of his exciting yet soothing dose, and he met these kittenish advances of Miss Harris with a kind of dreamy acquiescence. Now and again the awful truth would dawn upon him that he would be obliged to marry her, and the cold perspiration would roll over his ample face, and he would offer up an inward prayer to be preserved, not only from all perils by sea, from perils by land, but from the special peril, his fiend of a landlady.

Having some conversation with him one day, he confided to me the fact that Miss Harris was too much for him, and that his life was a burden to him in consequence. "Why don't you leave and get other lodgings?" I asked. "I can't do it, doctor; I would gladly do so, but dare not propose such a thing." I offered to see his landlady about it, but he begged me not to interfere, and seemed frightened to death at the bare idea of such a course.

Such dreadful moral weakness did rather astonish me; but when I came to know the dreadful secret Mr Samuel carried about with him, I could quite understand it. The truth is, opium-eating was so degrading his whole mental character that he seemed gradually sinking into moral imbecility, and he acted more like a child than a man with a mind of his own.

Before the entire truth dawned upon me, I had noticed a change in his general appearance for which I could not quite account.

Comparing his present state with what it was five years before, a change had undoubtedly been slowly but surely creeping over him. I remembered he used to be, though heavy and flabby in person, what one would call a strong, able-bodied man. Now he seemed "all of a totter," and he walked with that peculiar shuffling gait so characteristic of the broken-down drunkard: not staggering, but with legs wide apart, and with such an uncertain step that he looked about to tumble. Though not a sharp man, he used to be capable enough, and managed the surgery work with precision and accuracy; but now his memory seemed almost gone, and he could not recollect the simplest message, or follow out the simplest instructions involving any accuracy in detail.

One morning he did not appear as usual at his accustomed hour, and shortly afterwards Miss Harris jerked herself into the surgery, and told me Mr Samuel was ill in bed, and was very anxious to see me. I called, and found him very ill indeed, though the most inexperienced physician could have seen that

a great deal of his present misery was due to mental rather than bodily ailments. In spite of this, I certainly thought, on feeling his pulse, that his days were numbered. This opinion was more strongly forced upon me when I again visited him in the evening. He thought he was dying—dying in his sins, as he told his landlady, and urgently wished to see me.

It was a cold, stormy night in March, I remember; and when I went into his bedroom I was surprised and shocked by the appearance of age and despair that had come over him since my morning visit. I saw he had something to tell me, and looked wistfully in my face, like a dog which has a thorn in his foot, and cannot explain. Thinking he would unburden himself if his landlady was out of the way, I sent her down to my house for some brandy for him. As soon as the door was closed upon her, he seized my hand and cried, almost shrieked out, "Opium, doctor! give me opium! I am an opium-eater!" I saw it all in a moment, and the past mystery of his life was cleared up and dispelled as if by magic. He was suffering from the want of his accustomed dose. "How much are you in the habit of taking, Samuel?" I asked. "One ounce of the tincture" (two table-spoonfuls of laudanum) "twice a-day." I went home and brought the dose for him, as he was in such a state of prostration that there seemed no choice in the matter, and he certainly was not in a state to bear either advice or reproaches. He was very penitent, but told me plainly that the habit had got such hold of him that he believed he must die without his daily quantity. This present illness was due, to a

great extent, to an attempt on his part to give it up altogether. For weeks he had been struggling hard to lessen the dose, and for two days immediately preceding his attack he had done without it entirely. The sufferings he then endured were something dreadful, and it made him shudder to think of them. He described his state to me as one of the most acute agonising misery: not pain, but something harder to bear—an awful restlessness, a grinding weakness, generally referable to one point of his back. Accompanying this physical misery, he had feelings of absolute despair, fear of impending death, yet a strong desire to rush into the horrors of suicide. Sweat rolled off his forehead; his limbs shook under him; and he felt in a state of complete mental and physical collapse.

I reasoned with him, and did all I could to point out the degrading nature of the vice, and the certain ruin that awaited him if he continued in his downward course of self-indulgence. "I know it, Dr Gheist, as well as you can tell me; but the time for recovery is past now, and I am a complete slave to it. By slow but sure degrees it gained the mastery over me. I always made resolutions to lessen the dose, but as often broke them; and I believe my moral will is now so weakened that I have not even the desire to escape the dangers you point out as sure to overtake me. In my folly I thought I had strength of mind to resist its seductive influences, but like every other victim, put off the day of reform. You know, doctor, I used to suffer from tic in the face, and on one or two occasions, when driven to desperation with the acute suffering,

I went to the laudanum bottle. I don't know that it relieved me, but the excitement and exhilaration it produced made me fly to it when, from other causes, I was simply depressed or low in spirits. But why need I trouble you with these details? What interest can you now have in the lot of a miserable wretch like me?"

"Go on, Mr Samuel; I do take an interest in your story, for though it is but the old, old story of most people who have given way to this kind of indulgence, still, in knowing the causes and various steps of your downfall, we may be able to suggest some means of getting rid of the habit. Pray, go on, and tell me everything."

"I have little more to tell, doctor, except that I think my naturally shy and nervous disposition led me to fly to this kind of stimulant (for as a stimulant I always took it) more readily than I would have done had my nature been of a bolder cast. I may as well tell you, but you know that already, that I have not been comfortable in my lodgings for a long time—indeed, my landlady has been like an incubus to me—I can't explain how it is, or why I should be so much under the influence of a mere woman, but so it is, and for many a day I have not been able to face her without being primed with opium. When under the influence of this seductive, though cursed, drug, I feel a new man, and as bold as a lion; my reserve of manner and shyness leave, and I often feel inclined to take her by the nose—indeed I one day threatened to do so. Her wrath was dreadful, and since that time her conduct to me has been cruel and vindictive. I cannot, and never will, be able to

shake her off, for in one of my foolish moments I gave her a written promise of marriage. But, doctor, the idea is horrible in the extreme. I have no means of keeping a wife, and besides I fear her too much, dread her too much. I believe she would poison me did she think she had no chance of getting me at last."

From an ethical, more than from a medical point of view, Samuel's case seemed to me quite hopeless. Here was a man with a large brain truly, but of the washiest quality imaginable, a man without mind, without self-control, without motive for good, with a large sensual body, all his appetites run riot for years, and to crown all, this fiend of a woman hanging about his neck like the old man of the sea.

That she meant to stick to him like a leech was evident, for she told me that evening that he had promised to marry her, and a promise was a promise, all the world over, and if he did not keep his word she would have law on the head of it, if law there was in England. "He must not go for to think that because I am a lone young woman he can play fast and loose in that fashion, and I tell you, Dr Gheist, if the law does not right me, I'll right myself; why, doctor, I'll scrape the very bones on him, and dance on his grave after." She seemed quite exhausted with her spiteful passion, so I left her, thinking to myself that if, in the dispensation of things, poisoning were legitimate, and one of the fine arts, this interesting female most certainly ought to have a dose.

True to his character of mystery, Samuel one morning was nowhere to be found; he had disappeared, and, from the malignant glare in his landlady's eye, I knew

that her cunning had played her false, and he had stolen a march upon her. This female was ultimately gathered, and, as cremation was much talked of at the time, my new assistant, Dr George, was most anxious to try it experimentally in her case, by putting her in one of the Gas Company's retorts. But I gently reproved his scientific ardour, and keeping in mind the scriptural text, "vengeance is mine," etc., thought we had no right to anticipate this kind of thing.

CHAPTER X.

DR OSWIN GEORGE, my assistant, was an Irishman, and one of the most genial fellows in the world. He was an M.D. of the London University, and had distinguished himself to no small extent during his collegiate career.

A great enthusiast in his profession, he devoted all his time, energy, and talents, to the study of his patient's case, and, I need not add, was an immense favourite with all, even with old ladies.

He was particularly kind and attentive to the poor—that is, all those depending entirely on this kind of attention; for, of course, the rich can always command both attention and kindness.

Having a large union and club practice, Dr George's time was almost exclusively taken up with the working

people—the raw material he called them—and besides attending to their bodily ailments, he took peculiar pleasure in watching what he was pleased to call their mental life.

Being a close and accurate observer of human nature, I, of course, took for granted that he had seen evidence of this mental development, but, as I often told him, a long experience had led me to believe that a complete absence of anything like mind was one of their chief characteristics.

“Don’t you think you are too hard upon them, doctor? They have not, of course, what may be called the higher phases of mind. For, look you, besides the melancholy fact that they have been practically without education for generations, their mode of life must deter them from the acquisition of knowledge of any kind. Their minds, if ever broken up, have been lying fallow from time immemorial, and what I call their mental life has reference more to the impulsive and emotional side of their natures, and excludes all their individual and social relations. Of course, I speak more particularly of tradesmen, skilled workmen of all kinds, and even the higher castes of ordinary labouring men. As to the pure hind, the farm labourer, I confess you are right. I think Darwin, when elaborating his theory of evolution, might have picked up something in that large, barren, brain-field, the life of the labourer.”

“Well, George, I was perhaps too sweeping in my statement, but it is remarkable how large a period of our daily lives is passed in a state completely void of,

anything like mental action. I believe very few of us, with the exception of those whose lives are passed in literary work, or, at all events, work involving mental effort, can boast that our minds are often energetically active. We dream away our existence, and our ideas, if we have any, flit through our minds like clouds in the sky, and we have no more to do with their production than we have to do with the dream-scenes that pass through our minds during sleep.

“In the Midlands, Hodge of ours is a typical hind, and holds embodied in his clod-like nature the inherited essence, the mental residuum, of generations of beans and bacon. One great beauty of his mental life is its simplicity, its naturalness, and its entire freedom from anything like intricate combination, either in its moral or intellectual phases. His mind is not an active one, but passive to a degree. He thinks like a child, speaks like a child; his whole nature is child-like, except, perhaps, in his eating, and there he is a man all over. Mr Huxley speaks of our ebony brethren as toiling with their jaws rather than their brains, and this is eminently the case with Hodge; and in the matter of eating, my friend Hodge holds a pre-eminent position—indeed he is senior wrangler in that department.”

“I should think he is,” said George, laughing. “Why, I am attending a labourer now who nearly killed himself the other day by ‘devouring,’ as he called it, a pork pie of about four pounds weight. He was making a beautiful recovery from fever, and you can imagine what this did for him. By-the-way, I have not seen him to-day yet, so I had better go before they shut up for the night.”

This tendency to gourmandise, both in eating and drinking, is a strong feature in our rural labourer; indeed, all his mental energies are spent in providing for this most pressing want of his nature, and I daresay it is not to be wondered at. It matters not whether he spends his days in the tonic air of our breezy uplands, as a farm labourer, or boldly strikes at the higher flights of shoemaking (for this is his great ambition), he is equally at home at his Sunday dinner—I say Sunday dinner advisedly—for, though he is supposed to dine every day in the week, it is only on this day that he comes out as “a oner” in the feeding line. He may be seen on a Sunday morning taking his bacon (I speak figuratively, of course, for his menu is varied enough, and ranges from “skirts of casalty mutton” up to the primest joints) to the baker, and about twelve o’clock bringing it back. On his first journey there is an expression of melancholy resignation on his face, for his heart’s delight is only in bud, and has not attained the full fruition of brown crust and gravy; but look at his face now when he returns in triumph! look at the holy, the joyous, the gustatory rapture that beams in his eye! He looks neither to the right nor to the left, but with his nether lip, Bobo-like, moist with expectancy, he feels that to-day, at least, he is fulfilling his destiny, to-day he will feed on food fit for the gods—

“Tell me not in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream.”

Why, the man is happy, supremely happy, and what more would John S. Mill, or any other philosopher have?

As might be expected, the butcher is the king among shopkeepers. In our town we have two or three to every street, and they all get on in the world, they all make money; and how could they help it, the consumption being so great? I know plenty of families amongst the shoemakers and labourers who spend more money on butcher meat alone, than the curate of the parish gets to keep his clerical body and soul together.

From an utilitarian point of view it may be urged that the agricultural labourer of the period has as much mind as he wants, as much as he can well do with in the humdrum life he is obliged to lead. Many of the farmers round our district, I know, look with suspicion and distrust on the compulsory education system, and fear that in becoming better scholars their men will cease to be good workmen. This idea is, of course, absurd in the extreme, for unless we are content to see our country, with all its grand and glorious traditions, gradually sink into the position of a second or third rate power, our working men, even of the lowest cast, must be educated; even though that education is only of the lower standard in common knowledge, religion, and morality. e

As village doctor I have lived amongst the people (the *profanum vulgus*) for some years, and have observed that, though they seem content and happy in their sphere, their happiness is based on purely animal enjoyment; much the same, indeed, as that of the bullocks and cows that feed in contentment on our rich midland pastures. In our grassy meadows

one often comes across a contemplative cow having an expression of the deepest thought in its large bovine, sleepy-looking eyes. I often wonder to myself if this prehistoric ancestor of ours has a mind of its own. Does it contemplate its environment, as Spencer would call the six-acre field in which it lives and moves, and has its being? Does it review in its mind's-eye the different kinds of pasture; the merits of turnips as compared with mangols; the advantage its tail gives it over man in warm weather? Does it, in short, think? On this point I have never been able to come to a satisfactory conclusion. It is very evident we can never get behind the psychical nature of a cow any more than we can fathom what is passing in the minds of any of the lower animals. Having no language worth mentioning, they cannot express or give utterance to their ideas. By means of their instinctive cries they communicate their feelings, impulses, and desires to one another; but they have no language fitting into anything like ideas or active thought. The inference seems logical enough, that having no means of expressing mental life in other than this purely instinctive way, instinct and not reason is the characteristic of their minds. All their mental acts (for we must call them mental for lack of a better term) hang round the two great laws of self-preservation and the continuation of the species. Am I outraging humanity when I say that in this they are but types of the savage, the uneducated hind, and of all classes of humanity who, through gross self-indulgence, have become brutalised in their natures? I think not. No! taking all

things into consideration, I cannot help likening my bovine friend to my other friend, Hodge of ours.

Dr George tells a very good story in illustration of this very point. Not long since he had occasion to sit up all night with a case in one of our most arcadian villages. The husband of the patient, John Sharpe, certainly belied his name, for by all accounts he was one of the most unmitigated clods in the Midlands. George, always genial and familiar with these men, tried hard during his enforced detention to strike fire from Sharpe's dull brain, but without effect; for he answered, like the heathen Chineese, in monosyllables, and did not seem alive to anything beyond his own immediate interests. After taking a sketchy canter over all the subjects likely to interest him, George at last "struck ile" in an impassioned conversation on the life, history, the rise and fall, the social importance, and individual profit of bacon, the social economy embodied in the practice of pig-keeping. Sharpe, though by nature a dull man, was on this congenial subject most eloquent, and told George, with a snigger of satisfaction, that he had just killed his annual pig, that it was nearly twenty stone, and that he would have enough bacon and to spare for his household all the year round.

From the comfort of having bacon, and to spare, the transition was easy to the consideration of the advantages and comfort of unbounded wealth. In a festive and speculative way George asked Sharpe what he would do if he suddenly found himself possessed of a fortune. The answer came at once—"I would keep

two pigs." This short, terse answer embodied the philosophy of his whole nature, and contained "the *iliad* of the controversy in a nutshell." Of course! Sharpe would under the circumstances keep two pigs, and so would any other Northamptonshire man of the same cast. Keeping pigs is part of his nature; it is the alpha and omega of his existence. With him it is the one thing needful, the expression of one of the two laws aforesaid, the law of self-preservation. I need not add that the other law, the continuation of the species, was practically recognised before George left the house.

CHAPTER XI.

DR GEORGE had almost the entire charge of the club-patients, and I may say this was the only subject on which we did not quite agree.

A London University man, he had many high-flown notions as to what was due the dignity of the profession, and he believed that attending club patients at all was derogatory in the extreme. "I can't see, Dr Gheist," he would say, "how you can bring yourself to attend patients on this club system. It seems to me undignified and lowering to the profession. You say they can't afford to pay a bill. Well, let them apply to the parish, and be attended as paupers."

"That is all very well, George, but as I am parish surgeon for my district I could not afford to attend them all as paupers. Considering the miserable salary I get from the guardians, I think the pauper list is

quite high enough already. Besides, it is a dreadful thing to pauperise a man. It is demoralising in the extreme, and very unfair, not only to the doctor, but to the parish. Once accustom a man to pauperism in the form of medical relief, and he will very soon take kindly to pauperism in all its forms. And why should not a working man pay his doctor? He must be attended to in times of sickness, and if he can't pay a doctor's bill as an individual, then I maintain it is his duty to pay it by combining with his neighbours, and forming a corporate club or society for that purpose. When a man becomes a member of one of these clubs or friendly societies, he becomes possessed of all the advantages of property, and he is thus not only able to pay his doctor, but to meet affliction and distress with a comparatively light heart. Just as a private patient, the head of a household, pays his bill to the doctor for attendance on the various members of his family at the end of the year, so does the club or society pay the club-doctor a yearly sum for attending on its corporate family. In the one case the money is collected by one man, and paid out of his private funds, while in the other case it is collected by monthly contributions, and paid out of the public funds of the society. By combination the working man thus does what the private patient does individually, and if the doctor is settled down in the country (and I suppose village doctors cannot be done without), he must be content to take payment for his services in the only way he can get it, and that is by combination of small fees instead of individual large ones."

"I hate unions, I hate corporations," again broke in George, "especially in professional work. In spite of all you have just said, I cannot help thinking it undignified in a man of science (which a medical man is or ought to be) attending a patient for a few shillings a year."

"Talk about dignity! I think, George, it is far more dignified to be paid a settled sum yearly by the club than to run small bills with individual workmen, and then have to dun them or put them in the County Court for the money. Where is the dignity, I should like to know, in sending a poor man a bill, say for one guinea, year after year, and then, tradesman-like, suing him for the amount? I think the less a medical man comes in contact with his patients in money matters the better, and as the village doctor has not often the disagreeable pleasure of pocketing his fee in gold at the time of visit, the next best thing, to my mind, is to have his small club fees turned into gold by the collector of the club, and paid to him in a lump sum. True, the club contributions are not large enough, and the working man of the day does not do what he might do in this way, but clubs with their medical and financial benefits are a necessity of the age. It is easy enough to avoid this kind of thing if a man is practising in a city or large town, where his patients may all be of the better class, but here in the country it is not all beer and skittles, and we must act according to the necessities of the case."

"But don't you think, Dr Gheist, that the smallness

of the individual contributions has a tendency to lower the value of the doctor's services in the eyes of the men? Cheap things are generally looked upon as of little or no value."

"Depend upon it, George, the dignity and value of our services will never be gauged by their mere money value. If I choose to reduce a dislocation to a poor man for a guinea, he will not think the less of my services to him though he knows that my ordinary charge for the same operation to a private patient is three or four guineas. The value of the service rendered to him will be gauged by him by its importance, not by its market value, so to speak. We are not dealing in hard-ware or Manchester cottons, you know, George, but are physicians practising a noble and self-sacrificing profession, and our duty is clearly not one of money-making, but of healing the sick. The financial aspects of our profession are not governed by the rules of trade at all, and the cheap article may be considered of more value than the dear one. In one of our large Midland villages lived two doctors—one a respectable well-informed practitioner, the other a drunken, careless, but clever and large-hearted man, and one who had crept into the hearts of the people. The one was a great stickler for his dignity and his fees, the other delighted to work for nothing if need be, provided he could help his patient. Well, I have heard of the sober doctor's door being passed, and the half-drunken doctor *carried* on the back of the husband to the bed-side of the suffering patient. Surely this was not acting according to the law of supply and demand.

The truth is, the one was the beloved, though drunken doctor; the other, though respectable and sober and well-informed, kept too much before his mind's eye the financial aspect of his work, and would do nothing without seeing something like a fee beforehand. Nor do I blame the man; but if it was money he was grubbing for, he should have stuck to his father's trade, for I believe he was a stay-maker. But pardon this digression, as an old lady patient of mine often says, when she has incontinently struck off into the medical histories of all her family, for two generations back. I merely tell the story, not of course to uphold drunkenness in a doctor, for of all sins that is the least excusable, but to point out that money-making is not the idea which should actuate the conduct of the true physician. Depend upon it, George, medical men are too apt to trust to the size of their fees for keeping up their professional dignity. This is beginning at the wrong end. I think we should all try to render our services acceptable from their intrinsic value, and the poor man, as well as the world at large, will soon acknowledge the value of these services, and this quite apart from the amount of the fee. Many of our curates do hard, laborious, and useful work, and, as a rule, they are worse paid than the parish doctor, yet I never heard it hinted that the value and dignity of their services were lowered by the size of their incomes. I am afraid what tends to lower this club practice more than the money aspect of it, is that our services are too often rendered in a careless and perfunctory manner, and this is apt to arise from the fact that, being in a club, men often apply

for medical assistance when there is not much the matter."

"Well, Dr Gheist, I won't argue the matter with you, but all I hope is that my lot will not be cast in the country, especially when it entails such work as you are willing or obliged to do."

Dr George was more than usually bitter on the subject of club-patients, as he had just been sorely tried by one living about four miles from the surgery. It seems this man had some chronic liver affection, and was subject to occasional seizures of acute pain. These attacks often came on during night, and he invariably sent off post-haste for the doctor. I confess this was very aggravating, for George had explained to him that there was no danger in the seizures, and had besides given him a special bottle of medicine to take when they came on.

"Why, I have had no fewer than three urgent telegraphic messages to go at once to see him, besides being roused out of bed two or three times in the dead of night, and all for nothing, for when I reached his house he was generally better. What I think, Dr Gheist, is that a man who can afford to send telegrams in that way has no right to be in a club at all; he ought to pay his doctor like any other Christian. That is what I object to so much in this club system. This man pays his miserable yearly contribution, and he feels that he has a right to send for the doctor every time his belly aches. Had he to pay as a private patient for every visit he would not be so ready with his urgent messages."

"But, George, to do the man justice, it is not he who

sends these urgent messages; it is your old friend, Mrs Marsh at the Rectory."

"My friend, indeed! what a bore that woman is to be sure. What right has she to be so kind and philanthropic at the doctor's expense? It is rather hard that a doctor should be sent for at all times and seasons simply because she, in her ignorance, thinks there is danger. The other day I saw Mrs Marsh, and took the trouble to explain the nature of the case to her, and assured her there was not the slightest danger."

"What did she say?"

"Why, she said she was sure Dr Gheist could not have any idea how bad the man was. She was sure the man was very dangerously ill."

"That was rather complimentary to you, George! indeed, to both of us, for I have seen the man two or three times myself."

"I detest that woman," was George's ungallant rejoinder; "I detest her, and I know she does not like me, for she knows I can see through her. She thinks because she doses the people with weak broth and sugarless arrowroot she has a right to direct them in everything. I know, too, she grudges everything that comes from the Rectory, for I have noticed when a patient is ill over a week, she does not like it, and begins to wonder why the man does not improve. I believe she thinks poor people have no right to long illness, and that they should either get better at once on one basin of soup, or die right away."

Not many days after this, I was visiting this man, and met Mrs Marsh coming away from his house.

“Oh, Dr Gheist,” she at once said, “I am so glad to have met you. Poor Smith is not any better; indeed, he seems getting worse every day. What *is* the matter with him? I can’t understand why this illness should keep upon him so long. Is there nothing more to be done for him?”

Mrs Marsh seemed quite excited, and could scarcely get out her words fast enough. I felt rather nettled to be thus taken to task and pushed into a corner, as it were, the more so as I had already explained to her that the case was of quite a simple character, and free from the least shadow of danger. I felt, however, there was no use getting angry with her, but again took the trouble to explain the nature of the man’s attacks, and to assure her there was not the least occasion for alarm, and that his recovery must be a matter of time.

“Your assistant has told me all this before, Dr Gheist, but I should so like you to see him in one of his attacks; they are really dreadful, and to me quite mysterious.”

“I have no doubt they are dreadful for the poor fellow, but there is nothing mysterious about them; indeed, Mrs Marsh, I believe he partly brings them on, by over-eating. Just the last time Dr George visited him, he found him *devouring* pork chops and onions, and that, for a congested liver, is not altogether the right kind of diet.”

Mr Marsh, the rector, who was standing admiring my horse, heard me say this, and immediately turned round and said—“I believe you are quite right, doctor. Just

what I have been telling my wife. The fact is, they killed a pig ten days ago, and Smith is suffering from a surfeit of pork."

"I don't know that you are far wrong, Mr Marsh ; at all events, his illness has been aggravated by over-indulgence. This, I need not tell you, is one of the great evils a country doctor has to contend with in the treatment of the poor people. I cannot make them see the great necessity there is for refraining from their usual strong food during illness. They almost all have the idea that without solid animal food they must die from weakness."

Mr Marsh, the rector, was a tall, good-looking man, in the prime of life, with a red jocund face, and a bluff genial manner. He was a good specimen of the muscular Christian, fond of cricket, hunting, and field sports of all kinds. In spite of these unclerical traits, he was admired and respected by everyone, and, indeed, he was looked upon as a model parish priest. His was the religion of the heart, for he spoke and thought kindly of all men. He was devoted to the spiritual and social welfare of his parishioners, and from being much amongst them, I can say he was looked up to and loved by all of them. He seemed to be at once judge, priest, and lawgiver to his people, and settled all their quarrels and grievances. Nothing could be done in the village without consulting Mr Marsh, and his kindly manner and sound judgment settled many a disturbance, which otherwise would have furnished a case for the magistrates. I have known him give up his day's hunting to go and sit by the side of some dying parishioner, and many of

these simple hinds have I seen pass away, holding hard by the hand of their large-hearted rector.

He was not a patient of mine, but, having a good many patients in his parish, I often met him. His wife, as I said before, did the lady-bountiful amongst the poor of the place; but I am afraid she was not much liked, in spite of the soup and comforts she dispensed. She seemed to interfere too much with their domestic arrangements; and if she gave good broth, she always insisted on giving them, at the same time, advice on matters with which she had little or no concern. They naturally resented this interference, and it seemed to me that the good done by the large-souled and kindly rector was undone by the rector's wife.

There was a legend in the neighbourhood that Mrs Marsh had "come of a very high family;" but as the same legend existed in reference to many of the rectors' wives in the county, I did not think much of the story. Mrs Marsh evidently believed it implicitly, and tried to assert the ancestral age of her family by treating those beneath her, especially her poor parishioners, as beings of a different manufacture altogether. Now, there was, perhaps, no real harm in this flight of fancy on Mrs Marsh's part (for, though her family did really stretch away back into the dim mists of antiquity, these mists arose, it was said, from soap-boiling), had she not plainly shown in her manner to the poor people that between them and her there was a great gulf, which no religion or sympathy could bridge over.

"Oh, doctor," she would say, "I can't understand these people. They seem to have no sense, no grati-

tude, no respect for anything or anybody—not even for me or Mr Marsh; and I am sure we work hard to do them good, if they would only think so. But I suppose it is so with people of that class: they live the lives of animals—take all they can get from you, and then bite the hand that feeds them.”

The rector, who evidently did not like to hear his parishioners disparaged in the eyes of any one, would, on hearing one of these frequent and characteristic speeches from his wife, reply in a cheerful way:

“Don’t believe her, doctor. Mrs Marsh is quite delighted with the poor people, and thinks there is not such another parish in the county. Why, the people here are no worse than their neighbours, and though they seem a little greedy at times, it is their poverty, poor things, that makes them so, and I am sure they are always very grateful for any little attention or kindness shown them.”

I don’t know whether the large-hearted rector claimed descent, as his wife did, from a great house, but I am sure he ought to be the founder of one. A man with a heart large enough and sympathetic enough to embrace all humanity must be an ancestor to be proud of. Harriet Martineau, in her autobiography (a book, by the way, as remarkable for the interest it awakens as for its unbounded conceit), says that clergymen as a class are intellectually and morally inferior to other men. This wholesale denunciation is just what might have been expected from the author of the “Aitkenson Letters;” but, I am sure, had she known the rector of Barford, this ill-natured and ignorant


generalisation would never have been made. In my eyes, the rector was intellectually, morally, and socially just what a man should be. I never met Mr Marsh but I felt the better for it. He always had something pleasant to say; always seemed to take a deep interest in everybody's welfare. His genial "good morning, doctor," had music in it, and one felt almost inclined to go and live in his village, to be one of his parishioners.

He was considered by some rather High Church, and he used to justify his course by saying that the services of the Church ought to be made as emotional as possible, for most people could be reached more easily in religious matters through the emotions than by direct appeals to the intellect—"For you know, doctor, how few of us have intellect. But we can all feel. To the High Church belongs the great merit of developing and fostering the æsthetic element in devotion, and I firmly believe that a fair amount of ritual, with good music, is essential for leading up the minds of the less educated to the grand religious truths which are embodied in our beautiful Church service." I have heard him preach more than once, and if his sermons were not remarkable for oratory and depth of intellect, they were always listened to with the deepest attention and heartfelt satisfaction, for each one seemed to receive something suitable for his own individual case. Though considered a ripe scholar, his life was purely a practical one, and he considered that pastoral work was of more importance than a too rigid adherence to prescribed forms on the one hand, or patristic learning or theological speculation on the other.

His great force of character and independence of mind, together with his high social and clerical position, made him a man of mark in the county, and gave weight to any advice he might give to either squire or peasant. Mr Marsh, I repeat, was a model village priest, but what more particularly enlisted my admiration was the great care and interest he took not only in the spiritual needs of his parishioners, but in their social and domestic welfare. He took great trouble, for instance, in managing the village benefit club, and encouraged the people to help themselves. The result of this was that his people were better off than their neighbours, pauperism in any form was scarcely known, and the poor-rates were at a minimum. The sanitary state of his parish also claimed a large share of his attention, and he used to say that, where there was neither comfort nor health in their homes, it was difficult to lead the people in the paths of religion.

With such a rector, I would not have had much trouble with my club patients in Barford; but, unfortunately, his wife was under the impression that she knew something of medicine, and very often saw danger lurking in a case where, as in Smith's case, there was not the slightest cause for fear. Indeed, as Dr George said, Mrs Marsh was a thorn in our flesh; and I don't think he has ever forgiven her for rousing him so often out of bed to see "a simple case of pork colic."

CHAPTER XII.

F all things, the most wonderful and mysterious to me has always been the mental state of the dying. I have, of course, as a medical man, witnessed a great many death-beds, witnessed deaths of all kinds—some sudden, horrible, and appalling; others slow, formal, and expected; some where the poor patient has been acutely alive to all his surroundings, and others, again, where the passage was made in the sleep of unconsciousness. But in all I have noticed (and I believe my experience is that of most medical men) that when the dread moment draws near, the end is peace—peace, so far as emotional excitement is concerned; peace, so far as giving any indication of the great change about to be experienced—a dull apathy as to the kind of future that awaits them.

This negative state of mind, marvellous though it seems, can only be accounted for by the supposition that, as the body is about to undergo dissolution, the brain ceases to be susceptible of impressions, either from within or from its external surroundings. Indeed, a state closely allied to mental drowsiness takes place, so that there is no possibility of realising the paramount importance of the change. "The end of that man is peace," "there are no bands in his death," might be truly said of most patients whom I have seen die. It matters not whether death finds him with a stern belief in all the Calvinistic horrors awaiting a misspent and wicked life. It matters not if it is the weak and

frail Christian, who has spent his life in a constant but vain struggle to come up to a saintly ideal, or the scientific sceptic, who has *almost* persuaded himself of the truth of the cold, icy doctrine of annihilation. Is it the man of wealth, surrounded by all that makes life pleasant and beautiful, or the man in rags, whose life since his birth has been a burden and growing misery? Is it the man whose last moments are soothed or rendered terrible by the presence of kind friends or weeping relatives, or the man dying metaphorically alone by himself in a ditch? They all die in the same quiet passive state.

We can understand the religious apathy (so far as death is concerned) of the Turk on the field of battle, and the stoicism of the red Indian when meeting death at the torturing stake. One dies firm in the belief of his immediate and merited union with the faithful; the other lays his life down in proud disdain, and looks forward to a never-ending joy in the happy hunting grounds of the brave. But whence the source of the apathetic philosophy of the modern sinner, of the doubting Christian, or of the scientific unbeliever? Surely in the disfranchised brain! There are, of course, exceptions to this leaden insensibility, but these come few and far between. I have seen the aged sinner of ninety clinging for bare life to the present, and the man of mid-life and vigour holding on to life with a despairing death-wail, piteous to witness. But these are *outré* cases, and at once strike one by their rarity and exceptionableness.

This perfect apathy in the presence of death was

brought vividly before my mind in a case which happened not more than ten days ago. William Kirk, a patient of mine, while coming out of a railway carriage, when the train was still in motion, slipped down between the platform and the carriage, was dragged in before the wheels, and fatally injured. Now, this man was one of those individuals who were constantly coming to the surgery for advice. He thought he had heart disease, and had likewise a great and natural horror of dying suddenly. He was a fat-faced man, with very light hair, a lugubrious expression of face, and a gait suggesting the idea that he had not a joint in his body. When brought out from below the carriage, poor Kirk, though feeling that he was fatally injured, betrayed not the slightest emotion. Death, as he well knew, stared him in the face, but he heeded it not. And so he died without a murmur, without a struggle, without showing in the least that he dreaded either the article of death itself or the shadows beyond the grave.

This apathy may be said to exist not only as regards the one central idea, death, but the entire nervous system seems in a state of such ecstatic tension that all feelings, all emotions, or desires, seem fixed, and, as it were, frozen into psychical insensibility.

Many authors, for example, have noticed the complete absence of anything like surprise or astonishment in the dying. Miss Broughton, in "Not Wisely but Too Well," in speaking of this peculiar state, explains it in a very beautiful though rather a fanciful way. She says, "To the dying nothing is a surprise. The one immeasurable, unimaginable, supreme surprise, on whose

closest marge they stand, takes away and utterly annihilates the force of all lesser ones."

To a certain extent this is true. It is true in reference to all feelings and emotions. One feeling or emotion by its all-absorbing intensity may dominate all others. Thus wounds are not felt in battle. One intense over-mastering grief drowns all lesser cares.

One idea may by its intensity so usurp the mind as to lead up to all the various phases of hysteria (which is simply nervous action or force, intensely evolved in one direction) or even to monomania. This is particularly seen in young emotional girls, in people of eccentric modes of thought or belief, and, of course, in the insane. This, to my view, is one characteristic of the lower animals.

One feeling or desire, started as it were by impulse, so usurps the entire individual as to irresistibly cause it to follow the bent of the feeling or desire in uncontrolled intensity.

The same thing is often seen in the lower types of men, and we then look upon them as being *brutalised* in their natures. Just as the animal naturally yields to all its impulses, feelings, and desires without control, so man under certain conditions allows his impulses and desires to dominate his nature, instead of controlling and regulating his conduct according to the dictates of morality or religion.

An injured, diseased, or excitable brain, hereditary or acquired habit, defective education, may each and all lead to this domination of feeling over reason. Thus fear, under peculiar circumstances, may make a brave

man a coward, just as, on the other hand, an intense all-absorbing idea may make a coward brave. The harmless and gentle dove when absorbed in the instinctive care of its young becomes fierce as the hawk. The drowning man, though brave, may from a sudden fear of death clutch at his friend in abject cowardice, having no thought but that of self-preservation. The martyr at the stake feels not the fire, the captured Indian feels only the dishonour, not the pain of the scalping knife. In many senses this apathy in reference to the approach of death, and this insensibility to suffering, are manifest blessings.

What a comfort it is that the tortures of physical death are not realised in all their intensity, and are not, at all events, aggravated by the tortures of mental terror and anguish !

The various phases of emotional expression are wonderful in the extreme. I have a club-patient who is so emotional, that when suffering from even the slightest and most trivial ailment cannot answer the simplest question as to his state without bursting into tears. When any of his family are ill, the expression of his face is ludicrous if it were not melancholy. I have known him burst into tears when, on meeting him on his way to work, I have said, "A cold wet morning for you, Simns." Though comparatively young and able-bodied, his face is aged looking, being deeply lined and furrowed by the constant contraction of the facial muscles.

It is quite evident that the emotion on his part is hysterical, or, to use a less ambiguous term, physical.

Mental, it cannot be ; for why should a strong, apparently healthy man be overwhelmed with self-pity simply because he has a cold, or is obliged to be abroad on a wet morning ?

Insanity has been defined as an inversion, or an intensification to an extreme degree, of our moral and mental characteristics.

How near does this poor fellow approach insanity, fettered as he is to his highly emotional brain centre ! In many forms of brain disease we have the patient weeping, or laughing, or screaming all day. What looks like deep grief or hilarious joy are simply physical expressions of an irritable, emotional brain centre.

This poor man is not insane, nor can I find any trace of it in his family, yet I would not be astonished at any great grief hurrying this emotional state into one of insane intensity. We must all have remarked, too, how with old people in certain states of system the ordinary traits of character become intensified and exaggerated,—the bad temper gradually drifting into spiteful, fretful ill-nature without a break in the storm, and the morbid shyness of middle life becoming a sullen and morbid moroseness. There is in all the emotions a healthy limit which cannot be passed without verging on the border-land of insanity. Within the limit, though just within the boundary, must be placed all those exaggerations so often seen in old people, sometimes in childhood and youth, and all those eccentricities of character which belong to those of our friends who are very peculiar.

Dr George, who generally reads over these pages as

they are written, and who, by the way, is rather a cynic, or what he prides himself in being, of a practical turn of mind, politely asked me to-day what I was driving at, for he could not clearly see the connection between these emotional states and the mental state of the dying.

As a rule, I detest so-called practical people, especially those who cannot see any sense or use in anything, unless it leads up *directly* to the improvement or the development of art.

In case these pages should ever see the light, and fall into the hands of readers as abominably practical as my friend George, I would merely state that my chief aim in this rather prosy chapter has been to show that bodily or mental states may arise from shock, impulse, or disease, which may so suddenly overwhelm the mind or brain centres, that, practically speaking, the patient may become unconscious of all impression, and fall into complete apathetic insensibility on the one hand, or into a state analogous to insane ecstasy on the other.

Taking all things into consideration, one need scarcely wonder at the rapidity with which this state of apathy is reached, even by those brought suddenly into the presence of death. The electric current is swift, but nerve force is swifter, and granting the impulse, and given the conditions, the instantaneous transition from one state of mind force to another state of nerve force is declared. The characters of these two states are decided and boldly pronounced—mind force being generally, or always, a conscious state, and under

control, whereas brain or nerve force may be unconsciously manifested, and beyond the control of the individual. Mind so-called, or mind force, has really no scientific existence apart from brain force, and one peculiarity of man's nature is that not only is the one force dependent on the other, but the one may transpose the other; thus, the highest and most complex intellectual emotion may drift into the lowest somatic or bodily emotion, and *vice versa*. And, again, though there is no *real* analogy between a fine electric instrument and the brain, there is this similarity, that in both any sudden shock, or untoward influence, may render either instrument mute and insensible to impression.

I have often been impressed by the suddenness with which one natural action may be turned into an unnatural or abnormal form of expression. Thus laughter may suddenly change to weeping, and either into strong hysteric excitement. These and such like changes easily originate not only in the individual, but, by some occult influence, may seize and dominate the minds of crowds or whole communities. In a room where one is weeping bitterly, how soon is she joined by others! Laughter also is as contagious, and even the more grave forms of epileptiform fits of young girls have been known to spread through a ward in hospital like a sudden and dire epidemic. So with the ancient dancing manias, which during the middle ages spread like wild-fire over many parts of Italy and Germany; and in our own country and times, certain forms and revivals of religion seem to belong to the same category.

Sudden panics in crowded assemblies, or the violent outrages of a mob, are familiar instances of emotions "run riot," excitement spreading through the people like the rush of flooded waters.

These terrible convulsions, so to speak, are generally far in excess of the cause producing them. A cry, a shout in a mob, may be the starting point of all the horrors of lawless devilry. One coward may demoralise a whole company of soldiers, when at some critical point the fortune of war wavers in the balance—just as a heroic flash in the eye of their captain may lead on the men to death or victory.

The dominion of one idea or impulse granted, mind force may rush on to brain force, and the individual or multitude be bound and fettered, instead of controlling and consciously guiding its feelings according to the dictates of sense or reason.

After reading the above sheets, Dr George has been at me again with his old argument, *Cui bono?* and he tells me he really can see no practical importance in such fanciful philosophy—pseudo-metaphysics was the term he was pleased to use. "Of what use are such philosophical disquisitions? What good end can they serve? Honestly, Dr Gheist, I may be too much of a utilitarian in matters of philosophy, but I really like to see some outcome for my work, and for the life of me, I cannot see the drift or purport of these pages."

As I before remarked, I have no great love for your purely practical man, one who always will insist on having full change for his shilling, but, as George takes care to tell me, few will ever read my lucubrations

(that is, provided I ever get a publisher), and fewer understand them; for the enlightenment of those few, and for my own pleasure and justification, I would ask—

Is it of no practical importance to have correct ideas as to the effects of bodily shock on mental processes?

Is it of no use to know how much of conscious attention may be expected of the dying?

Is it not worth while to be able to give sorrowing relatives a reason for any seeming apathy or indifference displayed by the dying?

Is it not good to be able to comfort a distracted husband, or grief-stricken wife, with the assurance that there were no bands in the death of the departed?

Is it not good to be able to say that the mind of the dying patient may have been settled and happy, though no word was spoken: that silence did not necessarily mean doubt or despair?

Is it of no practical importance to be able to speak positively as to the fact that a death-bed is not the time and place to wind-up our religious or worldly affairs?

Is the study of human nature, in any of its phases, not worth the trouble, if we can throw even the faintest glimmer of increased light on one of the most mysterious problems of life, to wit, the influence of mind on matter?

To all these questions I emphatically say, Yes; Dr George and my few cynical readers notwithstanding.

CHAPTER XIII.

AS I was enjoying my grog and pipe one evening, Dr George came in, in a state of gleeful merriment. He had some news for me, he said, and I would now have an opportunity of following my psychological bent to my heart's content.

"In which way? What do you mean?" I asked.

George could scarcely speak for laughing, and I could see something very unusual had occurred to throw such a dignified young gentleman into such a state of hilarious excitement.

"Oh, doctor, you are to have a distinguished visitor to-morrow, a *rara avis*, a *lusus naturæ*, in the shape of Dr Mary Molliere, a medical woman."

"Who is she? where did you meet her? and what in all the world does she want with me?"

"She wants to consult you as to her future career," said George, still laughing, "and is going to offer herself as a second assistant."

"Do be sensible, and tell me all about it, for I confess to being curious to know what this charming female really wants with me."

"Don't be too fast, doctor. I did not say she was a female, or belonged, strictly speaking, to the softer sex. She is a female doctor."

"Who is she, then? you have not told me yet; nor how nor where you met her."

"Well, she is a kind of cousin of Underwood's, the Quaker, and has just returned from Zürich University, where she has taken a degree in medicine."

"I never heard of her before to-night."

"Very likely," said George, "but there she is waiting anxiously to see Dr Gheist. She wishes to get experience, and is going to ask you to-morrow if you will allow her to visit the patients in the Union and Cottage Hospital. She told me that she represented a great principle, the principle of female liberty, and she says she intends devoting her whole life to the attainment of the emancipation of her sex from the disabilities imposed on it by narrow-minded *males*. Such were her words. Just fancy! the very word 'males' shows she has nothing womanly about her. Indeed, I don't think she has, except her petticoats, and these I think she will discard when she bursts into full development."

"I declare, George, you have made me quite interested in this fair creature. Does she expect remuneration for her services, do you know, or does she wish to come in the light of a pupil?"

"No, no; she does not expect nor look for salary, but wishes to improve herself, and she says she has no doubt but that her services will amply compensate you for any trouble she may give."

"What kind of woman is she? Is she young?"

"Dr Gheist," returned George, still laughing, "I am a man of few words, but they are generally accurate and to the point, and I beg again to state that I did not say she was a woman. She is a female, a mature virgin of five-and-twenty, has very dark hair, small grey cold eyes, which glitter very much, and are, besides, too near each other in her head, a deep gruff voice, large

bony hands, and she is above the middle height, even among men. She wears spectacles, of course; dresses in a grey kind of walking costume, which is very short, and shows well off a neat pair of ankles—indeed, the dress is not unlike that worn by the Edinburgh fishwives. She has rather a masculine cut about her; indeed, at a distance, she might pass for either man or woman. Besides, she has a well-grown moustache; and she always crosses her legs like a man when she is talking to you.”

“Very vivid, I must say; and I have no doubt the picture you have just drawn is just the photo she would like.”

“Bah! the creature is insufferable. She has no end of conceit, and intends putting you up to a thing or two, I can tell you.”

Next morning I purposely waited at home for Miss Molliere, and as the clock struck ten, the hour she had named, my door-bell rang. The servant announced Dr Mary Molliere, and the curtain rose on as interesting a specimen of humanity as I have witnessed for many a day.

On coming into the room she strode up to within two feet of me, made a deep bow, and said—“Dr Gheist, my name is Molliere. I had the pleasure of meeting your assistant last night, and explained to him that I wished for an interview with you. As he may have explained, I am a doctor of medicine of Zürich, and as I am naturally anxious to see as much practice as I can, before finally settling down in London, where my future sphere shall be, I thought I would take the

opportunity of a forced residence in the country, on the plea of health, of getting as much insight as possible into the working of country practice. I may say that, representing the grand principle of equality of sexual position (*sic*), I am anxious to see for myself what are the hindrances supposed to exist against my sex following the hardest of all kinds of medical work, viz., that of the country surgeon, and especially in union and club practice."

I told her that so far as I was personally concerned, I did not object to her visiting the union or club patients, but before I could give a decided answer, I must have time for consideration. I did not for a moment doubt her capability to look after such cases, but must first get the consent of the council of the hospital on the one hand, and of the poor law guardians on the other. Besides, I told her, it might be that some of the patients would object to be attended wholly by a female doctor.

"Well, Dr Gheist, these prejudices (the result, let me say, of a narrow-minded state of society) must, I suppose, for a time be considered; but I am positive that if I once get amongst them, these foolish notions will soon disappear."

"Well, I am glad you are so hopeful. Do you think you will like the work? and do you think you will be able to stand the mental and bodily strain of a doctor's life?"

"Oh yes, doctor; I like the work well, as much, though, because I am representing a great principle, and supporting my sex (hang her sex! thought I) in the

unequal struggle which you males have imposed on us. My health is fairly good, and, so far as I have seen, will, I think, be equal to any bodily or mental strain that may be put upon it."

"Well, Miss Molliere,"—

"*Dr* Molliere, if you please, *Dr* Gheist."

"I beg your pardon, *Dr* Molliere. I am sure the unusual circumstance of speaking to a—to a female in your position must be my excuse. Well, I was merely going to say that if you kindly call up in two days, I shall have made the necessary inquiries of the authorities, and will let you know the result."

She rose and made a profound bow, took her hat (a bowler, which she had taken off and placed on the table), and stalked out of the room.

There was no objection made to *Dr* Molliere acting as my temporary assistant, so that when she (he, or it) came up, it was arranged that she was to help in the Union and to take entire charge of the Cottage Hospital—subject, of course, to my own supervision.

I walked down to the two places and showed her all the arrangements, and explained the treatment requiring more immediate attention.

I had a long conversation with her as to the sexual element, on the question of women entering the medical profession. She seemed very bitter indeed at those members of the profession who had of late taken the lead in resisting their entrance into the colleges and universities. "It is just a matter of time, *Dr* Gheist, for there is such a call for women doctors that Government will soon interfere and compel the corporations and colleges to yield the same right to both sexes."

"And why, Dr Gheist," she went on, "are we debarred from the work? Is it that we are intellectually inferior to males, physiologically unfit to cope with the kind of bodily fatigue? or is it mere jealousy and trades-unionism on the part of you doctors? If you cannot decide which is the true answer, I can for you. It is the last, undoubtedly; mere petty jealousy—a jealousy unworthy the name of gentleman, or males of any degree. Am I to be debarred from getting a livelihood in a profession for which I feel a particular liking and aptitude, simply because of this narrow-minded spirit of trades-unionism? No, truly! I represent a society formed of ladies like myself, who have made up our minds to rest neither day nor night till we have attained our object, and that is, to have equal privileges as to the study and practice of medicine with the males; and mark my words, Dr Gheist, we will get them, and that before long."

"I doubt not, Dr Molliere," I replied, when I could get in a word, "you will in time succeed, and if I had any say in the matter, I should be for giving you all a fair field and no favour; but mind you, I don't think for all that that your success will be permanent. One or two here and there, of stern masculine character, and great aptitude for bearing all kinds of bodily and mental strain, may succeed, but to imagine that the great body of women who will enter will ever keep up in the race is absurd in the extreme."

"And why, pray? Do enlighten me, Dr Gheist."

"Why, this is not a subject we can discuss in all its bearings in this open off-hand way; but suffice it to say,

that there are physiological laws against you ; there are social laws against you ; and last, though not least—and you will excuse me being so plain—there are mental characteristics wanting in women which, in my eyes, totally unfit them for treating many of the graver surgical and medical emergencies which are constantly arising in medical practice.”

“The old, old story, Dr Gheist ; the clap-trap brought forward by the established corporations of males to keep us out of the field, and worth nothing, sir, absolutely worth nothing, as good sound argument.”

“Well, Dr Molliere, it is not worth while reasoning the matter, for we never will agree on this point ; but time, which brings all things to their proper bearings, both in the social and physiological worlds, will soon decide who is right. In the meantime, try your hand amongst my patients, and without meaning to pay you a compliment, I must say if any one of the softer sex is fitted for the rough kind of country practice, you are perhaps one of the most favourable specimens.”

I did not see much of my interesting assistant for some weeks, but heard through George that she was indefatigable in attending to the cases.

Most of the cases she had to attend were simple enough, and were chiefly those of old paupers and children. Into the hospital, however, cases were now and again admitted which called forth all the ability, promptitude, and presence of mind of the surgeon. One such case was admitted in course of time, and I was curious to see how Dr Mary would manage

it. It was a case of partial mania from drink—in fact, a variety of *delirium tremens*. The subject, or, rather, the patient, was quite a character in his way, and well known all over the district.

Major White Melville, I think, mentions one of his characters as being a cross between a dissenting minister and a master of foxhounds.

Bobby Sime answered very nearly to this cross, for he had been second whip in one of our crack packs, till meeting with an accident to his foot, which deprived it of all sensibility, so that he could not feel his stirrup, he unwillingly left the hunting field, and became, of all things in the world, a schoolmaster. But the close confinement, and I suspect the uncongenial work, “fetched” him into drinking habits, and I am afraid this was not the first attack poor Bobbie had had. He was a round florid-faced man, with no end of good humour beaming in his eye; and what led him to try school was his love and knowledge of poetry, which for a whip was something remarkable. Well, Bobbie was very bad indeed, very violent, and had to have two nurses constantly with him. Dr Molliere insisted on looking after him as she was looking after the others, and saw no reason why she was not as capable as *another man*. He was lying in a kind of dreamy, muttering, semi-delirious state, his old memories taking him back to his happy hunting days.

“Down, Melody, down,” “Good dogs,” “Gently lass!” he murmured, going through some of the old movements of soothing his horse, when his restless eye fell for the first time on Molliere. “Oh! charmer! Come

hither, my canary, my love bird, without the love. She heeds me not."

Dr Molliere, after feeling his pulse and trying to soothe him, took up his draught, which was due, and began to give it him. Bobbie could not be induced to take it, but spreading out his arms cried plaintively, "Come, mother, kiss me ere I die." He regarded her earnestly for a second or two, and then cried at the pitch of his voice, "Back, fiend! Is it a woman that I see before me; thou coms't in such a questionable shape that I would speak to thee."

His excitement had been gradually accumulating, and he now sprang out of bed, just as he was, in one of his oldest and frailest shirts, and assumed a tragic attitude right before Dr Mary. I was shocked beyond measure, though feeling quite imbecile from suppressed laughter. I tried to get him back into bed, but he seemed fascinated by Molliere, and kept gradually advancing upon her, with long tragedian-like strides, as she gradually retreated backwards with a dignity worthy a courtier leaving the presence of Royalty.

"Doctor, Doctor, I see it all. I know all about Darwin and his troop, and, by Heavens! the lissing mink is found at last. Fiend! fiend!

"Get thee back into the tempest, and the night's Platonian shore,
Leave my loneliness unbroken! Quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and damn you, take thy form from
off my door.'"

I saw he was getting unmanageable, and quietly turned the key in the door in case he should attempt to go out. With a quickness peculiar to the maniac,

he saw me, and cried out, "Dr Gheist, don't dock that loor, else I will scatter the small modicum of brains you possess on the floor." Still keeping close to Dr Molliere, he in a tragic voice said, "Thou hast no speculation in thine eyes, at least none worth mentioning, but give me of the cup; I will quaff the kind nepenthe, and forget the rare and radiant maiden. Maiden, did I say? Prithee, begone! Hi, menials! remove this animal, for I would be alone."

I was curious to see whether Dr Molliere's nerve would stand this ordeal, and I confess, with admiration, that she showed not the slightest indication of fear. I noticed the pupils of her eyes contract with a kind of spite when Bobbie made his ungallant allusion to her ape ancestry, but beyond that she showed no indication of feeling of any kind. She had hard work to get him to swallow the medicine, and when he was more than usually loving in his attentions, she would say, "Come, male, be quiet; take your physic."

She succeeded at last, however, in quieting him, and after he had swallowed his draught, he was led shivering to bed.

I had a long conversation after this occurrence with Dr Mary (as she delights to be styled), and asked if she did not regret taking charge of such a disagreeable case. Oh, no. She did not see anything very disagreeable in it. The diseases met with in males generally were not to her taste, but she had made up her mind to take them as they came.

I hinted that her sense of delicacy must have been terribly shocked by the scene she had gone through.

"Not at all, Dr Gheist. I looked upon him purely as a case of brain disease, and even thanked him inwardly for granting me an opportunity of asserting the great principle of which I am the unworthy champion—the principle that women are as capable as males of managing an awkward case."

For weeks Dr Mary went on as she had commenced, and, I must confess, attended to the patients well; but, with all her attention, some of the poor and more ignorant patients, especially among the women, felt they were being neglected, "for was she not only a woman?"

Dr George, to whom these complaints were made, told them they were quite wrong, for Dr Mary Molliere was a very clever fellow, and no more a woman than he was,

I was annoyed that George should speak in this strain, for, as I told him, they would not believe him, and think he was poking fun at them.

"Well, doctor, it is all very well talking, but after seeing the way Dr Mary manages Bobbie, I believe she is not a woman at all. She is, in fact, what I would call a neuter, the shape and style (and that only to a certain degree) of a woman, with the pluck and physique of a man. She is horrible. I cannot bear to look into her cold, fierce, glittering eyes. There is something uncanny about her. Do you know what she did to Bobbie, yesterday, when he rushed down stairs brandishing a broken saucepan in his hand, crying at the pitch of his voice, 'Where is the shadow, the vision, the ancestral missing link between man and monkey, the cross between devil and angel?' Hearing the

noise, and suspecting the cause, Dr Mary (who happened to be in one of the lower wards at the time), intercepted him at the front door, just as he was escaping into the street, with nothing on but his bell-top hat. Without the least appearance of funk, she said in a determined voice, 'Sime, lay down that weapon at once, and return to your bed-room. You will not? Then I must make you;' and taking him unawares, she deftly fixed her long, lean, snake-like fingers round his throat, and almost throttled him, so that his eyes stood in his head. He at once dropped the saucepan, as if it burned his fingers, turned, and fled up stairs to his room like a whipped dog. I could see from her manner that she was annoyed that this had occurred under her supervision, for she was always very strict in keeping the nurses to their duty, and I fully expected Mary Davies, the nurse, would catch it. When Bobbie was quietly settled in his bed again, Dr Mary turned sharply round and insisted on knowing whose fault it was. Bobbie, always ready, at once said, 'Since you press me, fair Anguilla, it was Dary Mavies there, who was anxious to see me take a preliminary canter with my clothes off, before the grand steeplechase.' 'Mary Davies, you are a female unworthy of the name of nurse, and I will assuredly inform Dr Gheist of your carelessness.'

"I rallied her on the vigorous way in which she had brought Bobbie to his senses. She simply said, 'Dr George, I am ashamed that the accident should have occurred; but as to the manner of settling him, persuasion is useless when a male gets into that state,

and had he had the strength of ten males, it would equally have been my pleasure and duty to try and subdue him.'

"Dr Gheist, she is a horrible creature, and a disgrace to her sex."

"Why, George, you will become a regular woman-hater. I think now she is an ornament to her sex, and would make a capital wife for you."

George shuddered, and walked away in disgust.

CHAPTER XIV.

SOME weeks after the affair at the Cottage Hospital, I received a note from Mrs Faxton, asking if I had any objections to sending Dr Mary out to the Hall to see Miss Mabel. It seems the latter, ever since her severe accident in the hunting-field, had complained more or less of a swelling in her breast, and it had now become so painful that Mrs Faxton was afraid of some formation which might necessitate surgical interference. She apologised in a few graceful words for wishing to see Miss Molliere: "her daughter was so reserved and shy, and had a delicacy in speaking about it even to 'so kind and old a friend as Dr Gheist.'"

I told Dr Mary of the message, and asked her by all means to drive out and see Miss Mabel; at the same time hoping there would be no occasion for surgical interference with such a gentle and tender-hearted

creature as my old patient, Mabel Faxton. I thought Dr Mary did not seem so much gratified at the honour done her as she ought to have been ; for she seemed to take it all as a matter of course, and with the air of one who considered that such an occurrence was no more than what might have been expected.

Truly, I grudged Molliere (for the life of me, I can't write of her except in manly terms) the treatment of such a delicious creature as Mabel Faxton.

I think I mentioned the fact before, that she was wondrously beautiful in face, and marvellously handsome in figure. I could not help contrasting patient and doctor, and certainly the advantages were not on the side of Dr Mary. The one was the perfect antithesis of the other—one all hard outlines, the other the perfection of undulatory symmetry ; one with cruel, cold, glittering eyes, those of the other soft, slumbrous, eager, and loving ; the voice of the one gruff and masculine in tone, the other softer than the cooing melody of the dove ; the one altogether a female, the other altogether a woman ; the one of doubtful sex (*à la George*), the other the very type of all that is desirable and beautiful in the sex. I asked George what he thought of the contrast. "Capital, Doctor !" he replied, laughing ; "but what would Dr Mary think of your picture ?" "I should not like her to see it, of course, but I take a curious pleasure in comparing such an *outré* specimen of humanity with others of the fair sex, so that I may perhaps be able to account for her peculiar phase of character—for her *raison d'être*, in fact."

I saw Dr Mary when she returned from the Faxtons'

place, and asked her what the nature of the ailment was.

"Simply a tumour," she answered; "the result, I have no doubt, of some deep-seated injury received at the time of her last accident."

"Poor girl," I said, "she will be frightened. What did you say to them about it?"

"Oh, I simply told them it must sooner or later be taken out, and the sooner the better in every way. Miss Faxton did not show much strength of mind over it, but begged for time to consider, as she could not bring her mind to undergo such mutilation. Mutilation, forsooth! I told her I would not mind having my bosom disfigured, if such were necessary for my health. Though a pretty, amiable-looking girl, she certainly has not much force of character."

"There you mistake," I answered. "I have known Miss Mabel Faxton ride well to hounds over a very stiff country, and do it in a manner and style that showed to my mind that, though a yielding and amiable-looking girl, she has great strength of will and force of character."

"Well, Doctor, it may be as you say. I won't go into such an uninteresting subject as the young lady's mental features. I told her mother—who, by the way, seems as nervous as the daughter—that the operation should not be put off too long, and advised them to have it done before I leave the neighbourhood. Of course, I should like to see and help in the operation."

"Quite natural; but we must not let that weigh with us. We must consider the poor girl in every way.

Cheer her up as much as you can, and don't urge her too much; that is, unless you think there is no time to be lost."

"Though the tumour is not increasing very rapidly," replied Dr Mary in a cruel tone, "I am all for having it done at once."

I had a long letter from Mrs Faxton, who was distracted, wanting me to see her daughter with my female assistant next morning.

Well, I would do more than that for either Mabel Faxton or her mother, but it is a bitter pill to consult with a conceited creature like that.

We drove down to the Hall together, and saw the poor girl. She was lying on the same couch, and almost in the same attitude in which I saw her after the accident. She was robed in a dark-blue dressing-gown of a soft yielding material, and her massive yellow hair fell in thick rounded streams over her shoulders down below her waist. Her eyes, always a great point in her face, had an eager, wistful look; and I noticed a convulsive shudder pass through her beautiful limbs as Dr Mary took her hand to feel the pulse. She seemed pleased to see me again, and in a laughing way said she hoped I would not be too surgically inclined. "You know, Dr Gheist, some people are fond of the knife; but, as the most interested party concerned, I can tell you from my heart that I dread it—dread it in itself, and in its consequences."

"I don't wonder at your dreading the knife, but you may be sure it can be no pleasure to me to give you pain; but you know doctors are obliged to seem cruel and hard-hearted at times."

"Some of you are very hard-hearted indeed, and seem to have little sympathy with the natural weakness of suffering mortals like me." As she said this she looked at Molliere with a meaning look, and her eyes filled with tears. Dr Molliere was standing before Mrs Faxton, with her legs as far apart as an acrobat, going over the details of the operation with a horrid relish that was anything but agreeable to hear.

I called her away from Mrs Faxton into another room for consultation, for I could see our poor patient had had quite enough of her.

I then explained that, under the circumstances, I would like a second opinion—say, of Erichsen or Paget—before anything was done.

Dr Mary turned up her nose at the idea of having the opinion of a London surgeon. "Surely, Dr Gheist," she said, with great warmth, "the case is plain enough. What good can come of having a second opinion, as you are pleased to call it?"

"Pardon me using such words; but as you are acting as my assistant *pro tem.*, I look upon our opinions as one. I will have all the responsibility, you next to none; and, besides, it is a dreadful thing for the young creature to suffer mutilation, and it should not be lightly undertaken without due consideration."

"Bah!" replied Dr Mary. "I would not mind both of my breasts being taken off to-morrow, if it were as necessary as it is in Miss Faxton's case."

"I have no doubt of it" (if you have any, I inwardly remarked up my sleeve). "I have no doubt of it;

but it is the feelings and future comfort and happiness of our poor young patient we have to consider, and I shall certainly ask further advice."

"Then you will find she will be taken up to town, and these London men will insist on the operation being done there, and you will lose your case."

"Yes; but I will place all the *pros* and *cons* of the case before her parents, and I have every reason to believe they have entire confidence in me, and will be guided by what I say."

"We shall see," returned Molliere. "I know there are some men in town who will only be too glad to get such a case."

I called Mrs Faxton into the room, and told her that an operation was certainly required; but as there were many grave considerations to be taken into account, I should like to have a second opinion from town. I likewise told her that there was no surgical difficulty in the mere operation, and that, with her permission, I would perform it myself here at home; but I wanted justification from a recognised authority as to the extent of surface to be interfered with.

"But, Dr Gheist," said Mrs Faxton, "if my daughter has to go to London, will the operation not be better done there when they are at it?"

"Certainly not, Mrs Faxton, unless you particularly wish it. Her chances of a good and speedy recovery are better in the country air, and under all the soothing influences of home. If you wish it done by Erichsen himself, good and well, but have it done by all means at home. There is nothing like country air for surgical

cases. Why, an operation performed in the country, though not so deftly done, will, ten to one, place the patient in more favourable conditions, and lead to a more speedy and satisfactory recovery, than one performed in town, even by one of the lights of the profession. Of course, Mrs Faxton, I am merely suggesting what I consider best to be done, and what I would do were the case that of one near and dear to myself. I will either write out a short history of her case for the London surgeon, or I shall gladly go up to town with you and Miss Mabel, and be present at the consultation—whichever you think best.”

“Well, Dr Gheist, I will see my husband about this, and let you know what is decided on.”

Next morning I had a note from the Hall saying that they had agreed to see Mr Erichsen, and they thought if I would kindly write out a history of the case as suggested, it would be sufficient.

They went to London, and by the advice of some of their town friends, saw a Mr Blank, who gave them to understand that the operation could not be performed in the country, and that they must take apartments near him, and he would perform the operation himself. Mrs Faxton wrote in evident distress, not knowing what to do for the best; and Dr Mary chuckled at my discomfiture, and the fulfilment of her prophecy that the London men would “grab” the case. I did not hesitate one moment, but telegraphed, “See Erichsen before taking further steps.” I knew it was only the second-rate men who could behave in this sharky manner; that Erichsen was too honourable, and too much

of a gentleman, to take the case out of my hands. I wrote him also by first post, and explained exactly how matters stood; that I wished to operate myself, but wished his authority for the propriety of the operation.

Mr Blank, to whom I also wrote about his part in the affair, took a very high and unprofessional view of the matter. He said he knew the case was sent up to town by me for the opinion of a surgeon of repute, for he read my letter to Erichsen; but he could not take the responsibility of advising the friends of the young person to have the operation performed in the country. He had not the pleasure of my acquaintance, and of course could not say anything to the friends as to my ability to undertake such a grave operation. He was very sorry he had done anything to annoy me, but he had his own reputation to look to, and he could not have done otherwise than he did.

I never enter into disputes with my professional *confrères*, if it can at all be avoided, holding that life is not worth having if one has to fight tooth and nail for professional existence. But I felt I really could not allow this second-rate surgeon of a second-rate London hospital to take this impertinently-patronising and vulgar tone with me, without giving him back a little of what he gave.

I told him I certainly had not the pleasure of his acquaintance, but would try meekly to bear up under the loss. I also gave it as my opinion that he had no right to retain the case at all, for after having, in the first place, committed the questionable act of opening a

letter addressed to another, he would see for himself that the only help asked of the consultant was the justification of the operation. My poor patient was about to suffer mutilation in a part that girls dreaded of all things, and I held that no surgeon, not even the second in command at ——— Hospital, should undertake such a case without a second opinion. I had performed the same operation, not once, but many times, and with entire success ; and he might not believe it, but it is nevertheless true, that most of the country surgeons with whom I am acquainted think nothing of performing even graver operations than the one in question. I finished my letter by telling him not to trouble answering, as I had neither time nor inclination to go into any dispute either with him or any surgeon of his way of acting.

Next day I had a polite and friendly letter from Erichsen (whom, by the way, I had only met once, and that time opposed to him in a case of damages for railway accident), giving his decided opinion as to the immediate necessity for operation, and giving me a friendly hint as to the extent of it.

The Faxtons returned to the Hall the same evening, and the operation was fixed for the end of the week.

I showed Erichsen's letter in triumph to Dr Mary, and told her that, having a very large experience in consultations, both in town and country, I had noticed that men of repute, men of position—in short, gentlemen, always behaved well and honourably to the general practitioners, and it was the second or third rate men, men of uncertain and unassured position, who were

sometimes found ready to do the meanest thing going, provided they could secure the patient. There are some men in London I never allow my patients to go near if I can help it, for they invariably keep them.

One man, a specialist of the unification type of pathologists—that is, one who merges all disease into his own specialty, invariably “bones” my cases, and coolly advises them to take lodgings near him, so as to be under his immediate care. For the sake of the patients’ gold he ignores all the laws of professional etiquette, and, besides, sinks the consultant, and becomes for the time a general practitioner. I don’t know how London men treat each other in matters of this kind, but certainly some of them behave in rather a questionable manner to the village doctor.

Dr George, who had just come in, said, “Oh, they think nothing good can come out of Nazareth, or, in other words, all the talent in the medical world is in London.”

“Well, no doubt” I replied, “the *elite* of the profession are to be found in the large centres of civilisation ; but, as I said before, it is not the *elite* who do these unhandsome things by us ; the second and third rate men are entirely to blame.

“Well, my notion is,” said Dr Mary, “that there is far too much of this etiquette and consideration for the professional feelings of our neighbours. I hold that the good of the patient is the first point, and if a man feels that he can cure the patient, and if the latter is willing and anxious to be cured, then why, in God’s name, should he not do so ?”

“Yes,” I answered ; “the good of the patient should

always be the first consideration (and I hope with me it has always been so), but I hold that a man who acts in this unprofessional way is not considering the good of his patient, but his own purse."

"How do you make that out, doctor?"

"How? Why, it is surely to the interest of a patient about to undergo a grave operation (such as Miss Faxton's) that the family attendant, who, mark you, knows all the family weaknesses, all the patient's peculiarities, tendencies, and idiosyncrasies, should be consulted, trusted, and confided in."

"Oh," replied Dr Mary, "I think a man of average ability and experience would be able to dispense with most of that kind of information."

"He might, I have no doubt, in a large percentage of cases do so safely; but cases do occur now and again (and we cannot tell when they may happen) having such peculiar tendencies, such out-of-the-way idiosyncrasies, that it is only the family doctor who can enlighten the consultant about them.

"There are some patients who are always rushing off to town to consult this or that celebrity, very often for some trivial ailment which they have not given their family doctor an opportunity of treating. Nor do I always wonder at them for so doing. It may be the doctor has been unlucky in the cases he has been called to treat. The cases may all have been of an obstinate, or perhaps of a nervous type, and getting impatient, and listening to Lady This or Lady That who has wonderful stories of the marvellous cures performed by some London friend, away they go to town, and change of air, of medicine,

of scene, not to mention imagination itself, may each and all have combined to bring about a favourable result. What wonder, then, if they think the village doctor no good, and make a practice of rushing off to town always? I confess that we village doctors are no better than we might be, but all things considered, we are as good as circumstances will let us, and perhaps no worse than our London neighbours."

"Some men do hate consultation," said George, "and do all they can to prevent patients having it."

"I rather like consultation myself, especially when I meet a nice fellow, and one who can give you some new ideas on the case. What annoys me more than I can tell is a patient going to consult another man without telling me. I know some do this sort of thing under the idea they will give offence, so they try to get a second opinion *sub rosa*."

"I know, too," said George, "many think by going to a 'big doctor,' without saying anything at all about it to their regular attendant, they are more likely to get an honest opinion. They have the idea that we all hang together."

"A very absurd idea to have, truly," I replied. "A truly good man will always give a true and honest opinion, and if he differ in any material point with the doctor in daily attendance, he will take care not to make too much of it, but will either tell it in confidence to the doctor himself, or if it is a difference involving total change of treatment, to the patient also."

"No one could object to that, I am sure," said George; "but it is scarcely the kind of treatment you

received the other day in the case of Mrs Jones of Malsenthorpe."

"What was that?" said Dr Mary. "Tell us it. I like to hear of the shortcomings of you males. It consoles one for being a woman, you know."

"It is a very laughable case altogether, but scarcely one I like telling to a lady."

"Pray go on, doctor. I promise you, as it is strictly professional, you won't shock my delicacy."

"Well, it is soon told. I attended this Mrs Jones some years before she married her husband, the carpenter, which she did at the mature age of thirty-nine, just three years ago. She was the subject of an internal tumour, about the size of a very large orange, which, however, had remained of the same size for some years.

"About six months after her marriage this tumour began to give her pain, and, as she thought, increase in size, though this was to a great extent imaginary. She called on me one morning, and said she had been induced to go to one of our provincial hospitals to see the head doctor about her swelling, and he told her she had no tumour, and advised her to get home and make her baby linen. I asked her if she had not mistaken his meaning. 'Oh, no, Dr Gheist! He brought two young gentlemen, his pupils, I suppose, and made them listen to the beating of the baby's heart.' Mrs Jones seemed quite delighted with the idea that her reproach was to be taken away from amongst women, and was rather indignant when I again told her that a tumour it was, and nothing else. The result was, I saw no

more of her for a year and a half, when she called again, and told me the expected event had not come off; nor is it likely, for the tumour is there just as it was.

"Now, the worst feature in this case was that this same gentleman made merry at my expense for the supposed blunder, and, instead of writing me, as Mrs Jones asked him to do, he said, laughing, 'Oh! it is not necessary. Dr Gheist will find out his mistake when he attends you.'

"Mistake, indeed! Why, this same gentleman actually made the same blunder a second time, in the case of a young lady (since dead, poor thing), a patient of mine, who, six months after she was falsely declared *enciente*, was operated on by Spencer Wells for internal cancer.

"Oh, shame! shame! Not on the want of acumen, or professional knowledge, for anyone may fall into error; but on the vulgar narrow-mindedness that will sacrifice anything for the sake of gold, for the sake of exalting themselves at the expense of others. Some men must produce an effect else they are not happy; they must exalt themselves, even though, in doing so, they degrade a score of better men."

"And did you never inform this gentleman of the two gross blunders he had made?" said Dr Mary, evidently taking great delight in the story.

"No, I did not. I had not the heart to do it; and, besides, I daresay he would not have believed me if I had. I am afraid if some consultants always knew the after history of the patients they so patronisingly

dictate upon, they would have less cause to exalt themselves above their fellows."

But to return to Miss Mabel. I performed the operation on the day appointed, and am glad to say it was quite a success. I could see that the poor girl was in a dreadful state of terror, though she behaved as women generally do under such trying circumstances, with the greatest pluck and courage. Her chief dread was lest we should commence operating before she was thoroughly under the influence of the chloroform.

Dr Mary went through it all, as I expected she would do, with the greatest nerve and *sang froid*; but it struck me she gloated too much over the blood and surgical details generally, and seemed quite to forget the mutilation of the poor girl. I am afraid, too, she showed too little consideration for the feelings of Mrs Faxton, by the manner she spoke of the operation, and, altogether, she had too much of the dissecting-room demonstrator about her.

It was considered necessary that some one should remain with our patient for some hours, as there had been considerable hemorrhage, and it was feared that at any moment this might re-appear.

Dr Mary agreed to stay, but did so, I thought, with a bad grace, and I imagine my poor patient would much rather have been left to the risks of secondary hemorrhage; but, as I was urgently wanted elsewhere, I could not well stay myself.

On calling down late in the evening, Dr Mary seemed quite fagged, and impatient to get home.

She did not see the use of "sitting there all day with her arms by her side, doing nothing."

"I am glad," I replied, "that you have had nothing to do; but secondary bleeding does sometimes occur in these cases; and, besides, you must have been a comfort to Mrs Faxton, who is naturally anxious about her daughter."

"Well, doctor, I am tired of sitting here taking the place of a nurse."

"Don't say any more," I answered. "If Miss Mabel requires further special watching, I have nothing else to do, and will do it myself. I am afraid a nurse would scarcely be equal to the emergency of controlling secondary hemorrhage, should such arise, and I am afraid many cases are lost through neglect during the first twelve hours."

I told Miss Mabel I would stay over night myself, and felt amply repaid by seeing the look of delighted gratitude on her pale face.

She whispered in my ear when Dr Mary left the room—"I shall do now, since that awful creature is away. Pray don't let her come near me again. She has not the sympathies of a woman at all. She has no heart nor pity in her nature, Doctor; please don't let her come again."

It was just in this I thought Dr Mary would fail. Constituted as she is, and wanting in most of the finer instincts of woman, I feared she lacked that sustained kindness of heart, that self-sacrificing pity for suffering, which feeds and keeps alive that sexual gallantry (so to speak) so characteristic of the old-fashioned medical man.

CHAPTER XV.

“Man for the field, and woman for the hearth,
Man for the sword, and for the needle she :
Man with the head, and woman with the heart :
Man to command, and woman to obey.
All else confusion.”—TENNYSON.

“**D**R GHEIST, who, by the way, is alone responsible for the weak rubbish at the head of this chapter, asked me some time ago to jot down my ideas as to the great question of woman and her position.

“I consented, not that I think this style of book will ever be read, but it relieves my feelings to give utterance to my ideas on this all-important subject.

“The doctor thinks my views are too advanced and pronounced for the age ; but that, of course, is the view naturally taken by an interested male.

“My views are entirely based on common sense, and are, moreover, strengthened and justified (if such be needed), by all that is good in the realms of physiology and political and social economy.

“For ages, indeed since the world commenced, women have been kept in unmerited subjection.

“The lordly savage, strutting along with his bow and arrows on his shoulder, followed by his enslaved wife, drooping under her loads of maternity and household goods, is but the type of the so-called lord of creation in civilised life. The one looks upon his squaw as his slave and the mother of his children, and treats her, as all slaves are treated, with harshness and injustice.

The other—the civilised savage, I mean—keeps his wife in inglorious subjection, not by physical force, but by the absurd and cruel trammels of unjust social laws.

“Such being their position, need we wonder that women are not understood as they ought to be understood? Need we wonder that their natures are stunted and trained in lines for which they were never intended; that their mental capabilities are undeveloped; that their social position is undeclared; that they are reared and kept much as the females of the lower animals, for breeding purposes; that they are, in fact, kept in sexual subjection? Surrounded by one-sided laws and social boundaries, they have no means of exercising their mental powers, but pass through life the veriest slaves to the social males.

“A purely womanly woman I despise, for is she not one more link in the chain keeping the whole sex in bondage?

“Such being my views, need it be wondered that I hailed with delight the first steps taken for our emancipation? With this view, I eagerly availed myself of the opportunity of studying medicine, for in doing so, I felt I would help in carrying out the great principle that women are fitted for higher things than the males of this country think them; in short, that they are equal to the males physiologically, and in virtue of that equality, ought to have the same social and political rights.

“Naturally of an independent turn of mind, I have always considered it my duty, as it is my right, to choose a line of my own, and always make a point of

trampling under foot, when I can, those absurd social barriers surrounding my enslaved sex.

"Thus I proposed marriage (marriage based on a mutual advantage to each party) to that young man, Dr George; but I could see he looked upon the idea with perfect disgust. And why, pray? Simply because I do not combine in my person these sexual qualities which go down with the males. A mill-girl with a pretty face, a good bust, and other matronly qualities well pronounced, though without a brain, he might marry, but not one of my purely intellectual type. Love! the idea of it never entered into my head. No; I simply thought that we might have married and entered into partnership, and done a good business in London. No doubt he thought I was grievously disappointed; in fact, he thought I was actually smitten with his manly proportions. But no; it was purely a business transaction, and its success or failure was not, of course, of vital importance.

"Males seem to me to be excessively infatuated as to this question of women. I have seen a coarse, voluptuous-looking, weak-minded woman carry the day against half a dozen as pretty women, who wanted that style, that figure, that gush in the eye, which are all so suggestive to men's minds of the potential mother.

"I would advise all ladies—that is, if they consider getting married and having families the real object of life—by all means to cultivate all those arts and graces which improve the bodily form, which expand the chest, give colour to the cheek and fire to the eye, for really

it would seem that in this nineteenth century the body is the woman.

“No wonder we have poets like Swinburne and Browning; writers like Ouida and Rhoda Broughton, not to mention a host of less prominent authors, whose great aim in writing a book seems to be to pander to the coarser feelings of our nature, and fill it with as much lust as will pass the printer's hands. It is the tendency of the age, a sign of the times, and I am afraid it betokens the downfall of this otherwise vigorous and upright nation. Scan the history of those ancient dynasties which have fallen into the dust from the highest pinnacle of success and civilisation—the Roman Empire, the ancient Greeks, the present Turk, have they not all been characterised by the hyper-development in them of the grosser and more animal propensities?

“Though admiring to the full physique and great sexual and muscular development in man, I despise all those traits in the female character which seem to indicate her sphere as in the nursery rather than in the arena of public life. Now that the London University has taken the lead in our cause, and thrown its gates open to women on the same footing as the males, we may safely predict the time when that grosser part of women's nature will have partially given way, or become entirely obliterated by that increase of mental culture, which, though choking back (as weeds) those unclean elements, will, nevertheless, not entail any loss of the more pleasant and feminine characteristics.

“Of course, as an obscure and private individual, my personal opinions are not of much importance to society

at large ; but it has struck me that an error—an error of the gravest magnitude—has been committed by society in differentiating (I cannot think of a simpler word) too prominently the life and course of the two sexes.

“To make myself plain. Why, in the name of common sense, should there be such a difference in the dress of the male and female ? Why cannot it be left to individual tastes for a female to adopt the male attire, or, what in many cases would be most appropriate, the male adopt that of the female ? Then why do away with the good old custom (still adhered to in America, I believe) of having boys and girls at the same school ? By mixing the sexes, a stimulus is undoubtedly given to the female, so that she keeps up with her male opponent, not only in trials of intellect, but even in trials of strength, and she thus both gains in bodily strength and mental vigour. Some straitlaced individuals think that by mixing the sexes the seeds of evil are sown, so that on the side of the male there is undue precocity, and prominence of passions and feelings that ought to be kept in check ; and on the side of the female the familiarity with sexual ideas, which, under the present system, she is not supposed to know anything about. To both, at least the last idea, I would simply utter the one word, ‘*rubbish* ;’ and I do not hesitate to aver that during my whole school career such ideas were never brought either directly or indirectly before my notice. Again, why should females be debarred from following the same kind of outdoor amusements, which have been found of so much value in developing the bodily strength and vigour of the males ? Are the females of this

country to be kept in perpetual bondage, tied to a governess' apron strings? Up to a certain age, the treatment of both sexes is alike, and up to that time the one is as good as the other.

"But behold, a new element appears. A physiological epoch is reached, and thence to the grave a social barrier is raised separating the two sexes, dooming the one to a life of cold, inefficient, disfranchised inanity, and the other to a coarse, unrefined animality.

"Mix the sexes, and you will get on the side of the female a higher bodily and mental development, and on the side of the males a not less vigorous physique, but a more refined tone of mental culture.

"The one sex is complementary of the other; each gives of its characteristic wealth to the other, and both are gainers.

"The lusts of the flesh, like all other lusts, are, of course, to be kept in check, not by separating and concealing the one sex from the other, but by control, by moral and social training. Instead of this course what do we find? Keeping the sexes rigidly separate up to, or only slightly beyond, that most volcanic age of puberty. We then allow them to mingle or associate with each other in what is called society, the consequence being the hyper-development of prurient feelings, or of emotional states at all events, which are as much the result of curiosity and novelty of position as of inherent depravity.

"We all know the old story of the young man, bred up in such rigid seclusion by his eccentric father, that at twenty-one years of age he saw a female for the first

time in his life. He naturally inquired what it was. His father, ever anxious to keep him from the sex, said, 'Oh, it is a kind of swan.'

"The young man often thought of swans, and his birthday coming round, when he might choose his own gift, he at once, with masculine weakness, said he would prefer a pet swan to anything. Indeed, so great a hold had the swan taken of his hitherto fallow imagination that he told his father that a swan he must have, if he lost everything else by possessing one. The moral is evident.

"The better health a girl is in, and the more highly developed her bodily organisation, in so much more is the likelihood of her keeping pure and natural in all her feelings.

"Look at all or most of the cases of our fallen sisters. Do we not here see a want of balance between the emotional and purely physical phases of their character? Hot rooms, luxurious beds, high living, and the harem-like seclusion to which, during the tumultuous period of maidenhood, women are socially condemned, lead up to those emotional states which, in some naturally warm temperaments, are fraught with such risk and danger.

"Give girls a more liberal and less feminine education; train their bodies physically in all the out-door exercises likely to develope their muscles; clear their blood, and keep their whole secreting system in full vigour, and we shall have fewer of those miserable cases of hysteria, so-called, which are neither more nor less than misdirected nerve force, which, instead of being evolved in a healthy manner, bursts on and overwhelms their specially feminine systems.

“This nineteenth century is peculiarly antagonistic to the average female of middle-class life. Amongst savages and less civilised nations the natural instincts of our sex are seldom or never unnaturally suppressed by their environment or social condition.

“The average squaw gets her lord just as the latter gets his rifle or his horse. No barriers exist condemning the females to unworthy maidenhood, and though I should be far from extolling this state of savagery at the expense of our more enlightened age, still we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that much of the depravity and sexual imbecility of the age are due to the barriers which necessarily exist against early marriages, indeed, against marriage at any age.


“It is not only amongst the lower circles, or, as they are euphoniously called, the common people, that we find that terrible laxity of principle, that miserable emotional phase of nervous system that is gradually filling our nurseries with delicate children, and stunting the manhood of the race. This truly is not the age of bronze, when our men were physically perfect in bodily organisation, and our women perfectly pure in mental and moral nature. But it is the age of lead—an age dead and cold to all the truer interests of life; an age of old maids; an age of sexual precocity, of mental debility; an age fashioned and ruled by males, who, alive only to their own selfish interests, forget, in their subjection of women, the interests of the race.

“Lords of creation, forsooth ! Who made thee a ruler over us, pray ? You claim sovereignty over nature.

Good! you can only hold your title with women as your consorts. Why, then, keep us in degraded subjection? Why make us miserable slaves? Are we not bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh? Granting (only for the sake of argument) that we have defects in our feminine natures, why educate us in a manner calculated to exaggerate all these defects? What we ask—indeed, what we demand—as women, is our civil, political, and social position—a position from which we have been unworthily thrown. We ask not to be your toys, your playthings, not even your better halves, but we claim the right to be your comrades, your fellows in the race of life.”

CHAPTER XVI.

“Audi alteram partem.”

“N justice to myself, to my sex, and to that individual, Dr Mary Molliere, I have asked Dr Gheist to follow the above motto, and hear my side of the story.

“I often had the pleasure of perusing these sheets before passing into the printer’s hands, and was more than disgusted to find that Dr Mary had placed on record the fact that she had proposed a kind of partnership between herself and me, which she dignified by the name of marriage.

“Marriage! Why, the idea is monstrous and absurd in the extreme, and I thank my stars that my feelings were young enough, and my sense of the iniquity of

her proposal keen enough, to enable me to throw back her request with the vigour and scorn it deserved. She told me she heard I was thinking of buying a share in a West End London practice, and thought that, as she had the same intention, we might unite not only our 'means, but our lives, in the same concern.' 'Society,' she said, 'would not sanction a male and female living in the same house in the unmarried state, else she certainly would prefer retaining her freedom;' but she thought, if I were agreeable to go through the ceremony, we might make a very good thing of it indeed. She did not pretend to have any feelings of love in the matter, but made the proposal merely as a business transaction. She likewise hoped I would not think her wanting in modesty in thus proposing marriage, for she claimed an equal right with any male in creation, not only to choose her own line of life, but in thus choosing the means of attaining her object. If I could have stabbed her with a look I would have done so. A woman! Why, it is a perfect burlesque to think of her as belonging to the sex. To think of being tied to a female nondescript for life by ties only of self-interest. It is awful, in my eyes.

"When I told her a few of my more vigorous sentiments on the subject, she only smiled one of her neutral-tinted smiles, and said 'Well, well, Dr George, don't put yourself out; it is a mere matter of business, and as you don't see it to your advantage, no more need be said, and I will follow out the course I had originally chalked out for myself, and claim my professional position unaided and alone.'

"After delivering herself of the above, in her cold, harsh, precise manner, she sailed, or rather stalked, out of the room. She left me bewildered.

"Surely it could not all be a horrid dream! Is she the embodiment of some dreadful nightmare? I felt myself all over, and, in the words of old Joe the groom, asked of society at large, 'who I was, where I was, and what was I a-doing on?' The very thought of marriage with such an unsexed icicle made the cold drops of perspiration roll over my forehead.

"Could life be worth having, even though clutching the fees of a Gull or a Paget, with a mummified female of her type for ever sitting by one's side? Was my whole life, with all its generous and natural impulses, to be handicapped by an ogre clinging to it like an old man of the sea, for time, and perhaps eternity?

"I got sick at the unhallowed thought. Surely it must have been a grim joke on her part. To the interests of us both, she thought. What could she gain by such a bargain? Why, everything; for though not an Adonis, I am not bad-looking; and, besides, I am fashioned as other men are. And what was to be my share of the compact? It cannot be realised.

"She thinks she is a female of the purely intellectual type—that is, a being without warm impulses, without the instincts of her sex, or rather of a woman, for I more than ever believe she is a neuter. I heard of a young fellow the other day marrying an old lady who was old enough to have been his grandmother. I would as lie marry half a dozen grandmothers (as to age), one after the other, than link myself to a creature like the interesting

Mary, who is only the semblance of a woman. I wonder we don't rise as one man, and denounce the neuters. I wish I had the analytical power of a Huxley or an Owen; I would devote my life to the investigation of this type of the human race, this entity of creation, this incarnation of Nihilism. The Mosaic record (I think) prohibits our marrying our grandmothers. It should be revised forthwith, and a clause inserted against the outrage of marrying a neuter.

"Mightily amused I am at some of the rubbish she has written in the last chapter.

"She is very hard, for instance, on the imaginary young lady, without the brain, but with all her feelings and instincts in full swing, whom she so deftly pits against another half-dozen interesting creatures with minds and natures, like herself, I suppose. She is coarse-minded. Coarse-minded, indeed! She is simply natural. I go in for nature, I do.

"And poor Rhoda Broughton, too, gets dirt thrown on her. One of the fleshly school of writers, is she? Darling Rhoda, say I. Yes, amongst writers, 'she cometh up as a flower,' in spite of Mary.

"And the London University has thrown open its portals to the females, has it? Well, let it; all the worse for it, I should say.

"Talk of coarse-minded females indeed! Why, she rolls that word 'sexual' under her tongue (not that she has the dimmest idea of its meaning) as if she enjoyed it. A horrid, coarse-minded male would have coined a better word, especially in reference to girls at school. Sexual ideas, forsooth! Let her try sex ideas for a change, on any future occasion.

"She is great in the benefit to be hoped for by mixing the two sexes at school. She thinks the girls will refine and purify the boys, while the latter will strengthen their fair school-mates. One sex is complementary of the other, she believes. I rather think the boys would be complimentary to the girls. I may be wrong, though.

"And again, why the phrase, 'the two sexes?' In common honesty and fairness she might mention the third, namely, the neuter, or "midde-sex."

"But I leave her to her cold, unimpassioned existence. I forgive, but can never forget her.

"And if within the distant Aidenn
I shall clasp a sainted maiden'

(Poe's pardon for parody), I am sure it never will be Mary, or one of her sex."

CHAPTER XVII.

AT Dr George's request, I have inserted the last chapter, just as it stands. I cannot help thinking, however, he is rather hard on Dr Mary. I am far from subscribing to all that interesting individual brings forward, and intend "having it out" with her on one or two points. Everyone, of course, has a right to his or her opinion; but when such opinions are in direct opposition to the received opinions of society generally, they should be given, as they should be received, with caution.

The whole question of education is one of peculiar difficulty. What, in my opinion, increases this difficulty, and tends to keep up some of the effete systems, is that the physiological aspect of it has been to a great extent entirely ignored.

But what has a village doctor to do with education? Surely this is a subject on which he has no right to speak. This can only be settled by those whose whole lives are engaged in the work of education. True, oh head-master! But the shield has two sides—a silver and a golden, a mental and a brain aspect. To you I leave inviolate the silver aspect, the questionable duty of forcing your precocious pupils through the absurd and hard drudgery of warping (as Bishop Thirlwall has it) the vacancy of thought in Ciceronian phrases, and hammering nonsense into Horatian metres. I claim the golden side of the shield as peculiarly my own, for though having no pedagogic appointment, as village doctor I have a great deal to do with the most important of all training, namely, the psychological education of the nursery.

I think the fact is too often ignored, that education, true education, always begins in the nursery. It may go on under intelligent control, or slowly and unintentionally, the education running parallel with the growth of the brain.

It is in childhood when the brain (the basis of all we know of mind) is plastic, and impressionable as wax, so to speak, that tendencies are started and mental habits formed, so that in this sense the old adage is eminently true, "The child is father of the man."

The world at large (and a precious humbug the world is at times) sneers at all questions savouring of metaphysics, but this question of building up of the brain-character, of training the child in the way he should go, is of such vast importance to the happiness of society, and to the vigour and the vitality of the whole race, that I cannot but look upon it as one of the questions of the age. It is undoubtedly to the mother of a family we must look for the first and most important steps in the education of the future members of society.

A child is like the young of most of the higher animals, simply a bundle of instincts. It has, properly speaking, no will of its own, but is guided in all its actions and feelings by the wants of its system. It gratifies all its little wants by a kind of automatism, which, as its perceptive faculties increase, and its brain and mind grow hand in hand, gradually drifts into what is popularly known as habit. This habit is a wonderful thing, and underlies the whole mental and physical existence of the child, as it does in after life the nature of mature man. Habit is undoubtedly a phase of memory, and depends on the fact that an act once done is more readily done a second time, still more easily accomplished the third, and so on—the mere repetition rendering the act more easy. Another fact connected with this point, is that the brain grows to the mode in which it is habitually exercised.

No one will doubt the fact that muscular movements of great intricacy, and which can be accomplished only after a long and often very tedious education, do,

by constant repetition, become easy, and apparently mechanical—become, in short, automatic. This fact is true, not only as regards movements in motor centres, but is equally so as regards mental acts in mind centres. Each muscular or mental act is registered or recorded in the brain, and becomes an experience. Moreover, in accordance with the law of constant repetition, causing such acts to assume the form of tendencies, and to become fixed in the motor or mind centres as part of their functional and structural constitution, such acts become habitual, or even hereditary—habitual in the individual, and hereditary in the race or family. This great truth presses hard too on the mystery of our moral nature. The so-called moral sense, or the want of it, is too often merely acquired individual tendency, or transmitted family proclivity.

A trick, a habit, a moral or intellectual bias, once allowed to get fixed as a tendency in the child, becomes, so to speak, organised in its brain centres, and may have an untoward influence upon its whole future career.

The true object, then, of nursery education is to guide the brain of the child in its mental and moral growth; to correct mental and moral tendencies, to control impulses, and to foster and nourish healthy habits of thought and feeling.

The happiness of the individual, the prosperity of the family, nay, even the destiny of the nation, are, in a sense, in the hands of women, who, it need not be added, have the care of this most plastic age of childhood. The after culture of our children, though all

important, is of secondary importance, and its success or failure must depend in a great measure on the kind of brain handed over by the mother to the school-master.

My two assistants, Dr Mary and Dr George, have just come in, and are both against me in reference to my notion of nursery education. Dr Mary thinks my ideas on the subject are fanciful, and do not accord with what obtains in actual life. I can see also that she is savage at the idea of any woman being a mother at all, and thinks a woman would certainly have very little to live for if her chief or only mission were watching the mental and moral development of "her brats."

Dr George, on the other hand, thinks I leave too much to the mother, and is of opinion that any boy, however great a cub he may be, can soon be licked into proper form by a good school-master. Though a great admirer of the fair sex, he is afraid women are not up to much in the way of education, and something more is wanted for the young idea than a course of "hi diddle diddle," "Jack and the bean stalk," and other nursery tuition.

One night not long after this, when Mr Hoyle, our rector, was dining with us, this vexed question of woman's mission was, as usual, broached by Dr Mary, and a rambling and hot, if not very interesting, discussion took place.

I may remark, in parenthesis, that Mr Hoyle was a typical clergyman. I was going to say he was one of the most remarkable men in the place, but I hesitate, for he really had nothing remarkable about him. Indeed, he was remarkable in having nothing remarkable

about him. He was a good man, a sound churchman, neither high nor low, but a nice mixture, a good theologian, but not pronounced in his beliefs. He was a good citizen, but of no party; never voted at elections, and was never known to side with anything or anybody. He was neither tall nor short, but eminently about the middle height; indeed, he was a mediocre man all through. He was friendly with all, hated no one, except, perhaps, a stray dissenter or two; was very much respected, and thoroughly respectable, and he always bought and preached the best unpublished sermons to be had in the market.

For the ladies, I may add that Mr Hoyle was a bachelor, had very fair hair, a small round head like an apple, a good private fortune of his own, and a bad habit of putting his elbows on the table at dinner.

He was not, strictly speaking, a lady's man, but what Dr George calls a lady-man, whatever that may mean. He had small hands, but large feet; was devoted to lawn-tennis, and has been known to take a pinch of snuff without sneezing, and to smoke a cigar without being sick. I mention these facts, not that there is anything remarkable in them, but he thought them so; and if he had one weakness, it was the desire to be thought a gay, rollicking, man-about-town kind of clergyman.

Dr George said he was a sweet thing in parsons, but he is an irreligious dog, and has no more respect for the church than he has for the theatre, and perhaps not so much. Mr Hoyle was very intimate with Dr Mary, and the latter upheld him as one of the nicest and most intelligent males she knew. I liked him

myself, for he was easily pleased, and praised everything, from the black draught I prescribed for him to my '65 claret.

For historians, and those interested in unearthing antedeluvian records, I may mention that I have on the best authority that Hoyle's family is a very ancient one. Coming over at the Conquest (Norman, of course) with William (this must refer to the Conqueror, but my informant is not very explicit on this point), the first Hoyle settled down in the then small village of Ketterly, and very soon realised a good income by selling boot-laces. Fortune not only smiled, but grinned from ear to ear on the family, for we find it ably represented and holding its own in a long line of what a local poet called "Ketterly Canaries," a playful and purely fanciful name for shoemakers.

The present Hoyle's grandfather, clinging to the family traditions, commenced his career as a cobbler; but being a speculative as well as an ingenious fellow, he contracted for army shoes, and realised a large fortune, some said because he got the work done more cheaply than his neighbours; others, and I dare say the envious ones, because the soles of the shoes he made were not always of the best paper.*

Be this as it may, our Hoyle's father started life with a good balance at his bankers, and a large new shoe factory; and when he died, our Hoyle found himself a curate with something like one thousand a year of his

* For the benefit of my readers, I put on record the fact that it is not yet settled amongst scientific men whether paper or leather is the best material for shoes, but the Ketterly men incline to the paper.

own, and a crest, a high top, with the appropriate motto, "There's nothing like leather."

What more enviable position than a curate with a thousand a year of his own? It is only equalled by the position he holds now, for by some means he was presented to the living here, where years before his ancestral sire cured his paper soles.

Except amongst the grandees, it is not every one who knows his own father, but our rector not only knew his grandfather, but with emotion showed me the cobbler's stool used by his great grandfather, and the tears stood in his eyes when he spoke of the many endearing traits in the life of his ancient relative. I honoured him for it. But to the dinner.

As I before remarked, Dr Mary was very fond of airing her opinions on the subject of "woman's place;" and it did not much matter how a conversation might start, it was sure to lead into this, her all-engrossing subject. I was not at all astonished, therefore, to see her button-hole Mr Hoyle, and in her most argumentative tone propound the poser, "Who's responsible, who's responsible, I would like to know?" So far as I knew the special point of debate, she might as well have asked, like Tool, "who's Griffiths?" though I was morally certain it was the *mission*, woman's mission, a subject she was pleased to think she had some special interest in.

Catching my eye, Dr Mary at once transferred her poser to me, though I had been deceitfully trying to look preoccupied, and deeply interested in the gurgling remarks of my neighbour (a long gaunt man, with a pale unhealthy-looking face, and a wonderfully healthy-

looking appetite) on the comparative juiciness of meat cooked by gas, or in the ordinary way.

"Dr Gheist, I was supposing a case where a family of boys or girls are left orphans, and with no blood relations to care for their upbringing, and I wish to know who is responsible for the nursery training you think so important in their education. According to you, without this elementary start, there is little or no chance of their keeping up in the race of life."

"You quite misunderstand me, Dr Mary," I replied. "Instances do, and, of course, will arise where families are deprived of this kind of training; but my firm conviction is, that by this physiological education, so to speak, the greatest happiness of the greatest number is secured, and from the very nature of the case the mother seems the most fitted to carry it out. I don't mean to assert that no boy or girl will succeed, or lead a happy or useful life without this; but as a rule, those who have benefited by the loving tuition of a wise and good woman are more likely to make good citizens than those who have not."

"But where is the proof of such matronly influence?" said Dr Mary, with a sneer.

"There may not be any direct proof, nor indeed could there be," I answered; "but apart from the evidence furnished in history and biography generally, all true psychology points to the probable truth of my idea."

Dr George, who, by the way, seemed to vie with my gaunt friend in his devotion to the claret, began to show his usual impatience at what he calls "meta-

physical prose," here leaned across the table, and in a confidential whisper said to Dr Mary, "I quite think with you, and my advice is, don't bring up your children as if they were physiological machines; send them by all means to the schoolmaster, and have them well whipped, for I am sure they will deserve it."

"Don't trouble about my future, please," said Dr Mary, in a snappish tone; "I think I can see something better to do than what your absurd speech suggests."

"No trouble, old fellow—I mean, Doctor," replied George, "but I should be sorry you went away with the idea that I'm not with you, and I don't mind telling you that my family, which I trust will be large, will be brought up on the good old system—a system combining all the physical advantages of Do-the-boy's Hall, with the mental nutrition of a New-England Female College."

To this absurd remark Dr Mary did not deign a reply, but turning away from George with a look of contempt, said to me—

"Then you think, Dr Gheist, that woman should accept the truth of your theory, and rest content with the duties of the nursery—should, in short, consider that in bringing up their children"—

"Only if they have any, of course," interrupted George.

"I am not addressing you at present, Dr George; and when I want your enlightened views on the subject will ask them."

"Do be quiet, George," said I with a smile. "Pass the claret to Mr Hoyle, his glass is empty, and my

friend Pike here (my gaunt friend) can take some more."

"I was merely going to ask," said Dr Mary, "if you consider woman's mission is in the nursery?"

"Yes," again broke in Dr George, who seemed bent in either arresting the discussion or irritating Dr Mary, "Yes, such is my belief; in fact, you could not have put it more tersely. In short, it is the *iliad* of the controversy in a nutshell."

Mr Hoyle, whose attention seemed beginning to waver from the claret, and who, as he confessed, could see through a knotty point better after dinner than before, turned sympathetically to Dr Mary, and remarked—

"Yes, I'm afraid I think so too; but, at the same time, Dr Molliere, there is much to be said on your side of the question."

As Mr Hoyle seemed content with this maiden remark, I said—

"Most decidedly, Dr Mary, and what holier or nobler mission can a woman have than raising the moral and intellectual tone of the race?"

"But does she accomplish this by thus cramping her energies in this way?"

"I do not think," I replied, "that every mother will succeed, or will even make the attempt; but that fact does not destroy my position, that such a course is in accordance, scientific accordance, with the growth and development of character. The inference is obvious."

"Well," Dr Gheist, said Dr Mary, "you may think me wanting in penetration, or what is worse, blindly

wedded to my own ideas, but I cannot see the drift of your remarks, and wish you would make it plain to me how the brain of childhood is so easily influenced, and, if influenced, is so apt to retain in the form of organic structure the effect of that influence. Nor will that content me, for I must know how it is that that new organic structure gives the bias to like action. It seems to me you make a regular Cartesian automaton of a person, and ignore altogether the facts of mind, *per se*, of will, of the existence of a soul, of religion as a guiding influence; indeed, Doctor—and I trust you will not be offended with me for saying it—your ideas on this point are neither more nor less than gross materialism. And pray, how do you account for the children of religious parents, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, so far as wisdom is concerned, turning out badly? According to you, they should sail through life free from the dangers besetting other children.”

“Give in, Doctor, pray do give in—you have not a leg to stand upon now. According to Dr Mary’s showing, besides being badly brought up, and not minding your catechism, you are a Nihilist, and don’t believe in nothing. In fact, sir,” said George, with a mock earnestness, “I can’t see how you do believe that you don’t believe.”

George here winked confidentially to my gaunt friend Pike (whose attention, by the way, was still with the claret), begging it to be understood that he washed his hands of all such heresy, and whispering to me that he had some patients to see, left the table.

Hoping this would give a turn to this apparently

endless discussion, I was about to rally Pike on his silence, when Mr Hoyle, who evidently felt that it was now his duty as a clergyman to say something in defence of orthodoxy, said—

“But surely, Dr Gheist, you think that religious training, as conducted by our Church, is all important for the young, and more likely to yield good citizenship than a course, however elaborate, of mere secular training?”

“Mr Hoyle, I do not disparage religion in any way, but it is only one rung in the ladder. With other means it is important, if for nothing else than for the morality it teaches. Besides, at the age of my pupils religion is scarcely realised as a power. It exists to them only as a body of rules, and cannot be felt as it is in after life. Remember I am not advocating one system over another, but merely think strongly as to the way in which any system of training should be carried out. It is not so much what is put into the mind as the method of putting it. Train up the child in the manner or way he should go; it is not a part of my system to tell him where to go. There is good in all systems, religious, secular, and mixed, but with these I have nothing to do. My system, if you can dignify such an apparent domestic duty with such a name, is not, strictly speaking, so much education as the physiological preparation for all after education. A child that has simply ‘*grow’d*’ like Topsy, must through life be handicapped by impulses, feelings, and desires which no after education or religion can completely control.”

“Then, Dr Gheist,” said Mr Hoyle, warming to his

subject, and speaking in what to him was a very critical tone, "you think that all or most of the causes of vice, depravity, and even insanity, are due to the want of this domestic tuition, directly in the family, or indirectly in the ancestry?"

"I do, most decidedly, though psychologists can bring forward no proofs. But where there has been ancestral over-indulgence, can you expect to find the progeny characterised by the virtue of self-control? From bad-tempered parents, one can generally point back to temper in the grand-parents, just as you will look for it in the children."

"What a horrid idea, Dr Gheist, though I quite agree with all you say. I still think, however, that you place religion in a very secondary position, and am inclined to ask of what use is the Church at all? You surely believe in the facts of reform, of conversion, of the new life, and, not to speak irreverently, of the power of our Saviour to cleanse from all our sins?"

"I do, most assuredly, Mr Hoyle, Dr Mary notwithstanding; but I as firmly believe that religion is of no use without a due recognition of certain well-defined natural laws. Man's nature is burdened with certain evil and depraved tendencies, which science tells him can be checked in their growth, or prevented altogether, by a timely mental and physical training; and I hold it becomes part of his religion to follow the teaching of these natural laws."

"Dr Gheist," said Dr Mary, "as you may imagine, I am deeply interested in this subject, and crave more light. But it seems to me that in a subject embracing

as it does, the life history of the race, no discussion can lead to anything, unless we take one point and follow it out. I hate generalisations, especially when they are made to do duty in argument for hard precise facts. In this way we may argue for a lifetime and come no nearer the truth."

"Well, Dr Mary," I replied, "I can have no objection to such a course, though it is scarcely a subject to be fully discussed at a dinner-table. It embraces, as you have just said, not only the mental life of the individual, but the life history of families, communities, and races. What special point would you suggest by way of illustrative test? for I can see that both you and Hoyle are sceptics. I hope I have still my friend Pike with me."

Pike, whose attention was still with the wine, did not answer, but looked unutterable assent.

"By your own showing, self-control is one of the most important items in nursery tuition. Suppose you take that as your illustration. What do you say, Mr Hoyle?"

"I think the doctor could not do better," said Hoyle, beginning to eye the claret again.

"All right," said I, "though I do not like the position of general exponent. My theory is simply this: that the earlier the point in the life of a child in which we can begin education (nursery training) the better. Such training is more easily acquired, more durable, and more likely to influence, not only its after education, but its whole character. If we can train up a child with the idea of fostering and increasing its power of self-control, we gain one of the most important

steps in its after education. A mind without this power is like a ship without a rudder, and is swayed hither and thither, wherever the winds of impulse, passion, or vice, may drive it. No faculty is so important in life, no faculty so easily cultivated in the child, no faculty so difficult to gain in after years."

"Excuse me interrupting, Dr Gheist," said Dr Mary, "but the idea of teaching a mere child, or infant in fact, self-control, is absurd in the extreme."

"I daresay it does seem so to you ; but the absurdity is only apparent, not real. The child's life is purely instinctive at first, so our efforts at training must be directed to the instinctive side of its nature. And the sooner the better, and a splendid field for operation is presented during the period of lactation, or the stage of suckling. One of the first and necessary lessons for the infant is regularity (as to time and quantity) in receiving its nourishment. But how can regularity in feeding influence its mental nature ? Want of control arises from irregularity in the evolution of nerve and mind force. Irregularity in any organic process, as of digestion, must, and indeed, as a matter of daily experience does, cause irregularity in nerve force, and the latter generally ends in irregularity in mind force. Witness the irritability of the dyspeptic, the mental and moral *abandon* of the hysterical ; nor need I point to the recklessness of the drunkard, the despair of the suicide, the frenzy of the homicide, by way of further illustration. All these undoubtedly point to some irregularity in the organic processes of the brain or nervous system."

"Then you think," said Dr Mary, "that a child fed at any time and every time, just when it wants and cries for its food, is more likely to grow into an automatic creature of impulse than one fed on a system of regularity?"

"Most decidedly I do, Dr Mary.

"You might say the young of the lower animals take their food in this irregular way. They do, and they are (I do not say in consequence) purely creatures of impulse, creatures of instinct, and without any rational control over their actions. I think when we remember that every mental or physical act is followed by some kind of molecular movement in what psychologists call the mind or motor centres, and that these movements, besides being organically registered in the centres, are, by repetition, rendered more easy, and more liable to occur as mental or motor tendencies, we can see the force of being as early in the field as possible in the way of training the child.

"One movement having taken place, it is recorded in these centres, as it were, for future use. The more frequently any such movement takes place the more persistent becomes the organic structure, and as a consequence, the more liable the tendency to appear in the same form again. Thus the great difficulty in eradicating bad habits, and what are called tricks, in children. Thus the importance of keeping our nurseries pure, as regards morals, in checking impulses, outbursts of temper, greed, and all vicious habits of whatever kind or degree. I was much pleased and struck by a reason given by a patient of mine the other day for not

engaging a nurse-maid who had been highly recommended to her—‘She is most respectable, Dr Gheist, but she is too profuse and lavish in her aspirates, and has evidently never heard of our old friend Lindley Murray. I don’t want my children to grow up with bad grammar sounding in their ears all day.’ This lady was quite right.

“A child hears now and again some gross grammatical blunder by its nurse. By imitation it uses this phrase. Its mind centre records the blunder, and it is only by the pedagogic rod, and after some difficulty, that the blunder is corrected.

“The same with vice of all kinds. Familiarity with vice must degrade, because the mind centres record every evil thought and deed, and there the records are for future use. Some children are inherently wicked, and seem to grow up to devilry (if there is such a word) by instinct, as it were, and without example. In these cases the record has been there all the same, but it is ancestral, for they inherit their wicked tendencies just as they do the colour of their eyes, or the shape of their noses. It is a serious thought for parents, but mental and moral qualities are just as surely transmitted as is bodily conformation. The real object of education, then, is to cultivate the capabilities, aptitudes, virtues, and graces on the one hand, and to weed out and correct all inherited and acquired vices on the other. Education, as known in our schools and colleges, is merely an aid to this grand training of the race. So much Latin, Greek, and Mathematics cannot of themselves lead to that culture which is the characteristic of

the highest type of education. They are means, necessary means, but certainly not educational ends.

"Following us thus far on the point of self-control, I hope you see the following ideas standing prominently forward :—

"What is once done is more readily done again; whatever is done, is recorded organically in the brain; and lastly, this record becomes a tendency, habit, or, it may be, simply an automatism.

"The whole force of my theory lies in this, that a movement, a feeling, a thought, a desire, or a combination of these, as some habit, leaves its undying record in the brain, and once there, the tendency of that individual brain is to move, to feel, to think, to desire, in the same mode or manner again."

"Well, Dr Gheist," said Dr Mary, "I have followed your rather fanciful statements thus far, but still you will excuse me if I say that you have not shown, at least to my satisfaction, on what principle a child is more likely to be taught self-control by the system of nursery tuition than by the time-honoured rod of the schoolmaster. Surely bad habits can be corrected, vices eradicated, moral principles instilled, new methods of thoughts initiated in the mind of an individual, though that individual may be descended from questionable parentage, and whose childhood has been passed without nursery control or restraint."

"I do not deny such a possibility, for by doing so I would be denying the progressive educational capacity of the race; but at the same time it seems to me that by sowing early, and in virgin soil, we are more likely

to make the after education of school, and the after education of life easier, more perfect, and the good qualities of the race more invariably transmittible. I could put my finger on numerous facts showing that the *first* mental or physical process initiated in an organ, not before used in that direction, influences all other processes of the same kind that may come after. Then we know that a child learning to spell, and making a mistake in a given word, is so apt to repeat the mistake: the same with a false note in music. A horse trained to canter or to pace can with difficulty be made to trot, and even with one not specially trained, how hard is it to get him to trot if he has commenced his journey in a canter. A hemorrhage, say from the nose, is not easily arrested if not done at once: once initiated, the vessels go on bleeding. A well-known breeder of greyhounds (mentioned by Darwin, I think) had his strain spoiled by one of his young bitches having pups by a sheep-dog. All her subsequent litters took more or less after the collie conformation. I saw a child the other day catch a ball for the first time, and in delight it clapped its hands. Well, it was many weeks before it got over the habit of clapping its hands when it caught one. Dr George can tell you of a case he knows where a gentleman has the habit of plucking the hairs from one particular spot in his head. It seems when quite a child he received a wound on this particular spot, the irritation of which started the habit.

“But it is needless to multiply facts. Their explanation can, I think, be scientifically methodised, or perhaps

demonstrated, if we follow what takes place in the simple educational act which takes place in training a child to write from *traced* letters. In teaching a child to write, what we aim at is to bring about that fine adjustment of movements in the digital muscles so characteristic of this skilled automatism. This can be acquired by the constant repetition of these movements brought into play in the art, in accordance with the law that muscular actions, whether guided by the will or not, have the tendency to become fixed and automatic. Of all systems for teaching the school-boy this art, we think that is the best which gives him *from the first* an indistinct tracing of the stroke or "pot-hook" to be formed. By this method the muscles of the fingers are trained from the first to form the letters in a correct manner. These muscles always going over the same ground in a perfect manner, get, in time, educated to follow the movements rapidly and easily, and thus attain a perfect and skilled automatism. Of course, these tracings of letters are the product of a skilled penman, and the same muscular combinations which were originally brought into play by him, are slowly but surely co-ordinated and educated in the hesitating hand of the scholar. The motor centre guiding and co-ordinating these muscles grows to the mode in which it is exercised, and writing becomes as fixed an instinct as speaking or singing. As with the motor centres, so with the mind centre: regularity in organic processes leads up to rhythmical regularity in the motor centres, and this in time favours healthy action and obedience to rule in the mind. Thus a child

learning obedience to rule, the brain the more readily follows self-felt obligation, since all irregularity of action is kept in abeyance."

"I see what you mean, Dr Gheist," said Dr Mary, "but at the age you suggest this treatment should be commenced, you cannot pretend the child is conscious of obligation, or of the necessity of following rule."

"No, it is not, Dr Mary, any more than the learned dog when first taught its trick in the ring knows the object of its tuition. But it is trained, nevertheless, and what remains an automatic act in the dog becomes in the child, when reason asserts her sway, an intelligent act. No one would try to train an old dog to perform tricks, because its brain has already grown to the mode in which it is habitually exercised. But start it in its puppyhood, when its brain is impressionable, and the latter will grow to the mode in which the trainer may exercise it."

"Then, Doctor," chimed in Mr Hoyle, who had just been wakened out of a short nap by a completed sneeze on the part of my gaunt friend, Pike, "you think with John Locke and Helvetius that all men are born equal and with equal faculties, and that they are good or bad, clever or stupid, according to the education they receive?"

"Certainly not, Mr Hoyle; how could I, believing, as I do, in hereditary transmission, or, as Ribot calls it, heredity? Education can do wonders, but it seldom can turn a Shakespeare or a Milton out of a Northamptonshire hind. You know the proverb of the difficulty in making a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

"For all you have said, Dr Gheist," said Dr Mary, rising to go, "the difficulty of teaching babies a system of morality occurs to me with the same force. I believe in education for the young, an equalised scholastic training for both sexes, but I certainly do not hope for much during the suckling stage of humanity."

"Neither do I, but it is, nevertheless, the A B C of education, and is completed before that of the school-master begins. It is to woman, to the mothers of England, we must look for the double duty of bearing our children and educating our heroes and men of mark. I have prosed on this subject long enough to-night, but cannot help saying that this faculty or power of self-control is the most important element in human character. Undoubtedly, its roots are to be found deep in the age of infancy, and its growth and complete development fostered by nursery training. It is impossible to prove in a desultory way the advantages of this initial training—this new kind of baby-farming, as George calls it; but the disadvantages of a total want of it are too apparent, and meet us in every phase of society. Just follow the life-history of a family where the children have been allowed to grow up like rank weeds, without wise motherly care or nursery control. The picture in its lurid lights and shadows has a truly Rembrandt effect. Spoilt, pampered children, having their own way in everything, impulsive in their likes and dislikes, selfish in the extreme, capricious in their hates, knowing no control, they kick against discipline when it confronts them in the school-room, counting-house, or behind the counter; accustomed to gratify

every whim, appetite, and desire, they know no restraint in the paths of social life: leading a purely instinctive life they become what is aptly called brutal in nature. In after life we trace them, low down in the dregs of society, as the sot, the man out at elbows, the wife beater, or worse still, as standing out in the grim light of a Bill Sykes. We see them in a so-called higher grade as the broken merchant, the prodigal son, the fallen sister, the cheat, the forger, the man about town, the *roué*, and the debauchee who has run the gamut of every vice, and who cuts his throat at last through sheer *ennui*.

“Such may be the pronounced results of this want of self-control; but it has many lighter shades, which, though not appreciated or even recognised as such, are undoubtedly the cause of much individual and family misery.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

THIS chapter I hope will be shorter, and perhaps more palatable, than the last. Like currant jelly to mutton, or apple sauce to goose, it may happily enable the reader to swallow the metaphysics.

According to George, metaphysics is a thing of the past, and people, he thinks, are rather indifferent than otherwise now-a-days whether it is Hume or Berkeley, Des Cartés or Hamilton, Tyndall or Darwin. Not that

either Tyndall or Darwin is much in the metaphysical line, but they enter deeply into the *raison d'être* of things, and that is quite enough for some people. Anything requiring thought or speculative inquiry is to them a *terra horrida*, and not to be mentioned.

Well, George, after my guests of last evening had left (Hoyle with goloshes, and my gaunt friend, Pike, with a final and valedictory sneeze) put a note of invitation to a garden-party into my hand, which, with one for himself, had been left at the surgery by Mr Pinkerton's groom. I was rather pleased with the idea of it, for Mr Pinkerton, besides being rural dean and squire of his parish, generally gave very pleasant parties indeed. The day of the party, Friday, I remember, was one of the brightest, and George and I drove out in my phaeton in the best possible spirits. George told me on the way out that Dr Mary was also invited, and he believed the party had been got up solely for the purpose of having her interviewed by the ladies. I thought this likely enough, as many of my patients had been expressing curiosity about my female assistant, and Mrs Pinkerton herself had been expressly introduced by me two or three days before the date of the party.

"How is she coming, George?" I asked. "We might have given her a seat in the phaeton had I known in time."

"Oh, don't trouble, Doctor. Pike knew of the party and the invitation the night he dined with you, and I heard him asking, in the middle of an abortive sneeze, if she would take a seat in his waggonette."

"It seems to me, George, our gaunt friend is rather smitten with Dr Polly."

"I should think he is. Why, he is constantly asking me about her, and thinks she is a good style of woman, and would make a very desirable housekeeper."

"Perhaps if he marries her he will get her to help him in his law business," said I. "She would make a splendid Sally Brass."

Not far from the deanery I stopped at a cottage to see a poor child, and had the pleasure of seeing the Faxtons pass in their carriage. As I hoped, they turned in at the lodge gates. Miss Mabel, my old patient, was of the party, and my heart rejoiced. Somehow the day seemed always brighter when she was of the party. Not that the deanery needed much extraneous help to make it look bright and pleasant; to my eyes it looked the *beau-ideal* of an English home. I don't know to what era it belongs, but it is a long irregular-looking house of two stories, built of a greyish-white stone, and perfectly embowered in ivy, clematis, jessamine, and roses. One side where there was a door leading into the garden it was perfectly hidden by a huge Westeria of great age, the stems of which twisted and twined about the porch and all round the windows, and just at this time seemed purple with pendulous masses of flowers. The house stood on a small hillock of about ten acres, which, being almost completely surrounded by a stream, required little or no boundary wall to mark the grounds. These were beautifully kept, and, like everything else belonging to the Dean, in perfect taste. When we arrived the lawn had a large assemblage of

guests, and the first thing I noticed was Pike in the act of sneezing, and the ample proportions (back view) of Mr Marsh of Barford Rectory, who, dressed in something very like a tennis suit, was dancing like old Mr Weller, in a buoyant corklike fashion, and missing the ball twice for every time he struck it. Mr Pinkerton, always genial and hospitable, shook hands, saying in a cheery voice, "Come, Doctor, Mrs Pinkerton will be glad to see you. You will be welcome to-day. No physic, you know, to-day; all beer and skittles, I hope." I soon found Mrs Pinkerton, and congratulating her on the beautiful day she had got, and on her improved looks, for she had been rather on the sick list, I went over to where the Faxtons were standing, and soon had the pleasure of having Mabel all to myself for the next half hour.

Miss Mabel, as I should call her, had quite recovered her health, and in my eyes looked more beautiful than ever. But what drew me to her more than her mere physical beauty was a dreamy kind of tenderness of manner, which ever since her illness she had shown towards me.

"You once saved my life, you know, Doctor. A questionable blessing, by-the-way, and I shall always feel grateful." It is strange, but I do not quite like this gratitude of hers, for though it is pleasant—ah! how pleasant, to hear her speaking—yet is it not simply the gratitude of a patient to her doctor?

"Is your sister not here to-day, Miss Mabel?" I asked, looking in vain amongst the guests for the Hebe-like figure of Miss Faxton.

"Yes, she is. Did you not observe us pass you in the carriage? She cannot bear tennis and is devoted to archery, so I suppose she is down in the meadow."

"Have you seen Captain Lane," I asked, watching with a curious sensation of pain a slight blush spread over her neck and face, as she answered—

"He is not come yet, but I hear he is coming. But why do you ask?"

"Oh, I don't know, Miss Mabel; I merely asked for information," said I. "You know many questions are asked in this world without any definite intention."

Miss Mabel, for some reason or other, did not seem pleased with this answer, and with some degree of coldness in her voice, said, "You are the last person, Dr Gheist, I should blame with asking frivolous questions. But to change the subject—have you brought that dreadful creature, Dr Molliere, with you?"

"Talk of the d——," I answered, laughing. "Here she comes, leaning lovingly on the arm of my gaunt friend, Mr Pike. What a nice pair they make, Miss Mabel! How pleased the young things seem with each other."

"Don't, Doctor; you will make me laugh, and that horrid creature has her cold eye fixed on me already."

"I hear Pike is enamoured of Dr Mary, and thinks of laying his gaunt person at her feet," said I.

"Poor old Pike," said Miss Mabel, with difficulty keeping back her laughter, "I thought he was a confirmed bachelor, like yourself."

Dr Mary and Pike passed the seat where we were sitting, but merely bowing, passed on out of sight round

the corner of a holly hedge. Pike was evidently happy and in great force, for not long after they had disappeared, a tremendous sneeze burst through the holly hedge, starting Mr Marsh, who was just on the point of making a splendid hit, to that degree that his legs slipped right from under him, and he came down on his seat with a shock that shook the garden seat we were sitting on.

"That's Pike for a sovereign," said the good-natured rector, laughing, and not attempting to rise. "I would know his sneeze anywhere. He must be enjoying himself, I know. It's worth anything to a man of his temperament to be able to relieve his surcharged feelings in that way. Come, Maggie, help me up," putting out his hands to Mrs Marsh; "that is, if I dare. Something has given way, either the lawn or something else."

We were still laughing at the ludicrous scene, when Captain Lane and his friend Wells turned round the corner from the holly walk, laughing and talking in that eager way which people do when they have seen something remarkable.

"How do you do, Miss Mabel? Good morning, Doctor."

"Who is that fiendish-looking creature walking in loving converse with old Pike?" said they both at once, laughing.

"That is Dr Mary Molliere, the doctor's assistant," said Miss Mabel with a smile, and looking to me to give further information.

"Good God! Excuse me. Is it possible?" said

Lane. "Where did you pick her up, Doctor? and why are you putting old Pike on a course of her?"

"Horrid nasty to swallow. Eh, Charlie?"

"I did not pick her up, Captain," I replied. "She picked me up, and considers she is honouring the neighbourhood and society at large by her stay."

"Do you think Pike quite safe with her, Doctor?" asked Lane. "You know I would not like my family lawyer to get muddled or hurt in any way."

"Oh, he is happy," said I; "did you not hear him sneeze just now? He never does so unless he is happy and comfortable."

"Sneeze? I should think so. I'm not a nervous man as a rule, but it made my teeth chatter," said Wells. "I never met a man so well up in his nose before."

"Well, Miss Mabel," said Lane, "will you try tennis again with me to-day? The doctor here will give you leave, I have no doubt." He said this, as I thought, with a kind of sneer, but I merely said, "Do, Miss Mabel, it will do you good."

"No, thanks," said Miss Mabel; "I like watching the game better. It is too much trouble for me. But don't let me keep you; the doctor will perhaps take care of me for a little yet."

"Yes, for ever," I inwardly said to myself.

"Well," said Lane, "I will go and see my charming hostess, and come back again."

Mrs Pinkerton came back with Lane, bleating for Dr Mary. "Where is your assistant Dr Gheist. So many of my friends want to see her."

Mrs Pinkerton was one of those fussy yet kindly women, who are never happy unless giving a garden party, superintending a tea-drinking or Church festival, watching some dreadful case in the village, or even detailing in protesting whispers some new scandal. Dr Mary was a godsend to her, and she hailed with delight the idea of Lady Valentine, one of her neighbours, of having the female doctor interviewed at a garden party.

Mrs Pinkerton, though not young, was still well preserved and good-looking. She had two ruling, or, at least, prominent ideas. One, the great power and purity of the Church; the other, the great dignity of a dean's wife. As subordinate to these two ideas, she likewise had a wonderful idea of her powers of *finesse* and management, especially in matters connected with the parish. But for all that she was a pleasant and kindly disposed woman, and certainly was very kind to the poor. The dean himself was chiefly remarkable for his goodness of heart, and his thorough belief in the sufficiency of his wife for all mundane affairs. Mrs Pinkerton undoubtedly ruled the parish, not only in matters worldly, but was said to take the helm in many spiritual questions. Anything in the shape of a clergyman pleased her; and though a remarkably pleasant person to meet, she generally gave one to feel that she considered the Church (with a capital C), and the Church only, the one thing needful, not only here, but hereafter. She certainly drew together some nice people, and her parties were free from anything like cold formal restraint. I had always been kindly treated,

as the family doctor, and was oftener asked as a guest at the deanery, than to any other house in the neighbourhood.

"Come, Dr Gheist," she said, "you must come and look for Dr Molliere with me. We all want to see her. It is too bad of Pike keeping her all to himself. You know, Doctor, she is quite a new idea to us quiet country folks."

I walked round the grounds in search of the fair truant, and had almost imagined the probability of her having bolted with my sombre and gaunt friend, Pike, when I heard a sound (explosive in character) which I at once recognised as the amatory sneeze of the enslaved lawyer, issuing from an arbour at the end of one of the walks. There, sure enough, were Dr Mary and Pike, love-making in their own style. The style, I may as well say, was all on the side of Pike, for Dr Mary, I could see, was looking at him with a cold and frog-like stare, and did not by any means seem impressed by what Pike was sneezing.

My friend Pike was a tall man; indeed, it might be correctly inferred from what I have already said that he was a gaunt man. He had likewise a long chin, which did not seem to match with a short sharp nose; very good teeth, large widely-separated eyes, and that kind of complexion much affected by bakers and journeymen tailors. He was about forty-five years of age, and always wore a black satin stock, which was supposed to belong to the business. When speaking he had a chronic habit of shaking his head from side to side, like a Chinese mandarin. I may

add, to complete his history, that he was well off, and had the best family practice as a lawyer in the neighbourhood.

"Well, Mr Pike," said Mrs Pinkerton, when we found the pair, "it is really too bad taking my lady guests away into silent arbours, all by yourselves. You should not be so selfish. Don't you know loads of people are wishing to see Dr Molliere, and here you are keeping her all to yourself?"

Pike, shaking his head solemnly from side to side, adjusting his stock, and otherwise trimming his outlines, replied in a deep measured tone—"Mrs Pinkerton, I am very sorry, but when one is interested and pleased, one forgets everything but" (here he sneezed most violently, which I was grateful for, for I had seen it gathering, and was so eagerly calculating its force, as they do storms at Greenwich, that I missed the conversation) "the pleasure of the moment."

"Well, I will forgive you both this time," said our hostess, "but come into the garden" ("Maud, yes Maud," Pike whispered in a grim yet festive way to Dr Mary, "come into the garden, Maud, that's it").

What Pike meant by this allusion I don't know, but he evidently looked upon it as a love passage of great force, for he seemed happy and inclined to sneeze again.

"Well, Pike," I said, laughing, when we were left alone, "you are a sly fellow. You take things so quietly and demurely that you lead one to suppose you cared for nothing or nobody. But I see how it is. You love her; you love my fair assistant."

"Dr Gheist, I think she is a most worthy person, good style, clever—in short, a desirable companion through life. Besides, I find it lonely, Doctor, and miserable, now that my old housekeeper is dead. I am not at all well either, and want building up ; in short, want social comforts more than I did. Another thing, Doctor," said Pike, speaking in a deep confidential whisper, "I suffer terribly from cold feet, and I think—in short, I hope—a wife, besides contributing to other domestic joys, will tend to comfort me, and brighten my sombre home a little."

I congratulated him on having found his long-sought ideal, and advised him by all means to go in and win. I wondered to myself how Dr Mary would view this gaunt love-offering. Yet I pitied him, for of the two Pike was less *outré* than the other—old-fashioned certainly, but that fashion after the usual mode of humanity.

Dr Mary had quite an ovation. Lady Valentine, a tall imperious dame, doing duty in the way of title, looked long at her through her double eye-glass, and privately gave it as her opinion, "that with such a creature as medical attendant, one would not require much physic." This rather vulgar behaviour was somewhat softened by Mrs Marsh, of Barford Rectory, declaring how proud she was to make Dr Molliere's acquaintance. "It was high time there should be women doctors, for many ladies, herself amongst the number, would decidedly prefer their family being attended by a female."

Mr Marsh, who had just come from the tennis court

in a delightful state of perspiration, hearing his wife give utterance to this decided opinion, said, in his usual merry voice, "Thank you, Maggie, not on my account, please. I would much rather trust to Widow Welch's pills (shocking, David !) I mean, then, Cockle's universal pills. Eh ! that's what you believe in, Maggie ?"

"Nonsense," replied Mrs Marsh.

"At least," persisted the rector, "it was a Cockle you prescribed the other day to poor Johnston, who, it turned out, had his ribs broken. You naturally thought it liver, of course !"

"Nonsense, David. You make fun of everything," said Mrs Marsh, rather annoyed.

"Do you know, Lady Valentine," she continued, "I have found such a remedy for sciatica. You may laugh at it, but I know a poor man in our village who was quite cured by it, even when Dr Gheist (looking at me) failed. It is simply carrying a raw potato in the pocket of the same side as the pain."

"There now, Doctor !" said Marsh laughing. "Store up some potatoes for future prescription. I can testify that with wine (very good port, too), soup, and various broths, this treatment generally does good—especially the wine. I have no doubt lots of Mrs Marsh's patients would carry a dish of boiled potatoes distributed all over their pockets, if they had the latter part of the remedy. Eh, Maggie ? Eh, Doctor ? Ho, ho ! give me a Cockle and the port, and I'm your man."

"Come, Mr Marsh, have some claret-cup now," said Mrs Pinkerton, "you look like taking a sunstroke."

I was pleased to see the cool way Dr Mary received

the inquisitive yet polite attentions of the company. She did not seem to care, but looked "representative" all over. Pike followed her about with a garden chair, evidently dreading prospectively the idea of her getting cold feet. I had no further opportunity of speaking to Mabel Faxton, though I watched her with eager pleasure as she moved gracefully about amongst her friends. When she sat down, she was at once surrounded by the gentlemen, all vieing with each other to win a smile or engage her attention. The dean was one of the number, and seemed twenty years younger for the flirtation. Mabel had, I remarked, a tendency to flirt with married gentlemen, or others, like myself, who had no chance of mistaking her sweet tender sayings. With others, and those who might misinterpret her kindly manner, she was often cold and distant. Why could she not be cold and distant to me? Her very sweetness had more of bitter to me than I cared to own. But why think of her at all? I often wonder at this, but more at the folly of asking such a question. 'As well try to blot everything beautiful out of one's life, to cease dreaming of all the soft tints that make a life like mine bearable. Like the crowd, I am free to enjoy without stint all nature's bounties, her sweet sun-rises, her summer skies, her rippling brooks, her sweet scents, the blush of her roses, the bloom on her fruit, the surf on her many shores, the song of her birds, the smell of her spring—and why not the blue of her eyes, why not the tresses of her yellow hair, and why not the most favoured of her many maidens, Mabel Faxton? No! prosaic as I am, wedded to many of the harsh realities of

life, coming daily in contact with disease and misery, yes! though a village doctor, and no present intention of being anything else, I have my moments of repose, my moments of calm and heavenly delight. I do at times think of all these things, and they lead up to Mabel, and I am happy. Happy, that no one can rob me of the noble impulses her presence awakens. Rejoice, that no one can hinder me from dreaming of her slumbrous eyes, her soft rippling laughter, her tender charities to me, the poorest, the hungriest of all her admirers.

I often take myself to task for this kind of dreamy dissipation, as it sadly interferes with that calm judicial mind which I like to take to the bedsides of my patients. I often blame myself, too, for the breach of trust which my feelings imply. What right have I, a village doctor, to love one of my patients? Would Mr and Mrs Faxton care to call me in if they knew I felt as I do to their daughter? No! Certainly not. But then I console myself with the thought that her tender beauty is as free to me as the sunlight, and of course she never will know my feelings. Oh! the calm delight I experienced in seeing her twice a-day when she was recovering from her operation. I had her all to myself then, and from my heart pitied poor Lane, though I rather hate him now, who used to waylay me on the road to ask how my patient was. I could see when the issue was doubtful how his strong manhood quaked with fear. I pitied him, but far more did I pity myself, for in her return to health did I read my cruel banishment. In saving her I felt like losing her, for her ways were not as my

ways, and I loved her dearly. But that time, with all its rapturous memories, is past, and

“Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.”

When I got home from the Pinkertons, I was astonished to find Pike waiting for me in the consulting room. “Oh! Doctor,” he said, “I am here before you, you see. I wanted so much to see you on a subject very important to me—in short, of great moment to me.

I am anxious to get you to speak to Dr Molliere in my behalf. She has refused me, and her refusal has made me more than ever determined to have her. I do wish you would say something in my favour, in short, as to my position, means, etc. I think I can do better for her than going out into the world as a medical woman.”

“You have spoken to her, Pike?”

“Yes, Doctor, I did to-day, and I am afraid I have been too precipitate. I asked her not to decide at once, in short, not till she knew me better, and had time to think over it. But she gave me little or no hope. She had no desire to get married, she said; in short, she is wedded to science, and would rather not be hampered with a male. Male, yes; in short, such was the word she used, Doctor. Now, I am a male; but surely that is no disqualification—in short, the reverse. She seems quite obdurate, and thinks that her happiness lies in other channels than those called married life. Do try to say something for me. You know my position, and I am quite prepared to settle something suitable upon her.”

It was a strange sight to see this cold gaunt friend of mine in the light of a lover. I rallied him on his misery, and told him he must try again, and in the meantime I would speak to Dr Mary as he wished. I had the opportunity that very night, and advocated Pike's cause with all the eloquence I could command.

"No, Dr Gheist," the fair enslaver said, with a good deal of east wind in her voice, "you are very kind to interest yourself in my career" (career be hanged! thought I to myself), "and I am equally grateful to Mr Pike for proposing this alliance; but it cannot be. I have chosen a certain line, and being representative, so to speak, of a grand principle, I consider myself bound to live for that, and that alone."

"Then you will not give in and try to make my friend happy," said I.

"I could not, Dr Gheist. Life with a man like Pike would be unendurable: no mental satisfaction in it; and, besides, I would likely drift back into the ordinary ways of married women whom I despise."

It was needless, I saw, trying to influence such an icicle, and I determined to persuade Pike to offer his cold feet to some one with more red blood in her veins than Dr Mary had. Pike took my communication much as he would the failure of a law-suit. "Well, Doctor, I am sorry, awfully sorry, for I think she would have suited me all round, but it can't be helped—in short, I'm floored."

CHAPTER XIX.

IN the year of our Lord 1878, the British Medical Association held its annual meeting in the fair city of Bath. For many reasons, I was anxious to attend this gathering; and not being busy at the time, it was decided that Dr Mary should act for me as *locum tenens* during my absence.

In the early part of the year Dr George had exacted a promise from me that he should have his holidays at this time, as he also was anxious to visit this, the prettiest city in England. We agreed to go together, therefore, for though George was my assistant, and very much my junior, I liked him and admired him much for the brilliancy of his professional acquirements. I have always liked young people, indeed, prefer them very much to old experienced Christians, and as George was great fun, and a great enthusiast (like myself) in his profession, I looked forward to our trip with no small degree of pleasure. By-the-way, I often wonder why doctors who keep assistants don't try and have them of a type susceptible of closer relationship, than the cold formal one of principal and assistant. For myself, I always try to get a distinguished student (qualified, of course) from a good school; one whom I can make a friend of, and who can help in keeping me posted up in the new ideas of our rapidly advancing art. One of this type, from a good school, is to me like a new book, and is a source at once of pleasure and improvement.

We started together, therefore, on the seventh of August, and that same night found ourselves comfortably settled in the Grand Hotel, enjoying a hastily extemporised dinner. The train by which we arrived was crowded by doctors of all ages, sizes, and styles, and I was glad to see that a fair proportion of our fellow travellers were sitting all round us in the coffee-room enjoying themselves, as only those can who have limited holidays, and are determined to make the most of them. Some of our *confrères* had their wives and daughters with them, and I need not add that such lucky fellows soon became the envied centres of attraction.

Some time before we finished dinner a very stout gentleman, with a lady on each arm, entered, and took their seats, which had been reserved for them, at one of the dining tables, next to our own. He was very stout, indeed; I should say over twenty stones, and he had that round, jolly, red face, so suggestive of good living, and plenty of it. I could not keep my eyes off him, for there was something in his face which appealed to old memories of college life; but I did not remember one likely to grow into such proportions, and the inability to put my memory back, or to get rid of the idea that I knew him, was painful. On asking a London man, who was speaking to George, if he knew who he was, he said, laughing—"Oh, that is Dr Millner; quite a swell in town—in fact, one of the rising men of the day." "Millner," "Millner." My memory taking up its clue, at once landed me in a perfect recognition. I had known Dr Millner for some years by his wonderful writings, and in spirit looked up to him; but here was

the concrete article in the shape of an old college acquaintance. I remembered him now distinctly, but how changed ! There was the same round florid face, the same black glossy hair, the same large, bright, merry eyes, but the rest I had simply to take for granted. After we had all finished, I went up to Millner, and asked him if he remembered me at Edinburgh in 1857. He looked hard at me for a second or two, and a look of recognition was soon followed by one of his great hands seizing mine and nearly shaking my arm off.

“Well, Gheist, I’ll be hanged, but this is pleasant. I thought you were dead long ago, or perhaps married, which by some of my friends is looked upon as the worse fate of the two.” Turning to the younger lady of his party, Millner said—“Miss Clifton, allow me to introduce to you Dr Gheist, an old college chum of mine, a bachelor like myself, I should say, from his extreme thinness” (I was very stout, though nothing like Millner). “His solitary life does not suit him any more than it does me. Perhaps you will be able to do something for him ; to cure him, in fact.”

We bowed, and I willingly joined their table, leaving poor George alone with a prosy Newcastle physician, who was giving him a lecture on the power and extension of “our Association.” Miss Clifton I found an extremely pleasant person, about twenty-five years of age. To my intense astonishment, I learned she was a medical woman, a M.D., like Dr Molliere, of Zurich University. Judging from her manner and face, Miss Clifton had all the more pleasant feminine characteristics fully pronounced, and I could not help contrasting

her pleasant womanly face with that of my *locum tenens*, Dr Molliere. I confess I was interested, deeply interested, in this fair young doctor, and could not help thinking, that such a face, so radiant with loving kindness, and beaming with all that attracts our harsher sex, was being thrown away and wasted in the profession of medicine. Surely, like Dr Mary, this fair doctor was representative, though not of woman's mission. To me she typified that far grander *role*, the love of the sexes, the love that passeth knowledge; "in short," as Pike would say, she ought to be the comfort, the solace, the better half, the loving wife of some eager male. Talk of affinities; why, Miss Clifton must meet them every day of her life. And is she to ignore them, and shut up the warm sluices of her genial, loving, feminine nature, simply because through a blunder of her own or her friends, she has entered a profession, for which she is, from her very nature, unfitted?

On my expressing surprise at her choice of the medical profession, Dr Millner, laughing, said, "That is easily answered. The truth is, Dr Clifton is avaricious, and wants to make money. Of course she ignores all the softer feelings of her sex, and even now, I believe, she would rather prescribe for me than become my wife. Ha! ha! Is it not so, Miss Clifton?"

"Quite right, Dr Millner. You men all think when a lady enters the medical profession she is naturally a cold-blooded animal, and makes it part of her religion to hate the opposite sex. To be consistent, of course, I would rather prescribe for than marry anyone; and, of course, if you, I would have to put you on a course

of Banting first, so as to get rid of some of the objectionable element."

"There you go, like the rest of them," said Millner, with his deep sonorous laugh. "My stout and manly proportions are considered fair game by my friends. But I won't stand it, by Jove! I won't. I will go and marry out of the faculty. There make game of Gheist; he is stout enough for your purpose, and, besides, he is a marrying man. I intend voting against the admission of you lady doctors into our Association, I can tell you. How do you think a susceptible young man like myself can stand you ladies mixing with us, with your wheedling ways. I for one could not stand it, you know. Yes, Miss Clifton, I will vote against you, so I tell you."

"But, Dr Millner," said Miss Clifton, in a serious tone, "that is surely a very unworthy motive for refusing your support to us. It seems to me more a legal question than a sentimental one, and you have no right to exclude us."

"At present, I grant you, we have no legal right, but we are going to pass a bye-law, you know; so don't run away with the idea that you have any chance of admission."

"I hope, Dr Gheist," said Miss Clifton, turning to me, "you will not take the side against the oppressed ladies?"

"I'm afraid, Miss Clifton," said I, "the oppression is all on the other side. Ladies, as a rule, compel men to do much as they like, and the most of us pass through life your abject slaves."

“Speak for yourself, Gheist,” said Millner; “I am no slave, but a man and a brother.”

“I am afraid you gentlemen are not very complimentary to our oppressed sex. But, to my mind, there is such a thing as right as well as wrong in every question, but you women-haters make it at best a matter of personal feeling and expediency. You have not been able, as yet, to exclude us from the profession, so you do the next best thing in your opinion, exclude us from all professional association with you. Now, this seems very unfair, and—shall I say?—unmanly, for you have no real reason in doing so. Your Association was instituted at first for promoting science and fellowship among medical practitioners, and you cannot ignore the fact that women are being educated as doctors. Surely science cannot be said to be of any sex; and women doctors must, from the very nature of the case, get behind certain facts connected with diseases of women which without them must be lost to science, or only rudely guessed at. By excluding us, you quietly agree to go on guessing, and not only is this an injury to us, but to science in general.”

“All right, Miss Clifton,” said Millner, “you speak like an oracle; albeit your utterances, like all those truly oracular, are rather vague and one-sided. No doubt you ladies are sharp enough and wise enough to fish out hidden causes; but don’t you think that by admitting you to our Association meetings, many subjects of paramount interest to science, and subjects necessarily requiring discussion, must be quietly put on one side? Indeed, I do admire you ladies immensely, but we

cannot have our mouths shut. These forbidden subjects must be discussed, and your admission would (in checking free interchange of opinion) be fatal to success on the highest ground of the promotion of science."

Miss Clifton, I could see, was far from being convinced by the arguments of my stout friend. She confessed that many subjects of a painful nature required at times free discussion; but why they could not be discussed in a strictly scientific spirit in the presence of medical women was to her quite incomprehensible. Without agreeing so far with Miss Clifton, I must say this reason of Dr Millner for the exclusion of ladies seemed to me weak in the extreme. Why discuss these subjects *viva voce* at all? Surely such intricate questions as are involved in some of the subjects referred to, cannot be properly and fully discussed on the platform of a public meeting. And, besides, many men, otherwise well able to throw light on these and kindred subjects, have not the power of speaking in public. Indeed, it has always been a question with me whether points of scientific interest are at all susceptible of complete elucidation on any platform. It is different, of course, when the question is one of surgical art, where by model, or patient, a demonstration or object lesson can be given. I really do think that most other subjects, except, perhaps, those involving clinical experience, are best ventilated in the pages of our journals. On the one hand, we have a host of loose arguments served up to us by anyone and every one who can speak, quite irrespective of his

scientific right to do so ; while, on the other hand, men who write are, as a rule, those who have made their subject a special or clinical study, and their views are photographed, so to speak, for the use of all.

Dr George, who had from the first been evidently struck by Miss Clifton, came to our table and joined in the conversation. His experience of medical women had been, like my own, limited to the Molliere type, and I could see he was quite startled out of all propriety, and kept staring at Miss Clifton, when he learned from my introduction that she was also of the medical profession.

"What a charming creature Miss Clifton is, Doctor," said George to me when we were having a cigar together in front of the hotel.

"Yes," I replied. "Not much in the Molliere type, is she?"

"Molliere! I should think not. Why, one is a combination of bristles and spectacles, not to mention the neutral tints in her system, while this girl is all that a man could wish for—bright, womanly, decidedly good-looking, and besides, she is not over five-and-twenty. Is she, Doctor?"

"She does not look much more," I replied. "She certainly has a very sweet smile, and one could almost bear to be attended by her in a bad illness."

"Just what I was thinking to-night," said George, enthusiastically. "I really think I would not mind going through an attack of fever, so that I had her bending over me with those sweet longing eyes."

"Why, George, you are getting quite sentimental. Mind she does not propose to you, as Dr Mary did."

"Gad! I wish she did. I would close with the offer at once. Nor would I even refer her to my mamma. She is a charming little creature, that is what she is."

We adjourned to the smoking-room to finish our cigars, and have something before going to bed. Dr Millner was there, keeping the room in roars by the stories he told. One story after another rolled out of his capacious mouth, and each, as it came, seemed to gather pungency and raciness in its transit. We had some good music, too, in the way of variety, by an old college friend of mine, Dr Pool of Grahamstown.

Dr Pool might be styled a diamond in the rough, but one of those light-hearted genial souls whom it was impossible not to like. Anyone could see he was honest as the day, and, as he told us, he always went in for calling a spade a spade, and not a garden implement. He was a specialist, and had risen to a certain degree of eminence in his own *specialité*; but I shall not soon forget, with what caustic fun he decried those hyper-specialists of the day, who can see no disease except their own.

"Why, gentlemen," he said, "a lady I know well, when passing through London in a cab, had the misfortune to have her ribs broken through some accident (I forget at this moment how it happened). Well, at all events, she was taken to the rooms of a doctor, who shall be nameless, who, after examination, told her that, besides her injury, she was the subject of some throat affection, and advised her remaining in town under his special care. She had more sense than take his advice, however, and got home in a few days, throat and altogether, to her own medical man, who had little difficulty

in convincing her that there was nothing the matter. Poor beggar, how hard-up in honesty of purpose; how hard-up for fees he must be who could do such a thing."

The meeting of the Association lasted about a week, and very jolly it was. Each section had its attractions, and much knowledge was picked up by those willing to attend. What amused me amazingly was the rout, the mental rout, some men took during the proceedings. The men who seemed to have their profession at heart were, of course, to be found working hard at the various sections, reading, discussing, or hearing papers. But a large class, and not the least influential of the society, seemed bent only on working "our Association." Had they been geese, and we the eggs, they could not have been more anxious to sit on and hatch us into admiring and useful members of the B. M. Association. All they cared for was a place on a committee, or on the council, or to sit beside our genial president, Dr Falconer, and looked as if they, and they only, were steering the good ship "Association." These men were seldom seen at the sections; but at the dinners, the meetings of council, conferring with delegates, or rushing through the rooms, there they were, with that expression of face and fussy importance of manner indicating their complete absorption in the success of the Association. It was a splendid corporation, founded for the promotion of science and good fellowship, and if they did not seem to realise the first item very clearly, they certainly went in for the fellowship, and no mistake. Dr Pool was sore on this point, and likened these associates to a section of our Church, who, losing sight altogether of her grand aims,

viz., the bringing souls under the influence of our blessed religion, spend their time, talents, and energy, in keeping up the temporalities ; in short, making religion a secondary matter, and the temporal power of the Church the first consideration. "The truth is, Gheist," said he, "some of these men care not so much for the advancement of our art, or for the interests of science, as for the mere prosperity and power of the corporate Association."

"But you know, Pool," I replied, "some of our members must be kind enough to attend to the mechanism, so to speak, of the Association, else how can it exist, how kept in working order? These men, believing in the Association as a means of promoting our science and art, do, by thus enthusiastically attending to its mechanism, surely work in the right direction. And don't you think the Association is true to her principles and earlier traditions? or why does she so enlarge her boundaries and increase in daily influence? Look what it was ten years ago—look at the increase of membership since that time."

"All right, Gheist," said Pool ; "it is true the Association has increased marvellously for some years back, but that is due, I believe, to other causes than the strict adherence to her earlier traditions. In fact, these meetings are pleasant reunions, like monster picnics, and one meets fellows (strangers and friends) that, without these annual holidays, there would be no chance of seeing. Another thing, these annual meetings are largely patronised by some of the swells of London, who—tell it not in Gath—find it pleasant and profitable to

come down and make the acquaintance of their provincial brethren; there is always a possible fee in the future, you know. In fact, by attending these gatherings, they forestall their less wise colleagues, who trust to fame alone. Nor do I blame them, Gheist; there is such a struggle now-a-days for a place in the front rank, in the first flight, as you hunting men call it, that a man is almost justified in hawking his mental wares now and again."

"What a cynic you are, Pool," said I; for though I agreed in much he had been saying, I liked to *rile* him by contradiction. "You surely don't think that London celebrities have no better motive than the selfish one you hint at."

"Not all of them, of course. Some men have such a love for their profession that they hail with delight any opportunity of giving or getting more light on their special subjects. Others, like myself, and I daresay you too, Gheist, attend these annual meetings simply as a genial pleasant holiday, and being still enthusiastic, we take what good we can from each section. They are become, in fact, popular, social, pseudo-scientific gatherings, and with all their faults, are likely to become more popular than they now are. Then you must remember that our journal, managed as it is by our able editor, Ernest Hart, is a great power in itself, in not only moulding medical opinion, but in giving *prestige* to the membership."

"What a great expense it must be to the members of these large towns where these meetings are held, Pool."

"Yes, confounded expense, and I daresay presses hard

on some members, who have large families and limited incomes. I have often thought it was a pity we could not have these pleasant reunions without handicapping our *confrères* in this way. What is to prevent each member of the whole Association bearing his individual share of the burden, instead of leaving it all on the shoulders of these central branches? That is how it ought to be done, and we then should not have the mortification of being politely told we were not wanted, as we were last year, I think, by the Brighton chaps."


"Yes; but, Pool, you forget," I replied; "that was not a money matter, but had something to do with the choice of sectional presidents."

"Dr Gheist, don't you believe it. Had there been no question of expense, we should have had our trip to Brighton."

"Well, I don't know how the matter really stood, but I really think the expenses should be rated on the whole Association."

The meeting at length came to an end, and bidding good-bye to Pool and a host of other genial friends, I started home for the Midlands. Dr George, not having finished his holiday, went in another direction, on a visit, as he said, to some friends he had met at Bath.

CHAPTER XX.

NCE home in the dear old Midlands, I was not long in getting back into my regular groove of work. I found Dr Mary glad to see me, and as I expected, heartily tired of country practice. I had

taken the necessary precaution of asking Mr Winter, one of my medical neighbours, to assist my fair *locum tenens* in any special case in which, for any reason, her services were either unacceptable or not sufficient. Luckily no case of this kind had occurred, and Dr Mary was proportionately proud that she had been equal to the occasion. On giving me a list of the cases she had attended during my visit, she told me, with a peculiar glare in her eye, that Mr Pike had been ill, though he was now better.

"What was the matter with him?" I asked, inwardly wondering what kind of meeting they had had.

"Nothing particular," said Dr Mary, with another defiant look, "at least, nothing worth mentioning."

"I am afraid you found it rather disagreeable after what had taken place. Did you prescribe for him?"

"I did find it unpleasant at first" she answered, "but I brought stern duty to bear on the question, and settled it. I did prescribe for him, but instead of physic he is going to take me, Dr Gheist (another defiant glare), and in spite of all my protestations to the contrary, I am going to marry that male. I am going to bear the name of Pike, under certain conditions and considerations, which are, of course, of my own choosing."

"Without inquiring what these are, I beg to congratulate you, Miss Molliere, in that you have at last found that you have, like the rest of your sex, a soft place in your heart, and that it has been reached by such a worthy fellow as my friend Pike."

"Not so fast," Dr Gheist, "not so fast," said my neutral-tinted friend. "In the arrangement I have made with Mr Pike there is not an atom of sentiment, and I am not ashamed to say so. It will, strictly speaking, be a marriage of convenience. It will be convenient to me to have my income (which you know is not large) doubled, so that I can with greater freedom carry out those schemes of which I am in a sense representative."

"And Mr Pike?" I asked.

"And on Mr Pike's side, I daresay he fancies it will be convenient to have me to grace the head of his household, in short, as housekeeper. I made it plain to him, I assure you, that I had no love to give, but simply met him on equal ground, as man to man. He agreed to my conditions, and the arrangement was made."

"Purely an 'arrangement in silver and gold,'" thought I. What a heartless creature she is, to be sure. Poor Pike!

"You may think it strange, Doctor," she went on, "that I trouble you with such personal matters, but knowing, as you do, how I had so decidedly refused Mr Pike, and seeing that you are, in fact, in his confidence, I thought it due to myself—indeed, to my sex—to let you know why I had thought fit to change my plans."

As Dr Mary stood before me in all her neutral tints and war-paint, I thought I had never in my life seen a less lovable specimen of humanity. Poor Pike! I thought to myself; how long will it take before the life-blood of his soft, foolish nature is frozen to death by this female icicle?

Dr Mary had not long left the room before Pike himself was announced, looking, I imagined, rather depressed than otherwise.

"Good evening," Dr Gheist, "glad to see you back again," was his kindly salutation.

"Allow me to congratulate you, Pike," said I, trying hard to look as if I meant what I said, but inwardly feeling a deceitful blackguard; "Miss Molliere has just been telling me what a lucky dog you are."

Poor Pike looked as if he did not quite see the luck of the thing, shut his eyes to sneeze, but thinking better of it, said with stern gravity, "I ought to be a happy dog, as well as a lucky one, Doctor, but somehow I can scarcely as yet realise my happiness. It is very good of such an accomplished lady as Miss Molliere to accept an old stager like me, and I trust I may be able to make her happy, and keep her from regretting her choice. You know, Doctor, I am not young now, getting up in years, in fact, and she is, well—she is comparatively young—not much over thirty, she says."

At the thought of her many youthful charms he sneezed right out, and seemed better pleased with himself, but I could see he was in the position of a man who had made a bold plunge, and wanted to be told that the plunge was right. Poor Pike! What could I say to encourage him in the arctic expedition he had undertaken? He was a man of sterling good sense, and considered a fair lawyer, but he was not the first man I had seen making a fool of himself, when lovely woman was in the question. I think,

as a rule, the older a man is before he first falls in love, the more foolish and doting he is, and the more likely is he to do something startling to his friends and the world at large.

Though not naturally of a curious nature, I confess I was anxious to find out what the future arrangements of the happy pair were. Would Dr Mary carry her unhappy Pike (for unhappy he was bound to be) to town, and freeze him gradually, or would she settle down upon him, like a dampness, in his own old-fashioned but comfortable house in the neighbourhood? For many reasons I dreaded this. Professionally speaking, she would be contemptible as an opponent in practice; yet she would be worse, for if she had no patients of her own, she was quite the style of practitioner to be constantly overhauling one's treatment, and acting as an amateur medical assessor to the neighbourhood in general.

I hope I may be believed when I say that purely in hospitality I invited Pike to stay and have a glass of grog with me. The warm surroundings of my cheery fireside, not to mention the fragrant steam from the hot punch, soon opened, or rather thawed, the sluices of his heart, and he poured into my willing ear the story of his love. He told me how the idea had come into his head of consulting Dr Mary professionally, when I was at Bath, and of again trying to reach the hidden treasures of her heart. "Doctor," he said, "I was desperate, and when a man makes up his mind to win a woman, he is a fool if he cannot do it." He got quite excited in saying

this, looked the warrior all over, and certainly had the appearance as if he had been in the trenches for a week.

"I simply went in, Doctor," he said, "and won, not perhaps in a canter, but *won*: that is the point. She made me promise to leave the country and settle in London, so that she might watch the horizon of events. I asked her what horizon she meant, but she playfully said, 'Don't be foolish Pike (she unbends with me now, you know, Doctor); I mean, of course, the mission of which I am the apostle.' She is an apostle, isn't she, Doctor? She is representative all over, and I hope you will not think me excited when I say she is a deuced nice girl, in fact (with a tremendous sneeze), a trump. Doctor, I will not deceive you. I think I am happy—at least I ought to be. You have always been my friend, and I would just like you to promise to be god-father to the first little Pike I have.'

This was rather anticipating events with a vengeance, and I could then and there have taken heavy odds against the probability of my ever being a parent in that direction. But to please him (as I would a child in promising the moon), I truly gave the promise that I would stand god-father to the first instalment, inwardly hoping that if such an event was in the womb of the future, the Pikelet would not take after the mother.

The course of love seemed to run smooth with Pike and his chosen, for they were married about a month after this time, and are now living in London, Dr Mary still, I suppose, in her war-paint, watching the

horizon, and Pike never quite thawing, except when he takes a run down to the old neighbourhood, to see his old friends, when he sneezes all the time in joyful *abandon*.

CHAPTER XXI.

ABOUT the time I expected the return of Dr George, I received the following characteristic epistle from him, asking to be released from his assistantship, as he too was going to be married, and, *mirabile dictu*, to a medical woman, Miss Clifton to wit, the young lady whom he met three short weeks ago at Bath. I could scarcely believe it ; but there it was in black and white, and ran as follows :—

“DEAR DR GHEIST,

“You will be astonished to hear that I am going to get married, and that, as the interesting ceremony is to take place almost immediately, I want you to release me from my engagement with you. You must think me a very inconsistent mortal, when I tell you that I am going to marry a medical women. It is, I hope, not a very uncommon thing for a man to change his mind. I have changed mine. Not long since I could not imagine a woman of any delicacy of feeling, or one having her full share of womanhood, entering and practising in the medical profession. Such views were, I find, the crude notions of an ignorant fool. I confess it, I was that fool. Ignorance on any subject is, as a rule, the outcome of narrow-minded bigotry and defective experience. I freely confess to having been both a bigot, and to having defective experience on the subject of medical women. Thrice blessed chance that led me to attend the Bath meeting of the

British Medical Association! There I had my eyes opened. Living in intellectual puppy-hood, it did not take even nine days to prove to my better understanding that my old views of medical women (which, excuse me for saying it, are the views entertained by a large but weak section of the medical world) were totally fallacious. No; on this point I have been misled, perhaps by circumstances, perhaps by the narrow-minded literature on the subject. However, I will explain matters when I see you, which I hope to do to-morrow, as I intend being down by the evening train.—Yours truly,

GEORGE.

“*P.S.*—I find I have not mentioned the young lady’s name. It is Miss Clifton, to whom you yourself introduced me, in the Pump Hotel, on the night of our arrival.”

George duly arrived next evening, and very bright and happy he looked. Of course I was curious to know all about this affair of his, and in the same seat occupied by Pike, on a like occasion, and surrounded by the same genial influences, he poured out his joys with an utterance rendered thick from excitement and happiness.

“Well, George,” I said, when I could get a word in, “you have told me so far, but being a bachelor, I am, of course, anxious to know how it all came about. Did Miss Clifton take the initiative, as Dr Mary did, or did you propose in the ordinary hum-drum way?”

“Oh, hang Mary and all her tribe! Don’t, for goodness’ sake, associate the two names together. I can’t tell you how it happened, for I don’t know. It must have been love at first sight, for the moment I saw her sweet face I felt I was done for. I went to the mayor’s garden party, you know, and there I met Miss Clifton walking about with an old college friend who is in practice in Bristol. We were thrown a good deal

together, and an excursion next day, and the concert at Bristol finished the affair."

"Well, I must say, George, I am surprised, for I thought you could not bear the sight of a medical woman."

"Neither I could, till I saw Miss Clifton; but you know my experience of them was extremely limited—confined, I may say, to one specimen, and that a decidedly damaged one," said George, laughing.

"And is your fair *fiancée* going to stick to the profession, and help you in making a practice, or how are you going to do?"

"No. She is too good for that sort of thing. You know my father retires at Christmas for good, and I am going to take his place. Miss C. has decided to give up her practice at once, and then, Doctor, married we shall be, as the song goes."

"How does she like the idea of throwing up the profession? Did she not like it?"

"Like it! I should think she did. She told me that at one time nothing could have induced her to throw it up, but when your humble servant appeared on the scene, the profession lost all charm for her, and she now sees that—not the Molliere mission, but womanhood, is her sphere."

"Well, she must be a sensible young creature, at all events," said I, smiling at George's way of putting the great social law, that woman's noblest sphere is womanhood. "I hope, George, she will not regret her renunciation. I quite admire her for it, I can tell you."

"Thanks, Doctor, but you need not trouble. I can do all the admiration necessary, you know," said George, laughing.

"I suppose but for your getting acquainted, Miss Clifton would have gone on practising her profession. I confess it is a mystery to me, how a nice womanly girl, as she appears to be, could ever dream of meeting all the horrors incidental to a medical education, and a still greater mystery, how she could so far suppress her womanly nature as to practice it."

"Well," said George, "she did confess that she found great difficulty in keeping back all the softer feelings of her nature. In practice she was naturally thrown very much into the society of young medical men, and it was often with difficulty she repressed her longings to get nearer and dearer to those with whom she was thus so closely associated."

"Ah! Well, George," said I, smiling, "Miss Clifton is just another illustration of the unfitness of woman for anything but woman's work, and whatever that may be, I am afraid it is not to be found in the practice of medicine."

CHAPTER XXII.

AS Dr George had to leave me in two or three weeks, I set about looking out for another assistant.

Not seeing anything in the advertisements, I applied to Langley, the London agent, and soon had a host of

applications from all styles of men. One *sine diploma*, but a Good Templar, and thoroughly practical ; another a member of the Church, a light-weight, and good over any hunting country in the world. One objected to clubs, another to the Union, whilst all of them were clear on the salary question, and deemed their special services cheap at any money. From out this chaos I selected an Irishman, chiefly from his face, his photograph leading me to think he was the man for my work.

Dr Nolan, the gentleman in question, came a week before George left, and we both liked him immensely.

Every one, I find, has some peculiarity or weakness. Dr Nolan's chief weakness was his insane attachment to an old antedeluvian greatcoat. It was a coat *sui generis*, and could belong only to an Irishman. It had the national peculiarity of having only one button behind, the other having been removed to replace one in front. Altogether, it was a dreadful-looking garment, and when I met it at the railway station, encasing the manly proportions of my big Irish assistant, I thought I had made a blunder in trusting to an honest-looking face. Dr Nolan, however, in spite of appearances, was, I found, a thorough gentleman, both in manner and education ; and when after considerable strategical and manipulative skill he wriggled out of his gaunt threadbare shell, he looked a well-dressed, decidedly good-looking fellow of five-and-twenty.

Irishmen, I have found, are, as a rule, well up in surgery, and make fair assistants ; and Dr Nolan, of Trinity College, Dublin, was no exception, and turned

out a very superior man in every way. He was, as I have hinted, remarkably tall, with short light brown hair, large blue laughing eyes, and a still more expressive capacious mouth, all of which features he inherited, as every blessed Irishman does, from the Irish kings.

Like most Irishmen of royal lineage, he believed in the "Ould Counthry" most implicitly, and was prepared at any moment to shed his best blood in its behalf. Nothing was worth having unless decorated with the shamrock, and what pleased me above all in his *bizarre* character was his almost bigoted love for his profession, especially in its Irish developments. He held some absurd notions, however, as to the dignity of the profession, and was quite indignant at the idea of a medical man being paid in anything but gold or bank notes.

He told me he knew lots of Irish doctors practising in country districts, who were paid in this way, and that by small tradesmen, and even working people. "You have no bills to make out there, Doctor ; but after your first or second visit, or when your attendance is no longer required, you get your fee in notes or gold in your hand, just like any physician."

"And pray," I asked, "how do you get on when the patient is not able to pay in this dignified way?"

"Why, nothing at all, to be sure," he replied ; "but the rich pay for the poor there, as they do all the world over."

"Why, Nolan, I'm afraid the wealthier classes in England would scarcely consider this a very satisfactory mode of taxation. Many of our working people are better off in their position of life than the classes above

them. By our club or provident dispensary systems, every man pays his quota to the doctor, and the contribution is so small that they don't consider it a burden to do so."

"Botheration to your clubs!" replied Nolan. "I would sooner attend a man for nothing at all than demean the profession by looking after him for the paltry sum of five or six shillings a year."

"You don't understand the principle of co-operation I see, else you wouldn't turn up your nose at our medical clubs," said I. "I, like you, would not attend one man or one family for such a sum, but when one or two hundred labouring men, all healthy, remember, combine together and form a society for the purpose of paying their doctors in times of sickness, you surely would not refuse their yearly contribution of twenty or thirty guineas, as the case may be, simply because it had been collected by the individual contributions of five or six shillings? The doctor has nothing to do with the financial department of collecting the money. That is done for him by one of the members. All he has to do is to take the yearly payment, and attend to their professional wants. Some of my clubs consist of many hundred members, and their annual fee is not to be despised, I assure you."

"As to the yearly sum," said my Irish friend, laughing, "I wouldn't mind it a bit; but, honestly, I don't like the system."

"Well, Nolan," I again said, "the system has its faults, but in the country it cannot be done without; it is a necessity, and to say the least of it, it is a better

plan than the no-pay system so common in Ireland, and, indeed, in Scotland."

The first case Nolan attended was one of a rather startling character. A malignant kind of small-pox was prevailing in one of the neighbouring towns, and great was the panic and terror in one of our villages when Nolan declared his case one of this nature. The patient was a baker, and it seems he had been three days before on a visit to the town where this *black death*, as it was popularly called, was raging as an epidemic. I went out with Nolan next day to see the man, and sure enough it was a case of hemorrhagic small-pox, and though the poor fellow had been ill only four days, he was then in a state of fatal collapse, and, indeed, he died shortly after we left the house. The panic and fear excited in the village were dreadful. A carpenter could scarcely be got to go near the house to measure the body for the coffin, and when one was eventually made, no one dared to put the body into it. As is usual in cases of such virulently contagious disease, it was decided to bury the poor fellow in the middle of the night; and as it seemed, from the reports brought to the surgery, that there was likely to be some difficulty in getting him buried at all, Nolan and I promised to go out and see the ceremony properly and decently carried out. The house where the death took place was only about one mile from my own place, so it was agreed we would walk out after supper. We sat smoking before a bright cheery fire, having some hot grog to prepare us for the cold walk—for it was mid-winter—and talking over the panic that seemed to have taken the villagers,

when unluckily we both dropped asleep. I awoke with a start, to find that it was one o'clock, just an hour after the time we had promised to be at the house. We rushed off, and ran part of the way out, I feeling more than vexed with myself for failing to keep my promise. By going a little way round I knew we could take the grave-yard on our way, and, much to my comfort of mind, the place was dark and silent, the grave still open, and not a soul to be seen.

"Nice thing this, Doctor," said Nolan, all out of breath with running; "two doctors of medicine haunting the grave-yards at the dead of night. Not many years ago we would have been suspected of robbing the graves."

Nolan seemed quite to relish the strange adventure we were engaged in, and, indeed, I rather enjoyed it myself. The idea of fear from contagion did not, of course, for a moment enter our heads, and the dark grave-yard with the open grave, and the ghastly duty on which we were engaged, had a grim and ghostly fascination about them which was quite a new sensation to me.

When we reached the house we found the carpenter and two men, with a two-wheeled hand-cart, waiting at the door.

"Is all ready, Jones?" I asked the coffin-maker, "I'm afraid you thought us long."

"All ready, Doctor," said Jones, shivering, "but the body is not put in the coffin. I could not manage it myself, and I thought perhaps you gentlemen would like to have a look at it before it was screwed down."

Jones was a little man, with a dirty face, a very

nervous man, and dreadfully afraid of contagion, and I saw quite well that had we not turned up for two hours longer he would have waited patiently where he was rather than touch the body. He was smoking one of the longest, and perhaps the worst favoured-looking cigars I ever remember seeing; and he told me that his wife had made him promise to smoke all the time he was at the job, so as to keep away infection. We found the house locked up, the baker's family having wisely removed to the house of a relation immediately after the death; and I had some difficulty in getting poor Jones to unlock the door and enter the dark chamber where the putrid body, now turned blue as indigo, was lying on the bed, just as the poor fellow had died. Jones was very frightened I could see, though he kept constantly saying he was not in the least afraid for himself, but his poor wife "was so nervous she did not know what she was a-doing on." I shall not soon forget the scene of putting the corpse into the coffin. Though depressing and melancholy enough, there was a grim grotesqueness about this part of our duty which I feel quite unequal to portray.

Poor Jones, with his hair almost standing on his head with fear, kept pulling at his unsavoury weed, and talking in that excited hysterical way, which was almost too much for Nolan. His screw-driver rattled over the coffin nails, as if he were beating the devil's tattoo on the lid. With no little trouble we at length got the coffin down the narrow twisted stair, and as we got into the street, Jones' spirits again revived, and he facetiously rallied his two companions on their cowardice

in not coming in to help. "Come, Tommy ('the corpse's brother,' he whispered to me aside), don't be frightened, give us a lift on to the cart." Tommy, a short squat man, was, I noticed, quite covered with some white dust, which I at first thought was flour, but on looking more carefully I found that not only he but the other man had been well peppered with M'Dougal's disinfecting powder.

Jones apologised for their unfunereal appearance by the remark, "that as the poor chaps were so terribly frightened, the sanitary inspector had them well covered with the powder before they started."

On following the strange *cortege* down through the dark, deserted street, Nolan pointed out the house where the baker's poor wife lay. A light was dimly shining in one of the bed-room windows, and as we passed, the blind was suddenly drawn aside, and a pale terror-stricken face looked out. From the darkness of the night she could not, of course, see us, and well, perhaps, it was she couldn't; but the noise of the death-cart, and the trampling feet, added, I have no doubt, a luxurious horror to her already poignant misery. When we reached the grave-yard everything was shrouded in gloom—not a soul to be seen, and we silently buried the poor baker, Nolan and I taking our turns at the shovels when the others were tired.

On our way home, Nolan was full of our adventure, and recalled with vivid force its dismal surroundings. He could not, however, understand how the people of England were so terribly afraid of disease and death. "Why, in Ireland, Doctor," said he, "the people, instead

of being afraid, would have held a wake over the body, and very likely have finished off by having a free fight in the burying-ground."

"And by doing so, very likely spread the disease all over the neighbourhood," I answered.

"True for you, Doctor; but don't you think these sanitary boards, with their medical officers of health, and their often too officious inspectors, have a tendency to give people an exaggerated idea of the dangers of contagious disease, and by doing so lead to evils as great, if not greater, than those epidemics themselves."

"I see, Nolan," I replied, "you have been speaking to Mr Marsh, the rector, on the subject; that is his idea to a nicety."

"I did see him yesterday, and he thinks the 'nuisance men,' as he calls them, are entirely to blame for all this panic in the village. He told me that such a thing as people being afraid, either to nurse or bury their friends, was never heard of before. All this fuss was made about sanitation."

"Perhaps he is not far wrong, but sanitation is a step in the right direction, and being a new science and still in its infancy as it were, one need not wonder at the awful blunders made in carrying out its provisions."

"Are you medical officer of health for your district, Doctor?"

"No; Mr Winter is, and a very efficient one he is."

"Then are you obliged to report to him any case of infectious disease among your patients?"

"I don't know that there is any legal obligation in the matter, but Winter, being a good friend of mine, I

keep him posted up as to cases of this kind in my practice."

"Well, tastes differ," said Nolan, going off to bed; "but I for one should not like to give up general practice to be a medical officer of health."

"Neither should I, Nolan, though it is a splendid field that of preventive medicine, and engages some of the brightest intellects in the profession."

CHAPTER XXIII.

WE had scarcely got over the excitement of the small-pox case when Nolan came suddenly into my room one evening with the startling intelligence that a woman of the name of Glen had been almost murdered by a man called Green, and that our assistance was wanted at once. We hurried up to the place, and found a crowd round Green's cottage, the house itself filled with people, and on a sofa the apparently lifeless body of Betsy Glen, her face and head covered with blood, and in the inner room Green, with his throat cut, and in the hands of the police—a startling tableau certainly, yet easily understood, and having no air of mystery in its surroundings.

The old grim story of unholy love, jealousy, and brutal revenge. Green, who was a peripatetic gardener, and had been pruning my fruit-trees not half-an-hour before the deed, was a stolid, fair-faced, simple-looking man, of forty-five years of age, who, feeling his fireside

cold and cheerless after the death of his late wife, had taken this Betsy Glen to comfort him, without the formality of consulting the parson. Betsy, rather of a festive disposition, did not, it seems, come up to his ideal of fidelity, and frequent quarrels and recriminations followed, and she had made up her mind to leave him, and seek another lord of more easy and accommodating morals. This preyed on the poor fellow's mind to such an extent, that on going home he took an axe and tried to brain his fickle love.

The surgical details of the case were horrid and loathsome enough for the columns of the *Police News*, or any paper given to such light and sensational literature; but waiving, though with regret, all such interesting items, I shall merely add that Betsy, very much to the astonishment of all concerned, herself included, finally recovered, and poor stolid, flabby-faced, simple-minded Green had ten years penal servitude for the attempt at murder.

I mention the incident, not in the way of literary effect, or dramatic or sensational *posing*, but simply because of the intense interest (both social and philosophical) surrounding such phases of mind which can lead up to such terrible results.

I knew Green well, and indeed employed him occasionally, as a skilled gardener, amongst my fruit trees, and a more simple-hearted, good-natured, honest fellow I never knew. But into this simple mind of his the idea of murder arose just like a foul rank weed in one of his own flower-beds, and changed his whole nature. How or when this all-absorbing, tyrannising thought

took possession of him it is hard to say ; indeed, I question if he knew himself, for he gave no outward sign to those around him of the imperious impulse. Once or twice during the afternoon one of my servants saw him standing in a dreamy, distracted kind of reverie, with that far-away look so characteristic of the human face when under the dominion of an all-absorbing idea. But when spoken to, which I did myself once or twice during that bright sunny day, no one could have told that his poor soul was in tumult and storm, and darkened with the clouds of jealousy and murder itself. In the border-land dividing yearning protective love, and brutal lethal savagery, loathsome vice and spotless purity, eccentricity and hard common sense—sanity and insanity, in short, wander many whose dreary faces are familiar to us in everything but the alien thoughts that are burning in their souls. Read over some of the autobiographies of the insane, and think how long they have mixed in society as kind husbands, loving brothers, and dear friends, carrying in their troubled bosoms all the time the horrid ideas of blood and murder. It is terrible to think of it, but a man with latent madness in his soul, a man with an almost uncontrollable thirst for blood, may go in and out amongst us for years, his insane impulses only dammed up and kept under by a naturally strong will, or deep sense of natural affection, or, may be, religion. But at last comes a time, when from bodily weakness, sudden bankruptcy in means, or love (as in poor Green's case), the barrier gives way, and the hitherto honoured name is stained with the indelible mark of crime.

The most wonderful thing is that this peculiar phase of mental disease so often depends on causes of a purely bodily nature, and is as much amenable to treatment as inflammation or any other purely physical disease. Of course, I don't deny that many cases of latent and pronounced insanity are obscure, mysterious, and apparently unaccountable on pathological grounds, and to our sorrow incurable. But what I have noticed in my practice as a surgeon is this: that the beginning of mental aberration, like "the letting out of waters," once initiated, once started, and not recognised, and not checked, soon swamps the whole mental and moral nature, and ends in one or other of the goals of insanity—suicide, homicide, mania, or mumbling imbecility. As a case in point, I recall the face of a florid, healthy, good-natured looking woman who came to my surgery the other day, her only complaint being, as she told me, sobbing as if her heart would break, that she had an almost uncontrollable impulse and desire to rush upon her children and murder them. The cause of this horrid impulse was happily apparent enough in her then physical condition, and I am proud to say the treatment based on this idea of her case soon made her a sane and happy woman.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE summer of 1878 was remarkable, especially in the Midlands, for the number of sudden storms of thunder and lightning. Whether the large beds of iron-stone, so common in our beautiful uplands, have anything to do with the force and direction of these electrical disturbances I am not prepared to say, but certain it is, the accidents from lightning to buildings, cattle in the fields, and even man, are of frequent, indeed, almost annual occurrence. During one of these terrific storms the graceful spires of two of our village churches were struck, and so damaged as to require the services of a "Steeple-Jack" from the county town.

A Steeple-Jack, it may be remarked, is a man who, from peculiarity of mental and bodily organisation, has the courage and head to ascend the spire and repair the damage, which but for men of this physique would remain unattended to, being beyond the reach and skill of our ordinary workmen. They ascend the spire from the outside by a series of short, light ladders, one ladder being tied to the one below, as they gradually ascend the giddy height. The topmost ladder of the lot is firmly secured by a rope wound round the top of the spire, so that, practically speaking, a fairly safe path from the ground to the weather-cock is secured. Of course the great danger in the undertaking consists in placing the ladders, and removing them when the work is completed.

It is now six months since the spire of Mr Marsh's church was damaged by lightning, and it was decided that after the repairs to the stone work were completed, a lightning conductor should be fixed for the future safety of the building. The ladders have been fixed in the way described, now over four months, but the lightning conductor is not yet fixed, for the simple reason that the Steeple-Jack has "lost his head," and is frightened to ascend. There the ladders hang, and there they are likely to remain, for no one seems willing to take Bland's place. Poor Bland is now a patient of mine ; for though he confesses that he is afraid to finish his work, he still hangs about the village, fascinated, as he says, by the horrible ladders. Bland is a man about the middle height, of a nervo-phlegmatic temperament, short black curly hair, and grey eyes, and a mouth and chin indicating no small courage and determination.

He told me he had been at sea for some years before he took to the dangerous trade of repairing spires, and on asking his reasons for taking to such a risky life, he answered, "Oh, I don't know, Doctor ; but this kind of thing has always had a dangerous fascination for me. Perhaps the pay, perhaps the pride of doing what others were frightened at, and dared not do, influenced me ; but would to God I never had had anything to do with the business !"

As the subject was evidently a painful one to him, I did not then question him further. His landlady, however, called me back into her kitchen as I was leaving, to say that she was quite concerned about her lodger. He scarcely took any food, was very

depressed in spirits, and kept pacing the bed-room floor the whole night. She was sure there was something on his mind, and she was afraid, she didn't know why, to have him in the house. Undoubtedly something was on his mind, namely, the ladders on the spire. From his bed-room window he could see the spire with its streak of steps up one side, and I was more than ever impressed with the idea that his fear of ascending was beginning to unsettle his reason, by seeing him one gusty moonlight morning about two o'clock standing dressed at his window, and staring at the spire as if it were an apparition.

I could not, however, get him to unburden his mind on the subject, his only answer to any question on the subject being the wail, "Would to God I had had nothing to do with the job!" Nolan, however, was more successful in overcoming his morbid reticence, and he informed him with a shudder that the reason he had lost his nerve was that his companion who always helped him in these jobs had fallen from a ladder about a month before, and was killed on the spot. "I feel as if I dare not attempt the ascent again, and yet I must. The ladders cannot hang up on the spire always; they must be removed, and I am the only one to do it."

Nolan advised him to advertise for some one to help him, but he would not hear of such a thing. "No, no, Doctor, I have got to take them down, and do it I must; and yet, Oh God! what a death. In my troubled dreams I ascend these hateful ladders, but never get up beyond the middle of the spire, my head seems then to spin round, and I fall! Oh God! it is horrible. My land-

lady often comes to my bed-room door at night, terrified by the wild shrieks I utter in my sleep. This life, Doctor, is worse than any death can be, so I have made up my mind to take these cursed ladders down within the week, if I should be smashed to atoms in doing so."

On hearing this account, I went out to try and persuade the poor fellow to abandon the attempt, as from his state of mind and body he was quite unfit to undertake a job requiring not only great coolness and nerve, but perfect bodily health. But all my arguments were useless, as he said he had quite made up his mind, and indeed his whole future peace of mind depended on his finishing the job which he had begun.

I was distressed beyond measure, not well knowing what to do in the matter. Clearly he was, in the eyes of the law, at least, sane enough to regulate his own conduct. And yet he was far from being in a healthy state of mind, for he was either in one of two states—either the victim of one all-absorbing idea, the idea that he would fall, or (and I rather inclined to this opinion) he contemplated suicide.

Though not at all a nervous man myself, I confess to being glad that he had not fixed any special time for the ascent. I could not get the poor young fellow out of my thoughts, and constantly found myself imagining him just at the middle of the spire, at that point where he thought he would fall.

Two days after this, on the Wednesday, Nolan walked into my surgery pale as death, with the horrible tidings, "Poor Bland went up the ladder to-day, and oh!

Doctor, I saw him fall! killed on the spot—past all recognition!”

I confess to being dreadfully shocked, the more so, perhaps, as I had anticipated and dreaded the probability of the sad event.

Nolan told me he was riding through the village, and seeing a great crowd round the church gate, he suddenly remembered Bland's determination to ascend the spire. He looked up, and there, sure enough, was Bland, his coat and hat off, slowly going up the ladders. From the great height of the spire he looked the size of a boy of five or six years old, and though it made Nolan almost sick to look at him, yet his eyes were riveted to the spot by a kind of fascination.

When Bland came to the middle of the spire he seemed to clutch the ladder with a nervous, unsteady grasp, looked round with a despairing expression of face, then swung bodily round and fell with a crash on the top of a grave-stone, killed, dead on the spot, and smashed, as to his head and face, past all recognition.

Some days after poor Bland's death, his landlady, Mrs Turner, brought me the following MS. which she found in one of the drawers in his bedroom. I give it in full, as it clearly shows what state of mind he was in before he made the fatal ascent :—

“God! Another dreary night has passed, and the bright morning sunlight streams in at the window only to mock my misery. Through that window I can see that dreadful spire, and these still more hateful ladders. When I awake in the morning, or rather in the night, for I do not sleep many minutes at a time,

the dreadful thought that I must ascend the spire oppresses me like some horrible nightmare. These vivid dreams have marked the very spot in the ninth ladder where I must fall; it is always the same, the same oppressive dream, with the same ending—the horrible fall, the shriek of agony, the dreadful awaking to the fact that it is not all a dream, but a cursed, fatal reality. I must go up the ladder, and I know I shall, and indeed must, fall. What brain could ignore these ominous warnings? what nerve carry a man through such a trial, with his soul weighed down by leaden terror? I cannot, and will not, live with this weight on my soul; my brain will burst. I must and will end this state of awful suspense. When? To-morrow? Yes, to-morrow. Yes, to-morrow I will go up the ladder, though it leads me to the gates of death.”

This wild raving, written in an educated hand, plainly showed that the poor fellow's reason had quite given way. As is so often the case where the mind is getting unhinged, his horrid dreams were not recognised as dreams, the result of an over-heated fancy, but were projected into his conscious moments as fixed and stern realities. Though not a lunatic according to formal and legal tests, he was still, like poor Green, wandering horror-stricken in that border-land of insanity, without hope, without help, the poor victim of a dominant and tyrannous idea.

CHAPTER XXV.

MR LIONEL TOLLEMACHE—in the *Fortnightly Review*, I think—tells the story of a church dignitary being out in a small boat with two friends, when they were suddenly caught in a squall, and by some accident one of the three was washed overboard. He rose to the surface, and succeeded in clutching the side of the boat, but this cleric, fearing they would be swamped by the weight of his drowning friend, “had the great presence of mind,” as he said, for he told the horrible story himself, “to rap him over the knuckles with his umbrella, so that he lost hold and sank.”

This story can scarcely be believed, and especially of a clergyman, for as a class are they not generally looked upon as prominent examples of all the Christian virtues, and especially that of self-abnegation? If it be true, no better example of abject selfishness could well be imagined. And yet, strange as it may sound in Christian ears, this selfishness is a phase of character more prominently pronounced and more openly expressed than almost any other trait in the human mind.

Man is undoubtedly an eminently selfish animal, perhaps the most selfish of all animals. It is bred in him from his cradle, taken in, as it were, with his mother's milk, and in the adult concrete egotist, this amiable instinct is only kept from bursting into full development by the restraining codes of social or even individual interest. A pessimist's view of human nature,

truly ; but any medical man will bear me out in saying that when these restraining barriers are broken down by confirmed invalidism, or even by acute illness, the selfish man stands out in all his native ugliness. The sick man has no altruistic feelings left ; no social ties may be strong enough to bind him. Domestic feelings become swallowed up in his symptoms, and his individual interest degenerates down to the primary law of self-preservation—self-preservation at all costs, at any price, even though that may mean the ruin of his family, the 'honour' of his country, or even the contingent salvation of his soul.

There are, of course, instances on record of noble heroic self-abnegation, but I am afraid these are the exceptions, and are chiefly seen amongst women, and of the sick man, or male, as Dr Molliere has it, we may use the stock phrase, and say the exception but proves the rule.

Woman, even as an invalid, from her very feminine constitution, is unselfish. She has not, nor claims (much the same thing), any individuality of her own, but merges all her life and hope of happiness in the "lord of creation."

In her child-bearing pangs, she claims only the noble privilege of saving the race so much suffering. In times of wide-spread epidemic sickness, she is not, as a rule, the patient, but the nurse. Man lies and groans in his misery, woman bears patiently and in silence ; the first declaring his ailments to the world, the last equally suffering, yet disclaiming all right to be treated as an invalid.

It is amongst the lower classes, the crude, raw material, so to speak, of humanity, that these elementary phases of character are sometimes so forcibly and painfully illustrated. I don't mean that many of the lower stratum of society could be found capable of the cold-blooded action attributed to our nautical friend, the clergyman; but it is a fact that the restraining codes of conduct (the *lex non scripta*) regulating their joys and their sorrows, their loves and their hates, their eating, their drinking, their work, and their merry-making—in short, their everyday life, have not the same power of regulative control as these same social rules have in the classes above them.

I was led into these unkindly thoughts of my sex by a case I visited in one of the cottages to-day. A strong ploughman, of herculean frame, and the digestive powers of an ostrich, "threw himself on his sick club" for a boil on that part of the human form divine, which prevented him sitting down with any degree of comfort. This man had a poor old father, who had been an invalid for years; not being in a benefit society, he was on parish allowance, which I need not remark does not mean chops and tomato sauce.

I called in to-day, and found young Brown, the invalid *pro tem.*, devouring, with his capacious mouth, a huge plateful of boiled beef and greens. He sat in the warm corner of the kitchen, the table all to himself, and certainly he had the appearance of one who was enjoying himself immensely. His poor old father sat in the opposite corner, eating a crust of dry bread, and looking with longing eyes and moist nether lip at the smoking

viands on his son's plate, but this selfish monster of a son did not offer either bite or sup. I did not consider it any impertinence on my part to ask why the old gentleman was not having some of the more substantial food.

Mrs Brown, with true motherly affection, explained matters by saying that her son boarded himself, and what he was having was his own, and as his work was very hard, "poor fellow," he needed all the meat he could get. It was a curious and painful sight to see such a piece of deliberate selfishness enacted in the concrete before my eyes, and on my way home I could not help speculating on the reward in store for young Brown should he bring up his own children on the same selfish principles.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BEFORE Nolan started on his country round this morning, he asked me where a Mr Williams lived, and what kind of fellow he was. It seems Williams had been at the surgery yesterday, and impressed Nolan immensely by his strange manner. This man is certainly a curious specimen of humanity. Not that there is anything *outré* or *bizarre* in his appearance, but his manner and history are something worth remembering.

He is a decayed gentleman-farmer—not truly as to his bodily vigour, for though nearly seventy years of age, he is still hale and “fresh as paint,” but only as to his means. Possessed at one time of a considerable fortune, he had allowed it to slip gradually through his fingers, without having anything to show for it, and without having the least idea how it had disappeared. Thus, from comparative affluence, he fell by slow but sure gradations, till he now lives in a kind of hand-to-mouth way, almost entirely on the interest of a small sum, settled securely on his present wife, and the produce of his garden.

As to appearance, his face is of the most pronounced French type, short black hair, small twinkling sly eyes, a mouth worth anything in its play of expression, which, however, is almost eclipsed by a nose quite ridiculous in size, and hooked to an absurd degree. Indeed, this nasal organ of his has always been a *point d'appui* with his enemies, for it has been pulled more than once, and has earned him the sobriquet of “Nosey.” In manners he is most polite and respectful, but I don’t exaggerate when I say he is the most confirmed hypocrite in the whole of the Midland district. This hypocrisy Williams at times takes very little pains to conceal, and when in company he is generally putting out his tongue and winking behind backs at one or other of the audience. When I commenced practice in the Midlands, this strange mixture of humanity was well off, and rather a power in the district, and as he had much sickness and death amongst his wives—for he has had a few—I had every opportunity of knowing

him thoroughly. Since then he has sadly fallen from his high estate, however; not it is said because he has spent all his means, but because his third and last wife has proved too much for him. There is certainly another reason for his downfall, which I shall notice presently; but I must, before doing so, coincide with the general opinion that his third and last wife is decidedly one too many for him.

Yes; the third Mrs Williams is decidedly too much for him. She rules him with a rod of iron, and even sends him to bed like a naughty child. On visiting his house one day to see his sick child, I found Williams in bed too, in the middle of the day. On asking what was the matter, his sweet wife informed me she sent him to bed to keep the baby quiet, as she was busy, and had not time to attend to it herself.

I have thus far been particular in noticing the salient points in the character and domestic life of Mr Williams, as his was, perhaps, the best example I ever met with of that mysterious mental state, known as *dual* life—a state, be it understood, where the patient lives, as it were, two separate lives, each with its separate feelings and memories, the feelings and actions of the one life or state not being remembered or recognised as belonging to the same person in the other.

Williams was by habit a temperate man, but at times he was driven, by his too harsh connubial rule, to indulge; and generally not many days after this secret dram-drinking commenced, he fell into one of these mysterious states of dual existence. Though able to move about the house, and not complaining of any

special illness, he had, when in his abnormal life, a peculiar *distrain* appearance—his eyes lost their usual sly twinkle, his mouth its characteristic mobility of expression, and even his nose ceased to be the nose of yore.

He did not seem to recognise his wife, and addressed her as "Madam," and I had to be re-introduced every time I went to see him. He seemed to get less hypocritical in his manner, and when far gone has even been known to pay a bill when presented to him, a thing he was never known to do when in his ordinary work-a-day existence. He spoke to his wife of herself, as if she were dead, and as he generally chuckled over this tender memory, his wife was indignant, calling him drunk, and a shamming humbug.

A shamming humbug, however, he was not, especially in the fact of his dual life, as is almost proved by the fact that on two different occasions, when in this state, he attempted suicide, and that under very peculiar and exceptional circumstances. On each occasion the attempt occurred when he commenced his drinking, after a long period of total abstinence. One day he was cleaning out his son's beer cellar, and was induced, rather against his better reason, to drink a pint of strong ale.

His son went upstairs for a few minutes, and when he returned was shocked to find his father hanging to one of the beams, almost dead. He was cut down at once, and recovered, but it was found he had gone into one of his abnormal states of existence, not knowing his son, nor the place, nor anything connected with his

surroundings. He remained in this dual state for a week, and was quite surprised when told what had happened in the interval. I should add that after coming out of these states he seemed perfectly and absolutely well, not at all depressed in spirits, and he looked back with horror on his attempt on his own life, which it was thought wise to tell him of, so that in future he might avoid taking stimulants, which seemed to be the apparent and immediate cause.

On the second occasion he was going to meet a train at some distance from home, when unluckily he missed it, and it being a very wet and stormy day, he sought shelter, with some others, in a public house near the station. He only had some hot gin and water, but it was quite enough, for he went straight out of the inn and lay down on the metals before the express train, which he saw coming in the distance. He was seen, however, by some platelayers, and was rescued as if by a miracle. As usual, he drifted at once into his dual state, and remained "not himself" for nearly a fortnight. When in an attack of this kind, he often hid things away, which were not discovered till he produced them himself, when in a second attack. The feelings he experienced, the things he did, the persons he saw, in one attack, were all remembered, and formed part of the experience of another attack, though when in his normal state all that page was a blank in his memory. Altogether, it was a mysterious case, and seemed to furnish an illustration of the truth of Sir H. Holland's theory of a dual or double brain.

Hoffmann's weird conception of the "*Doppelt-gänger*"

has always appeared to me to be one of far-reaching significance.

It is hard to realise this idea as developed in the writings of Mrs Crow and others; but has not every one a kind of double self, not perhaps practically, or rather pathologically, recognised as such, but nevertheless there—a double that follows or accompanies us through life, watching for good or evil, according to the state of our bodily or mental health, the issues which determine our fates ?

The close analogy existing between this mysterious double life and somnambulism, dreaming, and even insanity itself, is very apparent. The somnambulist lives for the time a double existence, and does things during his sleep of which he is physically and morally incapable in his waking or normal state. The dreamer again illustrates the same thing, though not to the same degree. His feelings, desires, and tendencies are often, however, as in the case of poor Bland, projected into his conscious moments, and he may commit acts, when in this transition state, which bring him under the lunacy or criminal laws. Thus I have so often noticed that the suicide awakes from a troubled sleep, and before he thoroughly recognises the horror of his intentions, goes and commits the deed. How often the poor suicide, the moment the deed is done, would give worlds to have it undone ! He is already awake to the inevitable consequences. Insanity also has again and again been compared to the state of dreaming, a kind of concrete dream, a double life, in short. Here, however, reason, or rather judgment (for the insane often reason well),

becoming, as it were, paralysed, the absurd fantasies, the suicidal or homicidal tendencies, remain uncorrected, and the patient becomes, for a longer or shorter period, a person of unsound mind.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IT is long since I mentioned the Faxtons, and, indeed, in my hard, busy life, they had almost passed out of memory. The old hall had been let for a period of three years, and the family travelling on the Continent, amongst the various health resorts, on the plea, it was said, of Mr Faxton and Miss Mabel's state of health.

But now they are coming back, and the old grey hall will regain, to me at least, some of its old sunshine. So I thought, on first hearing the public report of their return. But just before the time of their expected return, I received a long melancholy letter from Mrs Faxton, with the startling intelligence that Miss Mabel's lungs had for some time shown symptoms of disease, and that, in short, she was coming home to die. It seems that in passing through Rome she contracted the fever so prevalent at times in that ancient city. Of this she seemed to get rapidly well, and was indeed considered convalescent, when, getting cold, she had a sudden and alarming attack of congestion of the lungs. For this she was bled again, and yet again, by the Italian physician who attended, and that in spite of the extreme debility existing when the inflammatory attack came on.

Poor Mrs Faxton considers, and I think rightly, from all accounts, that the chronic disease in her lung is simply the result of the barbarous medical treatment of the Italian doctors.

I found, on analysing my feelings, that it would be no light matter to see and attend Mabel Faxton on her death-bed. I was still but the country doctor, and though I had almost lived on the thought of her love, honour, pride, and professional etiquette, and—shall I add?—a too grave doubt as to her feelings had hitherto kept me from anything but silent, unexpressed, yet all-absorbing love. How could I witness this beautiful girl slowly passing away to that cold relentless grave, to that grave which must swallow hope and everything that was worth living for? However, it must be done. I must consider my patient, and not myself; my reputation, and not my feelings.

They arrived home at last, and I have just been to the hall and have seen what remains of the once beautiful Mabel Faxton.

“Oh, Doctor Gheist,” she said, when with a load at my breast I went into her room, “you can’t think how glad I am to get back, even though it is to die, amongst old faces. You used to be so kind to me, Doctor, in the bright days, that I am glad to come back to you when my whole life seems in shadow.” Poor girl, how I could have gathered her, even though death was looking through her large soft eyes! There was a look about these eyes as if she loved me, when she clasped my hand in both of hers, and cried, “Doctor Gheist, you have always been my friend, and I used to joke you

about my being your pet patient, so I implore you to tell me the exact truth. Shall I live a week yet?" Poor girl! her hands were hot and feverish, and large drops of perspiration stood on her forehead, and instead of telling her the truth, that she was dying very fast, ah! how fast, I was just on the point of telling all, and claiming the right to soothe and comfort her last moments, for I felt I alone could do that; but I restrained myself, and became the anxious (and nothing more) medical attendant. At night I was roused from my first sleep by a violent ringing at the night-bell. I instinctively knew it was for Miss Mabel, and that it was the last message.

It was old Mr Faxton himself, who, in his usually mysterious manner, whispered, "Doctor, she's dying; come." Long ere this I had become desperate, and even, in a sense, longed for this last message. Who, when caught in the fatal rapids, does not pray for the final plunge? And, besides, the sufferings of the poor girl were such that death was anxiously looked for by her as the only relief. I rode hastily down to the hall with Mr Faxton, but death was before me. Poor Mabel Faxton, my first and only love, had burst a blood-vessel and died almost instantly from the effects of the hemorrhage. And beautiful she seemed in her death, her long light brown hair falling over the pillows on to the floor. I took up a thick coil or tress, and all the spirit of the thief came over me. Could I but secure this tress, I felt her death might be borne; but better thoughts came, as they always do come to the deeply distressed, and I left the room.

I attended the funeral, as the family doctor, and when I saw her remains borne from my sight, and placed in the cold family vault, I felt my cup of nameless misery was full.

Next day came a letter by post with the enclosure as follows :—

MY DEAR DR GHEIST,—A lock of my hair. Keep it in memory of
Your pet patient,
MABEL FAXTON.

The letter was addressed by Mrs Faxton, but the writing was in pencil in Miss Mabel's well-known hand. I took up the long tress of beautiful brown hair, and as its yellow strand uncoiled and fell from the letter, like a thing of life, I felt comforted in the bare meagre thought that if Mabel did not love, she at least remembered me in her last hours of pain and suffering.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MOLAN met with what might have been a very nasty accident to-day. While riding along one of the bridle lanes, a bird suddenly flew out of the hedge, and so startled his horse that it crossed its legs and came down on its head, going completely head over heels on the top of him. This horse is one of the best I have in my stable, and would be a perfect hack but for its extremely nervous disposition. This extreme excitability is much increased in certain

states of the weather, as in high winds, or when there is uncertain light, or much light and shade on the road. I have tried all plans to cure it of this nervous fear, and have found that harsh treatment, instead of mending matters, invariably made it worse. Nolan, however, I'm afraid, does not take the same view of the soothing plan as I do, and once or twice I have had to speak to him, and point out the absurdity, not to say cruelty, of treating the animal harshly for a fault clearly depending on its nervous organisation.

Irishmen are generally impetuous, and when on horseback their national characteristics come to the front. Nolan is no exception, and though a nice kind-hearted fellow in the main, has a quick irritable temper.

My groom was especially indignant with Nolan for letting the horse down, and told him in rather plain terms that it was "bad riding, and not the horse's fault."

"What a fool that groom is," said Nolan, coming in from the stable, looking not at all in an amiable mood; "what an ignorant fool, to be sure. He has the assurance to tell me that it was my bad riding brought Vidette down. The fellow got quite impudent, too, and said my legs were too long for riding anything but sixteen-hand Irish cock-tails, and that there were two things he wouldn't keep about his premises, if he knew it, and these were, Irish horses or Irish doctors." Nolan, though angry, could not help laughing when he told me this piece of impudence on the part of old Sam.

Though rather afraid of Sam myself, I of course went out to the stable and blew him up for his impudence to Dr Nolan. Sam could stand anything but being spoken

to in the way of reproof, and generally tendered his resignation on these occasions. He was a splendid groom, very careful and kind to my horses, so I went as little near him as I could, knowing well I might get fifty worse men before I got a better.

"It's all right, you say, master," replied Sam to my mild remonstrance; "it's all right, but if I had my way that 'ere assistant of our'n shouldn't ride Vidette, by no manner of means. Why, when the hoss is a little full of himself, which is only likely he will be sometimes, considerin' the feed he gets, what does Mr Nolan do, but strike 'im on his 'ed, and what I says I stick to, and it is this, that any man who knocks a hoss about on his 'ed shouldn't have no hoss of mine to ride, not if I knowed it; but if you don't think I'm able to attend to my hosses, give me my money and I'll go, for I'm tired enough of this shacking nightwork as it is."

As this was Sam's usual way of winding up our stable conferences, and was not intended to be taken literally (for he had been with me over ten years), I paid no attention to his resignation, but left him.

I told Nolan when I came in what Sam had said about his striking the horse over the head, and asked him as a favour not to do it, as nothing spoils a horse's temper and manner so much as punishment of this kind.

"All right, Doctor, since you wish it; but I know it is temper in the brute, and wants correction, and that with a determined hand. For example, he will pass a heap of stones with perfect unconcern going one way, when on coming back he will jump right across the

road, at the same heap, mind you. This cannot be fear; it is temper or vice of some kind, you may depend on it."

"I have noticed the same thing myself, Nolan, and I have the idea that the near point of vision is not the same in both eyes. In fact, I think he must be near-sighted on one side and not the other."

"If that is the case, Doctor," said Nolan, laughing, "you will have to train him to wear an eye-glass on the weak side."

"Funny as it may appear to you, Nolan, I nevertheless believe that a large proportion of nervous shying horses, are so simply because their sight is defective in this or some other way. Nothing, for example, will sooner spoil a horse than keeping him in a too dark stable; and another fact leading up to the same theory, is that nervous, shying horses have, as a rule, too prominent eye-balls. The lens seems too globular, just as we see it in short-sighted people. When trotting quickly along, if the horse does not distinctly recognise an object till it is almost on it, you can imagine it being rather startled. Vidette, as you know, never does shy in the least on a dark night. Of course, some horses are nervous and disposed to turn round at seeing strange and unusual objects at a distance. This, of course, cannot depend on vision exactly, but to a highly-developed state of their imaginations."

"Imagination!" laughed Nolan. "How can you prove a horse has imagination?"

"There is no direct proof, only an inference; and yet strong inference is next door to good proof."

"I suppose then, Doctor, you would consider Sam Weller's horse—that wouldn't shy if he was to meet a waggon-load of monkeys, with their tails burnt off—devoid of fancy or imagination?"

"Yes, certainly," I replied laughing; "such a 'waggon-load' would strike the dullest-minded horse as being something strange and uncanny. Horses are remarkably quick at noticing any *outré* object on the road, such as a cart turned upside down, or with a wheel off, a dead horse, a donkey rolling in the dust, etc. etc. Such things excite their imaginations, and they are afraid in consequence."


"One thing is certain, Doctor," said Nolan; "your ideas on the subject are imaginative in the extreme."

"They may be, Nolan; but one thing is certain, nervous horses can never be improved by savage treatment, and striking them over the head is a most cruel as well as a most dangerous mode of punishment."

"Without joking, I think you are right. Some one told me that young Cransley, a nasty cross-grained little fellow, struck that mare of his between the ears and brought her down on her knees like a shot, and she is so much hurt that she will lose a third of her value."

"Such a contingency is the least of it. A horse that dreads the whip-stock over its head every time it shies, gets to be afraid of its rider, and becomes doubly afraid of everything that startles it. 'A wife, a dog, and a walnut tree, the more you strike them, the better they be,' is a wise saw, but it is certainly not true in reference to our true and noble friend, the horse."

CHAPTER XXIX.

F all the duties I have to perform, that of making out my yearly bills has always been the most disagreeable. It is not that I hate the idea of being paid for professional services—indeed, this is rather pleasant than otherwise; but the financial details, besides being very troublesome to get into commercial order, are from their very nature foreign to my tastes, and essentially disagreeable. The custom of this neighbourhood—indeed, the custom generally amongst medical men—is merely to give the total amount of the bill, and not the items of each visit or bottle of physic, these being left to the honour of the practitioner sending the accounts. The reason for this apparently high-handed mode of procedure is simply that the items of a doctor's bill are individually so small, and made up of the daily repetition of such insignificant sums, that had a formal bill of such items to be made out, a clerk would have to be kept to do it, no doctor, with any practice worth mentioning, having time at his disposal for such tradesman-like literature; and in nine cases out of ten, he would simply have to go without his money altogether.

Though this custom is generally recognised and permitted by the better class of the doctors' *clients*, still it sometimes leads to a good deal of heart-burning and disagreeable questioning on the part of the *profanum vulgus*, a sprinkling of which is to be found, I'm sorry to say, in every country district. A doctor may, and, indeed, often must, forget to enter visits paid

during the day, but I don't think many will be found deliberately entering imaginary items in his day-book. It is, then, rather hard to have a patient complaining that his bill is not correct, as he does not remember having such and such attendance. Besides, as the patient trusts entirely to memory, and the doctor to the recorded statements in his book, it stands to reason that of the two, the latter is the more likely to be in the right. Mistakes will, of course, occasionally arise, when two or more of one family name occur in the books, and a medical man would be unwise and uncourteous, indeed, were he to object to inquiry under such very probable sources of error. Compared with many places, I am particularly fortunate in having a kindly and courteous class of patients, and seldom have had any trouble as to money matters. Exceptional cases of this financial horror do, however, crop up now and again with me, as with the rest of my hard-worked *confrères*.

I refer more particularly to an attorney who, at one time, honoured me with his custom, as he elegantly termed it. I should rather call Mr Bray a man of law, or, better still, a man at law, for by profession, I believe, he was only an attorney's clerk. Getting some money left him, he eschewed the desk and took to practising law in a kind of amateur way, by making wills and appearing *against* people for all real or imaginary offences he could lay his legal hands on. He took up all cases of disputed right-of-way, sanitary, or highway board disputes, and never seemed happy unless he had some one by the legal ears. Mr Bray was a

Scotchman, and in his earlier career, besides the more useful and lucrative position of bagman, or "Scotch missionary," he officiated as shepherd in one of the Independent chapels in Market Harboro'. He did not keep his pulpit for any length of time, however, for he systematically went to law with every member of his flock, one after the other, till he had emptied the Bethel. Finding his preaching was not appreciated under the circumstances, he became head clerk to the attorney aforesaid. I use the term "aforesaid" advisedly, for I feel it is due to his legal surroundings to speak of him, even historically, in as professional a way as possible.

Mr Ebenezer Bray was as blatant a humbug as any in the three kingdoms. He was a dissenter, of course, and a red republican to boot—did not believe in the Queen, nor the Civil List, and rather thought that if a president were wanted for this country at any time, he was the "man for their money." He had a big, heavy, unctuous face, straight, sleek, whitey-brown hair, and a most pompous voice. Altogether, he was a disagreeable fellow, and a thoroughly pious man. I had sent him his yearly bill, which I confess was large, for he had had a long serious illness, the result of a Dorcas supper, of which society, though a man, he was at once president and spiritual guide.

The day after receiving my account I happened to meet him on the street, when, drawing himself up to his full height, he said in his pompous way, "Dr Gheist, I wish you would be a little more particular in your bills."

"How so? I don't understand, Mr Bray."

"Why, you give no items, and as I have to pay the money, I would like to have them. I don't say the bill is 'out of the way,' considering your long attendance; but it would be more satisfactory to see the items, to tax the costs, in short, so I hope you will let me have them."

"It is not the custom to give items, Mr Bray, and I shall certainly not break the rule to please you or any other patient, unless for some more satisfactory reason than the one you mention—and perhaps not then."

I felt, and I daresay, spoke, rather warmly, but I detested the man, and could see he wanted to raise a point of legal contention, and to show off what he considered his legal knowledge.

"Yes; but, Dr Gheist," he again said in his most judicial voice, "I know the law on this point, and I can claim them."

"Do so, then, Mr Bray; but I tell you plainly I will not trouble myself to satisfy your ungracious whim, for a whim it is, and nothing else."

"Lawyers always furnish the items of their bills, and why not doctors, I would like to know?"

"Lawyers may do as they like, or as is the professional custom; but, as I said before, it is not the custom amongst medical men, and I can't gratify you. I don't at all object to show you these paltry items in the ledger if you come up to the surgery when I'm at home, but beyond this I really must be excused."

"Seeing the items in your book will scarcely sati fy

me, and I again ask you to furnish a detailed legal statement of the account."

As his wrath was rising, and I did not wish to find myself in the undignified position of a street quarrel, I merely said, "You have my answer, Mr Bray, and as I am busy, I must say good morning."

"Well, Dr Gheist, since you take it in this foolish manner, I tell you plainly I will not pay your bill till you compel me in a court of law, and then you will be obliged to give the statement."

"Do as you please, Mr Bray; but before leaving, allow me to say, that before I shall submit to the humiliation and trouble of law proceedings, I will make you a present of the bill."

"Thank you, but I won't accept a settlement in that way. I am as able to pay my just debts as any man, but I will only pay in a legal manner."

I left him, inwardly resolved to have nothing more to do with such a litigious humbug; but it seems I calculated without my host, for not content with writing many long, dreary, ungrammatical letters by post, he even wrote and published letters on the subject in the *Free Briton*, a paper not more remarkable for its levelling principles than for its bad grammar and want of literary taste. I heard by side-winds that he was especially vexed and annoyed that I took no notice of these effusions, but he was "determined to fight it out to the bitter end, for he was sure the silly pride of Dr Gheist would give tongue at last, and give him something to take legal hold of."

Things gradually settled down, however, into their old groove again ; and in spite of Mr Bray's occasional annoying effusions, I kept to the dignified course of complete silence. I felt the money ought to be paid, yet I determined, nevertheless, to forego all claim rather than ignore this time-honoured custom of my profession. Just six years after the bill had been rendered to him, Mr Bray paid it in full, and not only without seeing the items, but with an apology for his past annoyance. It came about in this wise.

A child of his was suddenly seized one night with alarming symptoms of suffocation from croup. Mr Winter, his present medical man, was in London on a visit, and the child was being attended by his assistant. Seeing the dangerous nature of the attack, and that an operation would be necessary to give it a chance of life, consultation with me was recommended, as being, I suppose, the nearest available surgeon. Without a moment's hesitation I went, performed the operation, and had the satisfaction of heaping coals of fire on Mr Bray's head by saving the life of his favourite child. I did only what any medical man in the same circumstances would have done, but to a man of Mr Bray's moral calibre, my conduct was past comprehension. He could not understand it. How few do understand or give credit to our noble profession for the self-sacrifice, the self-abnegation practised daily by all its members who are worthy of the name. Mr Bray, as I said before, paid his bill, and I have no doubt, had I wanted such a commodity, would have given me his

friendship also. However, I waived this distinction, as there were still *items* in his moral nature that did not altogether suit my fastidious tastes.

CHAPTER XXX.

DR GEORGE had now been married about three years, when he wrote saying he intended paying me a visit, and if not too much for my bachelor nerves, would like to bring Mrs George and the baby.

I was pleased with the idea ; and as I knew Mr and Mrs Pike were also expected in the neighbourhood, I determined to give a quiet dinner-party, and see how they all looked together.

My expected visitors arrived in due course, and Dr George and his handsome little wife looked well and extremely happy. The baby was now two years old, and as Mrs George laughingly put my little god-son into my arms, I must say I thought her one of the rosiest and most fascinating little matrons I had seen for many a day.

A perfect little rosebud was Mrs George, and with her dark-brown hair, and her light blue honest eyes, she looked as "caller" (as they say in Scotland) as an April morning.

"Children are God's heritage, and come streaming into the world, keeping it ever green and fresh." So says Pulsford, the preacher ; and truly my old bachelor

house and garden looked brighter and greener for the presence of George's bright chubby-faced child. George, by the way, thought all the sunshine due to his little wife, and was rather annoyed than otherwise that her attention was so much taken up "with the brat."

I told George that his old flame, Mrs Pike, *née* Molliere, was in the place, and that I had asked her and her husband to meet them for the following evening at dinner.

"Pike! poor old chap," said George, "to be sure. And how is he? I suppose he has quite forgotten how to sneeze by this time?"

"I'm afraid he has, poor fellow. I hear his bed is not altogether one of roses."

"No Pikelets yet, of course?"

"Oh, no!" I said. "Mrs Pike does not go in for that kind of thing; and besides, as Mr Marsh says, she has more taste than repeat herself."

To dinner they came the following evening, and with them a cousin of Mr Pike—a Mr Samuel Pike, a lawyer, and carrying on the same family practice relinquished by Pike when he married Dr Mary. Mr S. Pike, or cousin Sam, was an extremely tall man, with very sloping shoulders, and looking rather weak about the loins and knees. He had a high intellectual-looking forehead, of which he was proud, though its geographical boundaries were scientifically fixed by a brown wig of rather ancient pattern. His face was round and red, and besides being streaked like an apple, was as smooth as velvet, and had not a hair to cover its nakedness. His eyes had rather a startled look; but his greater feature,

the *pièce de résistance*, so to speak, of his portrait, was a large black stock of the finest, shiniest silk, extending from his large flat ears, far away down his back. This type of neck-cloth belonged, it was said, to the Pike family, Mr Pike (Dr Mary's Pike) always appearing in evening dress in one of the same pattern. Mr S. Pike, cousin Sam, or, as he was nicknamed by the wags of the place, "Miss Pike," had a rather feminine voice, was about fifty years of age, a bachelor, and always wore galoches in damp weather. Though he did not sneeze like his cousin, he was apparently happy. He was often under treatment for little feminine ailments, so I knew him well, and a kinder-hearted fellow I would not wish to know. Every one has a pet weakness, and his was the desire to be thought what he was not—a gay young buck, with a spice of our dark friend in him, "rather fast, you know, Doctor."

We were standing at the window when the Pikes arrived, and each walked up the gravel drive in perfect character—Dr Mary, in her war-paint, in front, and the cousin Pikes behind.

George thought Pike looked wan and empty looking, which, of course, was only likely, seeing he was walking in his wife's shadow, and had not dined. Cousin Sam (by the way, why "Sam?" or for the matter of that, why cousin?) walked over the wet gravel with the courage of a Bayard, yet he claimed no heroism, for in his No. 11 goloches, and in his over-alls, and his Mackintosh, and his chest-protector, and his flannel belt, and his worsted "mits," and his respirator, and his cough lozenges, his constitution drops, his cod-liver oil,

and his family pills (though mild), was he not braced up and equal to the occasion? Did he not feel that a young fellow, however dare-devil and reckless he might be, was comparatively safe, under the circumstances?

Miss Pike, in spite of all his little weaknesses was an innocent and good-hearted fellow, and the only thing I particularly objected to in him was his almost abject respect for and devotion to my quondam assistant, Mrs Pike.

I could see that old Pike (I call him old Pike because he was my special Pike, and not because he was older than Sam—indeed, had they been brothers they would have been twins, so like were they, especially in their stocks) was weakly trusting to get an occasional sneeze, on the strength of this fawning attention on the part of cousin Sam engaging the attention of the enemy. When going into dinner, I also noticed that cousin Sam was stratagetically placed between old Pike and his wife, and when this arrangement was unconsciously favoured by my directions, the poor old fellow had almost sneezed, but couldn't. Mrs Pike met Dr George with polite indifference, and on being introduced to the rosebud, threw as much of the North Pole into her manner as would have thrown a shadow on any other face but that of our bright, genial little matron.

Dr Nolan gave me no little uneasiness by his look of barefaced astonishment when he quite realised Mrs Pike. "Good God! can such things be?" he whispered to me. "I had no idea of this."

Dr George, as usual, commenced chaffing Mrs Pike

on the improvement matrimony had made on her, and said (which was a barefaced untruth) that she looked fifty years younger since her marriage.

"Now, confess, Mrs Pike, you feel ever so much better since the ceremony, and that you are, like my dear little woman, a convert to the joys of married life as compared to that of single misery."

"George," said the rosebud, "blushing, yet bursting with suppressed laughter, "do keep quiet, and don't, pray, be so absurd."

Cousin Sam, assuming a rollicking, leering air, and evidently taking George's speech as a compliment to the prowess of the Pike family generally, said, "Oh, Doctor, we men are sad dogs, to be sure; but since you remark it, I have noticed a brighter bloom on cousin Mary's cheek since she married my cousin."

Had Mrs Pike been a cat she would have hissed and set her back up at George's speech, but contenting herself with a withering glance along their side of the table, she said, "Pray, Mrs George, don't mind what your husband says; he was always given to foolish, senseless speeches."

"Don't be too hard on me, Mrs Pike," said George; "I expected you would think me immensely improved."

"How are you getting on in town, Mrs Pike?" I asked, by way of changing the conversation.

"Oh, fairly well, thanks," said Mrs Pike. "It always takes some time to get foothold in a large centre like London, and, besides, I have to contend against the prejudices fostered and kept alive by you male doctors."

"I'm sure, Mrs Pike," said George, smiling across to

the rosebud, "I can speak for myself, that I have none of the prejudices you hint at. I am devoted to the ladies."

Cousin Pike, thinking this a favourable opportunity to assert his manhood, said in a gay, festive kind of way, "I can honestly say I have none of these prejudices, cousin Mary. Indeed, I would as soon be attended by a lady-surgeon as by a male one."

"Oh, you, of course, Mr Sam," said Nolan, laughing; "I have always had the notion you preferred women doctors, but here in the country, of course, with the exception of Betty Scott, we have no fully qualified female."

"I suppose," said Mrs Pike, her eyes flashing with anger at the idea of old Mother Scott, the monthly nurse, being mentioned as a representative female doctor, "I suppose that in a benighted country like Ireland female medical education will not have advanced much beyond the Gamp species?"

"You are right, Mrs Pike, it has not; nor has it made very rapid strides in this blessed country either."

Nolan was getting angry, of course; and as I was not sure where his rudeness might stop, I jokingly asked the rosebud if she ever saw patients on a pinch, when Dr George was out of the way.

"Oh no, Dr Gheist," said the little matron. "George won't hear of such a thing; and besides, my time is fully occupied with baby, and other household duties."

"A more congenial pursuit for you, I've no doubt," said Mrs Pike, with a sneer.

"Very much, I must confess," said Mrs George, look-

ing rather penitent, "though at one time I was so enamoured of the profession that I could not imagine anything nicer."

"Till you discovered matrimony," said cousin Sam, quite astonished at himself making such a good joke.

"Wait a bit, Pike," said George, poking up my sombre friend in the ribs, "wait a bit, and when your nursery begins to fill, you will see that Mrs Pike will take a partner, and confine her practice to children's diseases in her own nursery."

"I hope," retorted Mrs Pike, not at all pleased with the turn of conversation, "I shall have more senses, and greater consideration for my oppressed sex, than to do anything of the kind."

"But surely, Mrs Pike," said Mrs George, "you don't blame me for giving up practice when my husband wished it, and for attending to my own pet, and the comfort of my household?"

"It does not much matter, I dare say, what I think on this momentous question; but I feel that a female is very far from performing her duty to her sex, in throwing up her profession for such a reason. I can't see that a glorious career is to be so lightly thrown aside for the humdrum duties of ordinary married life."

"But, Mrs Pike," I said, smiling, "you speak of the duty to your sex; do you not recognise any duty to the opposite sex?"

"Certainly not; but perhaps you may enlighten me as to what that is."

"Stop, Dr Gheist; not a word," said George, laughing. "You, as a confirmed bachelor, can know little or nothing

of the subject. I can tell Mrs Pike that woman's duty is to love, honour, and obey. Love, because it is her nature ; honour, because it is her duty ; and obey, because she cannot help it. There, now ! If that does not comprise the whole duty of woman, I'm no moral philosopher."

"The philosophy of a Turk or savage, and certainly not belonging to the nineteenth century," said Mrs Pike, with lofty contempt.

The rosebud, evidently feeling the conversation too enlightened for her simple capacity, rose, and with Mrs Pike retired to the drawing-room.

Pike, on seeing his sweet wife disappear from view, sat down opposite the nearest decanter, looked round the table with a smile of intense relief, and actually sneezed long and loudly.

"Well done, Pike ; do it again. I will back you for expressing your feelings in the most forcible way, and in the fewest words. Your health, old fellow."

Pike laughed at this sally of George's, feeling too intensely happy in his freedom to resent the insinuation.

Cousin Sam distinguished himself in his too great devotion to the figs, a devotion he explained by his whispered remark to Nolan, that they were "good for the inside."

When our visitors left we sat round the fire talking over the unenviable fate of poor Pike.

Nolan could not get over Mrs Pike at all, and thought that even the shamrock could not justify her existence.

"If that is a specimen of medical women, all I can say is, God help the poor patients !"

George was rather annoyed that Mrs Pike should be considered representative at all, and proudly pointed to his charming little rosebud as a sample, "a fair sample," of the medical woman.

"I see," said Mrs George, "you gentlemen are getting rather personal in your remarks, so I will retire to my pet, and bid you one and all good-night."

"Yes, George," I said, "your wife is a *fair* sample of what a woman should be, and the very fact of her discarding the profession, and taking so kindly to the beautiful offices of married life, shows that she is not exactly representative of the class."

"All right, gentlemen," said George, immensely pleased, "fire away, but don't all speak at once; but let me tell you that my darling little rosebud is the dearest little creature in Christendom, and I think all you miserable bachelors should at once subscribe and give me a handsome testimonial for showing you that a woman may study and practise medicine, and yet retain all the sweetness and charms of her sex."

CHAPTER XXXI.

I HAVE always been passionately fond of music, and particularly interested in tracing out those special phases of mind which lead to the higher developments of this wonderful art.

Strange to say, music is cultivated to a great extent in this part of the Midlands, amongst the shoemakers and workmen generally. Scarcely a cottage I go into

but has its instrument of some kind—a harmonium, a violin, or cornet, or may be a piano, and in one house (that of a working mason), there is, besides a piano, a fair-sized organ—not a barrel organ (though we have a specimen of this horror in the place), but an ancient church instrument, of a square, cupboard-like build, and often have I heard this son of toil drawing out from its capacious bowels sacred melodies, as remarkable for their accuracy of time and expression as for their passing beauty. This musical mason has a large family of sons and daughters, and the sons all play on some instrument or other, while, strange to say, the girls are not at all musical. I only mention this fact as I have noticed that it is quite in keeping with what obtains all over the district, namely, that music as a pastime or pleasure is cultivated only by the men. I cannot quite explain this strange anomaly, but so it is all over this shoemaking district of Northamptonshire.

My interest in the subject of music, however, has especially been kept alive by a friend and patient whom I have been attending for some considerable time. He is just dead, poor fellow; and though I cannot but regret the loss of such a friend (for a friend he became to me, in every sense of the word), still I was glad to close his poor sightless eyes, for he had become completely blind, and was otherwise a great, though patient, sufferer.

Mr Paxton was the last representative of a family at one time of great wealth and influence in the Midlands. Successive generations of fox-hunting squires left Paxton's father with little more than a tithe of the

broad lands once belonging to his family, and though he tried hard to redeem the now small estate from its heavy encumbrances, he died before this was accomplished.

Mr Paul Paxton, my patient, on finishing his education (which, by the way, he got chiefly in Germany), found himself alone in the world, with just enough to live upon, and no more.

He was destined for the law, but his health gave way ; and when I first made his acquaintance, he was almost a confirmed invalid. He was even then suffering, to a slight degree, from that amaurotic state of the eyes, which eventually ended in complete blindness. In Germany he had studied and imbibed a positive passion for music, and he told me his defective vision only grieved him in so far as it interfered with his now almost constant study of this divine art. Daily I found him at the piano or violin, absorbed in the wonderful compositions of Gluck, Mozart, Handel, or Mendelssohn, or apparently absorbed in dreamily following out some musical idea of his own.

He was a composer of no ordinary ability himself, though he declared that as yet his musical infancy had been spent in assimilating the padulum furnished in the works of the great masters.

"Oh, Doctor," he used to say, "what will become of me when I am no longer able to commune with these mighty spirits of the art ?" 'Fall back,' you will say, 'on the stores of memory.' Well, I suppose it must soon come to this, for even now I can scarcely see the notes of the instrument."

"Will your defect of vision," I asked, "at all interfere with the purely mechanical part of music?"

"Oh, no! Vision is only really necessary for realising the compositions of others. In composing and playing from memory, touch, not sight, is required, the mechanism being carried on by a skilled automatism. This automatism, of course, implies that we can read music thoroughly, and enters largely into the performance of even those who play indifferently. Good readers, of course, play more automatically than those who read badly; and yet I have noticed that in high-class music, where the delight experienced is due to the highest phase of intellectual emotion, the performer plays less by automatism than when the piece is of a simpler kind. His whole soul is engaged in the performance, and he watches the mere mechanism with a close and jealous attention. With my dear old 'Cremona,' of course, touch alone will guide me into the heavenly realms of music, for I never take up the instrument except by way of musical reverie, or simply to give expression to feelings too tumultuous for the other instruments."

"What of your organ recitals now? I suppose you don't often go up to the old church since your eyes have become so defective?"

"Yes I do, Doctor, and I trust you will not order me not to. In the twilight summer evenings I am often in the mood for a voluntary or anthem, and these moods can only be satisfied by the deep, holy swell of the organ. And besides, Doctor, that grand old march seems so fitting for one in my dying condition. I play

it every evening I am there, and it helps to prepare me for the coming change."

"Then you think, Paxton, that certain feelings and emotions are correlated, or, to use a less pedantic expression, have a certain fixed relation to certain kinds of musical expression?"

"Undoubtedly, Dr Gheist. Each emotion, each feeling has its counterpart in some musical idea, and, of course some instruments, from their greater grasp and range of melody, have more facile power of expression than others. Thus, all our more sombre thoughts and feelings are more suited to the deep, melancholy swell of the organ, and hence that instrument, for that very reason, appeals more than any other to our religious natures; and, indeed, the organ should be used only for sacred expression."

"That I can quite understand, Paxton, so far as the range of instrument is concerned; but granting the close affinity between certain feelings and musical ideas—in other words, that certain musical harmonies convey to the listener definite ideas, just as a cry of agony gives the idea of pain, or a wail of grief the idea of sorrow, or in articulate language, the onomatopœic word, its representative sound, you don't mean that composers always convey the same musical ideas in the same style of melody?"

"Don't be too metaphysical, Doctor; but I quite see what you would be at, and my answer is, decidedly not. As a physiologist, you know that the co-ordination existing between the physical value of musical notes produced in the larynx, and the æsthetic phase of human

consciousness, is a fact. As a musician, I am equally convinced of the fact that this co-ordination, this relation between sound and sense, is differently expressed, not only in different sexes of the same species, but in different individuals of the same species, and for that matter, between different members of the same family. How else account for the different styles of speaking, singing, and other modes of vocal expression? If so—and I cannot see how it can be otherwise—what difficulty is there in imagining the different styles of musical composers in expressing the same ideas? High-class music, written with genius, and listened to, of course, by one having *receptivity*, does, and indeed must, always convey a strong definite idea. Two or more composers expressing, say the emotion of ‘resignation,’ or ‘contentment,’ will each express the musical idea in a style of his own. There will be the production of two or more minds, but all having the general prevailing idea, a stream of thought that can be tracked to the same source. Yet the melody may differ in each, as each composer would have his own idea of its representation. There would be in all of them an element of calm and peaceful serenity. One composer might think he could best express ‘contentment’ by slow massive chords, smooth in harmony, without any harsh or discordant progressions, whilst another might add to his placid theme a tripping accompaniment of semi-quavers, etc.

“Thus, each composer has his style, and may express a musical idea in his own way; Handel differing from Mendelssohn, perhaps, in quaintness, and Mozart perhaps

from either, in his exquisite simplicity and his power of reaching the heart at once."

"Do you think, Paxton, that a composer has formed any definite idea of the piece before he commits it to the instrument?"

"In some cases he has, Doctor ; but it is only men of genius who have the power. Gluck, the operatic composer, was in the habit of saying, 'I have finished my opera,' whereas he had not committed to paper, nor tried one note of it on the instrument. This gift is undoubtedly a kind of inspiration, and is only possessed by masters of the art. Beethoven, Mozart, and Handel, all had this faculty to a greater or less degree."

"But you have had considerable experience yourself in composition, Mr Paxton. Tell me, for I want to know, did your musical ideas, or rhythmical harmonies, to speak prosaically, arise spontaneously in your mind, or did they follow the mechanism of the hands, just as ideas seem to flow from the point of the pen when composing an essay or letter?"

"Well, though it seems a kind of sacrilege to speak of my compositions in the same breath as those of the masters, still, as you wish it, I will tell you how it is with me. Of all the melodies I have composed, I have found that two-thirds were produced on *first touching* the keys, no previous *conscious* idea being appreciable to my mind. The hands seem to move automatically, and so little does the previous idea exist in the brain, that three or four bars are often played before realisation of the melody strikes me; then I even experience a feeling of surprise and delight at its unlooked-for birth."

Such were the conversations I used to hold with this strange and gifted man. Certainly he was one of the most interesting patients I ever had.

Any stranger looking at poor Mr Paxton would not have noticed anything amiss with his eyes. Large and lustrous, they had only that dreamy, far-away look so common in the blind, when the disease is purely of a functional character.

As he got weaker, his wild enthusiasm for music seemed to get intensified, and, contrary to my advice, he often spent six hours at the piano, or in dreamy reverie at his violin.

Two or three days before his death, he told me he had engaged Mr Brook, a well-known organist, to play the "grand old march" at his funeral.

He was getting so weak that he had to be supported to his piano. Once seated before his much-loved instrument, his failing energies seemed to gain strength for a time, and he sometimes would sit playing till he fainted through sheer exhaustion.

At last Nolan came in one night and told me that this child of music had just been found dead at the piano. And so he died, died to music, and his spirit, I have no doubt, is now revelling in the purest and holiest strains of heavenly melody.

I attended his funeral, and as the grand old organ swelled out into the melancholy strains of his much-loved "Dead March in Saul," I wept for a friend, a musician, and a genius.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THIS neighbourhood has long been notorious for its rampant dissent. For every church we have half a dozen chapels, each with its minister and congregation.

I don't know how it is, but shoemakers, as a general rule, are all chapel-goers. They seem to like the freedom of Congregationalism, freedom in their choice and dismissal of their pastors. A hard life of it these dissenting ministers seem to have. They are seldom allowed to warm in their charges, and have to keep moving on with no settled place of abode. One chapel has had no fewer than five different ministers in something like ten years; and hard as the life is, there is no dearth of candidates. As a rule, the dissenting minister is an after-growth, and in one or two instances I have known his earlier career not innocent of the shop-keeper's apron, or the bench of St Crispin itself. But really it matters not what he is, or what he is capable of; he seems in time to pall on the theological appetites of his flock, and he gets notice to quit—to seek another fold.

Shoemakers are a rather philosophical race, and think a good deal on all subjects, and why not on religion? Many of them become, as it were, apprentices to the trade of preaching, and look forward to getting in time charges of their own. These apprentice ministers, or "locals," as they are called, are, indeed, a recognised branch of industry in the Midlands, and when successful in their novitiate, soon blossom into shepherds with

congregations of their own. Some of these have no better claim to their exalted position than what is called in Scotland, "the gift of the gab," and questionable exegetical skill in expounding the Word.

Mr Skimmington was a typical "local," and a most respectable man. On Sundays he always wore the shiniest broad-cloth, and a white neck-cloth; whilst on week-days he was content with his shoemaker's apron, a very dirty face, and hands to match. His duties as local preacher did not engage his time every Sunday, and then he went to chapel and sat through the sermon of his brother cleric, with the critical air of an old raven.

"John," as he was familiarly called, was generally in the van of those members of the chapel who were always crying to their minister to "move on." He, being a judge of these matters, had always some fault to find, either with the style of preaching, the want of piety, or the defect in pastoral visitation. He was a long-bodied man, with remarkably short legs, and had what may professionally be called "a stomach." Every man, I take it, has this useful bodily member, but John's stomach was a very capacious, yet weak, member, and gave him and me no little trouble. He was great at a Sunday dinner, and was distinguished above his fellow locals for his power, not only in imbibing unlimited tea, but in devouring the more substantial viands at the annual chapel "treats." He likewise always took his stomach with him when on "local" business, and after his sermon, in the school-room, cottage, or farm-house kitchen, he did ample justice to the hot supper generally provided by his grateful hearers.

Some of the church people uncharitably hinted that these hot suppers were great attractions to John, and amply repaid him for his five or six mile walk to the spiritually deserted village where he held his meetings.

He visited a good deal amongst my poor patients, reading and "expounding the Word" with a zeal which at times drew forth wondering admiration. I often wavered between two opinions as to John's fitness for this amateur visitation—at one time thinking him sincere in his desire to do good, at another (and my later experience has confirmed this last opinion), doubting his call for the work; in fact, believing that he did more harm than good.

One evening I met him coming down stairs from seeing a poor fellow who was in the last stage of consumption. "Good evening, Mr Skimmington," I said; "been with poor Smith? How is he to-night?"

"Good evening to you, Doctor. I have just been saying a few words to the poor lad. He is bad, Doctor, and I find it is not well with his soul."

On going upstairs I was struck with the appearance of my poor patient. He was in a state of ecstatic terror, his eye-balls almost standing out of his head, and the cold drops of perspiration rolling over his deathly pallid brow.

"Oh, Doctor Gheist! Save me! save me! if you can, even for a day or two! Mr Skimmington has just been and told me that I am a lost sinner, and that there is no hope for such as me."

I soothed the poor fellow as best I could, and though feeling myself all unworthy of the spiritual office, tried

to explain away his fears, so that he might find peace in his dying hours. His mother, weeping bitterly, told me how John had terrified her poor boy with all the horrors of his gloomy Calvinism, and though he promised to "wrestle with God for the depraved boy," he was sure there was little hope.

As a physician, I felt this kind of thing should not be allowed, for it was not the first instance in which I had observed an unfavourable crisis follow the misguided zeal of such gloomy Christians. Religion with such men is not a matter of daily life, not a matter of Christian forbearance or brotherly love, but a matter of dogmas, long prayers, and Sunday formalities. I felt deeply the responsibility I took in requesting Mrs Smith not to admit John again, but did so in the firm conviction that a surgeon's first duty is to his patient, and besides, setting aside the physical danger to life, I could not see that the poor lad's soul was to be benefited by thus casting into gloomy shadow the far-reaching and beautiful truths of our Christian religion. I called myself on Mr Skimmington, and explained to him that, as a doctor, deeply interested in the welfare of my patient, I would rather that he did not visit him again.

"Oh, Doctor Gheist!" said John, "you are a man of this world, and care not for the welfare of the poor lad's soul."

"But, Mr Skimmington," said I, "you scarcely take the right way with the poor dying lad."

"Right way, Doctor; what would you have? He is no scholar, the lad isn't, and couldn't make a prayer to save his soul. Right way, indeed! I can pray as well

as any Church parson you have ; and expound, why, I can expound as well as Mathey Henry, though he's not up to much neither. The lad has led a bad, bad life, Doctor ; never entered a place of worship, and only came once to my Sunday class the week before the tea-drinking."

"That may be all true, but he is so ill and weak that excitement of any kind must be hurtful, so pray, Mr Skimmington, do not disturb him again."

"Disturb him, Doctor," said this local, with wrathful pertinacity ; "I wonder to hear you use such a word as disturb him ! Why, I showed him the evil of his ways, and took him on corruption, redemption, and damnation, and treated on them well. The lad is being lost, Doctor, and though I make no pretensions, I could convert him like 'winkey,' and pluck him as a brand from the burning."

Not being able to convince John of the danger of "forcing an entry" for the poor lad, I was fain to be content with the promise—given after much consideration—that he would not visit him again till he had my permission, which, I need not add, I did not intend to grant.

"Well, Doctor," said John, as I left him, "against my better judgment I promise, but I will not lose sight of him ; I will pray for him—yes, I will pray for both on yees."

Undoubtedly, these vicarious ministers of the truth attain a kind of spiritual complacency of manner, and almost believe in their own piety. One old man of this class, renowned all over the district for his saintly life

and apparent piety, died lately. His friends gathered round his bed, expecting to hear some holy experience from the dying man. I happened to call when a feeble-voiced friend was asking him if he had any message to leave, any wish to express. I fully expected some pious request from such a saint, but with his failing strength, he looked up at his friend, and with beseeching voice said—"Yes, Annie Mariar, I would like a bit of pickled salmon." Here nature spoke, and though astonished at the request, I did not think the less of the poor man.

Nature often does crop up, not only in individuals but in communities, and more frequently in the religious element of the masses than is, perhaps, imagined; but I reserve what I have to say on this subject for another chapter.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MY friend, the "local," was the prime mover and mainstay of these "revivals of religion" which every now and again sweep over a district like an epidemic. Moral epidemics I had almost called them, but sorry I am to record the fact, that though revivals of religion, they certainly have no right to the term moral revivals. But this by the way. What has interested me, as it has done most thinking people, from the middle ages down to the present time, is that emotional outbursts

will sometimes arise in communities, sects, or nations, just as we have epidemics of disease, say of small-pox or measles.

Look at the strikes, the trade riots, the revolutionary struggles which arise from small beginnings, and too often lead to such dire results. In a staid and money-grubbing country like England, political or revolutionary epidemics do not disturb the national patient so often, or to the same degree, as they do some of our more mercurial Continental neighbours. It would seem as if the monarchical constitution of the British Lion is too strong, and less susceptible of disturbing influences of this kind. There is one ailment, however, that the old fellow is much subject to: religious mania to wit, one of the prominent symptoms being this revival of religion so-called. I trust I may get credit for believing that many good folks encourage and foster these religious outbreaks, under the sincere idea, that by so doing, they are furthering the ends of true Christianity. But from close observation, and the experience of two or three notable outbursts of the kind, I am led to believe that they are, for the most part, due to pure emotional excitement of the mass, the factors being imitation and that most powerful of all altruistic feelings—emotional sympathy.

When in church or other solemn gathering, how contagious a laugh may become, how easily a mob may be turned or led by the merest trifle! Does not an army sometimes become completely demoralised, or may not a regiment, as one man, ride down the murderous valley of death, "as rode the Six Hundred?"

How else explain the brave death, under arms, of that file of marines in the sinking ship in Hobson's Bay? We see it, again, amongst animals, in the flock of sheep following a lead, and jumping into the sea, or the stampede in a troop of horses or other animals. And the affinity here is closer than may at first sight appear, for in the gallant charge, or heroic death, there was discipline or will guiding and controlling the sympathetic mass. In these religious revivals or emotional outbursts of excitement, the great and objectional feature is this complete paralysis of will, this loss of all control in the swaying minds of the mass. In each and all, one emotion, one feeling actuated the mass, as it actuated the individual unit. One dominant idea or feeling bound these mental units into one acting whole. The story of the Milesian virgins, the dancing manias of the middle ages, the cataleptic paroxysm in the congregation of Shetland islanders, the tetanic attacks of the *convulsionnaires* at the tomb of the Deacon Pâris, in the cemetery of St Medard, the violent fits of raving and ecstasy in the camp-meetings of American Methodists, not to mention the Jumpers, the Shakers, and other "convulsive Methodistical sects" in our own country, are matters of history and illustrations in point.

When the individual or social mind is carried away by the dominant force of a strong impression, all freedom of action, all moral or intellectual control is lost. Any kind of enthusiasm or violent passion may thus lead to blind extravagance of action, and according to Hecker (a savant who has closely watched the nature

and history of these emotional disturbances), religion, "of all enthusiastic infatuations," is the most fertile in disorder of this kind. And this is easily understood. Religion, if not from its nature, at least from its methods of culture, appeals to the sympathy of the mass. It is taught to the crowd, it is preached to congregations, and its dogmas are jealously held by sects and communities. It is always altruistic in its surroundings, and speaks more often to the many than to the individual. What wonder then, that waves of religiosity pass over the masses now and again, at one time surging, with all-absorbing force, over an entire country, or confined to one sect, in the form of a mild revival? The results of these revivals of religion, like revolutions of a political nature, are not always of a happy tendency. The so-called converts too often, I am afraid, drift back to their old vicious way of life, and the last state of the man is worse than the first. My friend Mr Skimmington was great at keeping this kind of religious wild-fire going. It suited his ardent sympathetic nature, and as he was not without a wild kind of fervid blatant eloquence, he was looked upon by the enthralled crowds as a veritable Saul amongst the people. He threw aside all work; and as for his apron, he would have none of it. He stamped, and shouted, and preached, and foamed at the mouth, and quite ignored his troublesome stomach. He organised meetings for prayer, meetings for meditation, meetings for "converse," and meetings for receiving the converts into the arms of the faithful elect.

The most improbable characters figured amongst the

converts, and for a time the imitative sympathy changed their entire natures. Those given to drunkenness became rabid teetotallers, others stained with the mud of the most barefaced vice, became exemplary in their lives and conduct, the indifferent became enthusiastic, the scoffer became the professor, the infidel the believer, and all seemed urged on by some secret power to declare their change of life and feeling in the market place. Thus the shy man, who before had not a word to say for himself, "took service" and conducted open-air prayer meetings in the streets, the lanes, and even in the chapel pulpits. The whole neighbourhood was in turmoil, like a disturbed hive of bees, and the revivalists seemed bent on taking heaven by storm.

As an outsider, or "man of this world," as John styled all those who took no part in the good work, and given to watch the symptoms of public as well as of individual disease, whether physical, mental, or moral, I was not surprised to see, that in almost every instance, the dog returned to its vomit, and the sow to its wallowing in the mire.

And why? Simply—as I told my friend the "local"—because emotional epidemics are not true religion, but depend on causes outside of that blessed phase of humanity altogether. They are disturbances of the social mind, due to sympathetic excitement. True religion, as I understand it, favours not this public emotional mania, and is as little needed for its true growth and development as a band of music is needed for a man to say his prayers.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MISS ROBB, or Jeanie Robb, was an unmitigated poor relation of my own, a second or third cousin of my mother, who, from the days of my boyhood, had appeared and disappeared from the field of knowledge, so that when I found her, one dull wet evening, sitting by my parlour fire-side, I was rather shocked at myself for having forgotten her very existence.

Charles Lamb, had he known my third cousin, would have hailed her as a typical example of the genus "poor relation." But Jeanie Robb was a special individual of the species, and though a mere outline, had characters of her own, which on better acquaintance were filled in, in somewhat startling colours.

As a boy I remember her, as about the same age, as she appeared in this grey twilight evening; indeed, no one of the family ever remembered the time when cousin Jeanie was anything but what she appeared this evening—old, and thin, and little, with sharp pinched features, and wearing a dark-grey bombazine dress, corkscrew curls (artificial), and a drop at her nose. My second cousin Jeanie could not object to my thus taking liberties with her nose, for she liked to speak about this humidity, and always mentioned it with respect as "my poor nose," and firmly believed it to be afflicted with hay-fever.

Placing this feature metaphorically on the shelf for a little, I may remark that cousin Jeanie was always in

a state of chronic *flitting*, as they say in Scotland. At a moment's notice she was constantly "selling off" her household furniture, and departing on a lengthened sojourn into foreign lands. This nomadic phase in her character can only be explained by the fact that, among her other ailments, she was afflicted with a small annuity, which, besides being miserably inadequate to provide for her a liberal supply of clean pocket handkerchiefs, was under the control, and paid in half-yearly instalments, by a Philadelphia lawyer. This legal functionary gave her no end of trouble in the transmission of the money, and Jeanie might almost have taken a perpetual ticket on board the steamers, so often had she to cross the Atlantic. She also had business, or friends, in Holland: so that when she was not on the Atlantic, she was on the German Ocean.

When quite a boy, I remember hearing that Jeanie had a house of her own, but one removal after another had the well-known effects of a fire, and she for many years lived as parlour boarder, free of charge, with a sister of her own, who had married a German, and lived in Edinburgh. I mention these little incidents in the life of my cousin Jeanie, because, as she sat in this twilight evening at my fireside, she was accompanied by a girl, about eighteen years of age, whom she introduced as Chatty Müller, the only daughter of her late sister, Mrs Müller, with whom she used to live, as parlour boarder (free of charge), when in Edinburgh.

Miss Charlotte Müller, or "Chatty," as my ancient relative called her, had a most interesting face, quite a loveable face I should call it, a face, in fact, ripe with the beauty of

expression. Her face was rather heavy, and showed her half German origin, no regularity of feature to boast of, but lit up with a wonderful pair of brown sleepy eyes, and set in a perfect flood of brown *rippy* (if there is such a word), hair. It seemed a case of June and November between the two women, and the half-frozen parchment-looking contour of my misty relative, brought out in warm colouring, the rounded, budding figure of my little visitor, Chatty Müller.

My second cousin, Jeanie, settled down in my bachelor's household in her usual indefinite way, and I could not tell whether she merely came for a night, or intended remaining till the Philadelphia lawyer wanted her across the Atlantic.

It was very pleasant for Nolan and me to have Chatty wandering about the old house, like a stray sun-beam, and we unconsciously made much of Miss Robb for the girl's sake.

Jeanie told me that her niece was left an orphan, penniless, friendless, desolate, without experience, without tenderness, without choice, to to be cast on the cold stern world of reality as a governess. Poor Chatty!

She had been well educated, and like most German girls, was a fair musician.

It was thought I might be able to get a situation for our little friend amongst my country patients, and I made many false promises and many fictitious statements as to my endeavours in this way.

"No, no," as I said to Nolan; "we cannot spare the bright little creature." Who doesn't like sunshine in a

dull old house I should like to know? And, besides, the little creature was evidently so intensely happy too, that I had not the heart even to speculate on her leaving my old roof-tree.

Nolan took to the ladies immensely, and even tried his hand at Miss Robb's nose, but miserably failed.

He asked me one day, in rather an assumed off-hand way, if I didn't think a drive in the waggonette would do them good. He was sure Miss Robb wanted fresh air, and Miss Chatty too.

I thought my friend Nolan was rather too ready with his prescription, and said—

“But, Nolan, will it be right to show this poor girl all this attention? I have remarked that you are a great deal with her. What will the world say?”

“Oh, bother Mrs Grundy!” said Nolan, blushing up to the roots of his hair; “what harm is there, and besides if you don't object, who is to find fault, I would like to know?”

“Well, Nolan, I am not her guardian, for it seems she is without even that small hold on society, but being my visitor, I must act in that capacity for the time being, and all I say is—Be careful—and don't play fast and loose with the little woman's heart.”

“Dr Gheist,” said Nolan, flushing up, “did you ever know an Irishman, who was at the same time a gentleman, injure a shamrock blossom like Miss Chatty?”

“Why, old fellow, you speak warmly; take care you don't get caught by these sleepy looking eyes. Remember she has no money.”

By the way, I thought Nolan rather conceited than otherwise, and I did not see why he should appear to claim the right to all the sunshine in the place. As a rule I rather dislike Irishmen.

"Oh, that cursed money!" continued Nolan. "But to be honest and plain with you, Dr Gheist, you are too late with your advice: I am caught as it is. The fact is, I have asked Miss Chatty."

"The devil you have!" I burst out, with the sound of twenty German bands in my ears.

"Yes, Dr Gheist," said Nolan, looking astonished at my impetuosity, "and Miss Chatty has refused me."

The German bands stopped playing in my ears, and I asked, with a heavy load of deceit in my heart—

"Refused you, Nolan? and for what reason?"

"She has refused me at all events," said poor Nolan, clutching at the back of a chair, "and if I cared for her before, her refusal has made me *madly* in love with her. I believe the little witch has done it on purpose to rivet me the closer to her."

"What reason did she give? A prior attachment, I suppose?"

"'Neery a prior,' as Mark Twain would say. She thinks she is so poor, and friendless, and ugly, that I cannot care for her sufficiently, and besides as I am a Roman Catholic, and she a Protestant, she thinks it would never do. Why, the little monkey must see that I cannot help myself. She has very romantic notions, I can tell you, about being loved for herself, "for her very own sake," as she says, and cannot bear the thought of being loved through feelings of sentimental

pity. Speak to her, Dr Gheist, and tell her that though I am poor like herself, I am, 'bedad,' that I am an Irishman, with a heart as deep as Dublin Bay, and that it is her own entirely."

As a rule I hate Irishmen.

"But, Nolan," said I, with a hopeful smile of inquiry, "you have never mentioned to me what your prospects are. Are you able to marry?" This in a kindly tone, for I thought the lad was poor.

"I am not rich, worse luck, but I have enough to buy a practice, though before I met this little witch I had fully made up my mind to enter at Netley for the army."

I hate Irishmen as a rule; once they take a thing in their heads—well, they stick to it through thick and thin,—

"And you told Miss Chatty all this?"

"I did, be jabers, as they say in Ireland, but she pretends she does not care for me sufficiently, when I can see her little heart is bursting with love all the time. I know it is those beastly scruples about my religion and other nonsensical notions she has in her dear little head about spoiling my career. Career be d——d! What's the use in a doctor having a career without a wife? A doctor, especially an Irish doctor, is simply nowhere without a wife. Career? I may as well go at once to Rorke's Drift, and get stuck all over with these Zulu knives, like some horrid porcupine, or get massacred at Isandula, and come home without a blessed leg to stand on, or a hand to scratch my muddled head, for that is my idea of a doctor's career

without a wife, especially in the army, where she'll drive me to."

"A very desirable husband you would be then, Nolan," said I, laughing, in spite of my gloomy thoughts.

"Oh, but Doctor, I feel bad about this affair! Do speak to her, and see what you can do for me."

On the whole I don't care much for Nolan, and yet how can I refuse speaking for him? It would seem as if I was always to be the go-between, where lovers did not mix well. I would speak, thought I, to Chatty, and my own heart bounded with a wild undefined hope, a hope at one moment lifting me high on the "billowy waves of joy," and plunging me next in the trough of despairing self-accusation. I was about sixty, and feeling old and grey, and Nolan, in all the flush of tropical youth, seemed to claim the heaven-born right to wear this budding blossom in his heart. And besides, had not Nolan trusted to my using my influence in his favour? Truly! I must be the guardian, the friend, the elder brother, the counsellor, and nothing more. This blessed summer morning I felt old and mean, and dishonourable, and all unworthy. Yes, the only course open for future comfort and self respect was to urge Nolan's suit with the dear bright darling little Chatty.

Miss Robb, when she heard from me the state of affairs, for the little maid had not mentioned Nolan's proposal of marriage, wept, wept copiously, as she always did on the slightest occasion.

"Well, cousin," said she, "but for his being a

Papist, I would have looked upon this offer as a providential interposition of Providence; but as it is, it is out of the question. What a pity he can't be converted: such a good-looking individual, so clever in his profession, and besides, no doctor's bill to pay. This would have been an interposition for Chatty." The last item (the bill) was no small consideration to my poor misty relative, for if she had not had an issue for twelve years, like the woman in the Bible, she certainly had spent much on physicians, who had done her no good. And how could they? Her life was a burden to herself, and besides she had the nose-trouble, which every medical man knows is a thing of joy for ever.

As next day was bright and sunny, I asked Miss Chatty to come out with me for a drive. It was one of those bright "caller" mornings in May, and as there had been some rain during night, the earth was jubilant and rejoiced. The dog-roses and honeysuckle filled the dripping lanes with fragrance, and the thrushes almost choked themselves with delight. The little maid seemed to partake in the general joy, and had a look of strange delight in her brown sleepy eyes. Happy Nolan, thought I, your heart may be as deep as Dublin Bay, but the little maid can fill it to the brim. I did not know very well how to broach the subject that interested us both, for I could see her little heart was pulsating under some new and absorbing emotion. Men blunder, indeed always do blunder, so I startled the little creature at my side by abruptly saying, "Nolan has been telling me, Miss Chatty, that you won't have

him." She blushed, and lifting her beautiful, honest eyes to my face, said—

"Did he tell you the reason, Dr Gheist?"

"Yes," I answered, "he said you thought him not good enough, and that you did not believe in him."

"Oh, Dr Gheist, he did not say that! He knows better. Tell me truly what he did say."

"Well, Miss Chatty, he seems in a bad way, and thinks your silly scruples as to his religion, etc., will wreck his happiness."

"Oh, Doctor, what shall I do? I feel it would not be right, and besides I feel that his offer is more the result of pity for a friendless girl than real caring for me. I am afraid, too, that he does not know me sufficiently, and that he would tire of me if he once had me for his wife. Besides, by marrying me he would be changing his entire career, for I know he intended entering the army. In making this sacrifice for me, I feel that would be doing more than I am worth—that he might regret it, and cease to care for me."

"Well, Miss Chatty," said I, "to be honest with you, I may say that I promised to speak to you. I am old enough to be your father, and as you have no proper guardian, and are a kind of relation, you know, you will excuse the liberty I take in saying that if you love Nolan you should overcome these scruples and take him."

"It is kind and good of you, Dr Gheist," said the little maid blushing, and with tears in her down-cast eyes, "it is so good of you to take this charge of

me. I will not deny it, I do care for Dr Nolan; indeed, love him too well, and it is because I love him so much that I am frightened to take this step. Did I know he really cared for me, for my very own self, there is still that dreadful difference of religion, and as yet I can scarcely see it right."

"Love you, you little monkey, you know he does," said I smiling, and now looking down on the bright little friendless girl through a halo of pure fatherly regard, "and, religion notwithstanding, you should accept him. What kind of religion would it be to go and wreck the poor fellow's happiness, besides destroying your own peace of mind? To my mind your duty is clear, and as duty is the mainstay of religion, be it Catholic or Protestant, you ought to marry him."

My theology might not seem very philosophical, but it evidently chimed in with the heart's desire of the little creature, and as I told her, it was the religion of common sense, and she ought to accept its teaching.

"Oh, Dr Gheist, I am so glad you have spoken to me. It is all so much like a beautiful dream that I can scarcely take it all in as yet."

"Well, Miss Chatty, shall I tell him it is all right?"

"No, no, Doctor, I must think of it. I can't yet see that I am worthy of him."

"Nonsense! But I will leave you and Nolan to settle it as best you can, but if I were he I would have you, whether you would or not, and if I were your own dear little self, I would take a good husband when I had the chance."

Nolan told me next day that he was as happy as any

man could be out of Ireland, and Jeanie Robb thought that her nephew Nolan was perfect, and hoped that in time he might see the error of his ways, and be converted.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A DEATH vacancy occurring not long after this in a village called Weston, not ten miles from my district, Nolan, with his father's approval and by my advice, bought the practice.

As he still held that a doctor without a wife was "nowhere," he married Chatty Müller about a month after being settled. I gave the "blushing bride" away, and cousin Jeanie wept as usual, wept copiously, and looked upon her nephew Nolan as a decided interposition of Providence.

Mr Middleton, Nolan's predecessor, had been in very bad health for some considerable time before his death, and the practice had been almost entirely in the hands of his assistant, and as a consequence suffered to a considerable extent. This difficulty, however, might have been overcome, but this gentleman, Cottingham by name, waiving all etiquette, and the *lex non scripta* in affairs of this kind, behaved in a most dishonourable way, and became Nolan's opponent in the practice.

Choosing a large village in the centre of Nolan's district, Cottingham settled quietly down with a large brass-plate on his door, and much to Nolan's disgust,

succeeded in getting two of the most important clubs in the place.

The village of Weston, where Nolan lived, had been the doctor's residence for over a century, and like a "close borough," was strictly speaking an unopposed practice. Unfortunately, however, Weston was just beyond the boundary of the principal Union district, and as the Poor Law Board preferred medical men who did reside in the district, Cottingham had every chance of securing the Union appointment also. Nolan was in great distress about it, and rode over to me asking what was to be done. The appointment had always been held by the Weston doctor, and though not of great money value in itself, was important to him, as it was the key to holding comfortably the club appointments in the district. Nolan was likewise particularly anxious to secure this Union appointment, as he knew that without it Cottingham could not afford to oppose him.

Ezra Cottingham, Esq., L.R.C.P., Edin., L.S.A., was one of a type of medical men so often met with in the lower grades of English practice. He was a little, dark man, and always wore a black surtout and tall hat. On the strength of his L.R.C.P., Edin., he thought he was a physician and had 'Dr' Cottingham on his cards. He had unbounded faith in himself, and rather thought he was throwing himself away in country practice. In spite of his brass-plate, and the *assumed* doctorate, he was totally without professional or literary culture, and practiced his profession purely as a trade. In the way of trade, he became a pronounced dissenter, attended chapel, and even officiated at the weekly prayer-meet-

ings with my friend Mr Skimmington. "All things are fair in love and war," they say, and Mr Cottingham did not think it beneath his dignity to call on Nolan's patients, leaving his card and an occasional tract on the Catholic question. He always spoke of Nolan as the Roman Catholic doctor, and doubted "whether Englishmen would stand that sort of thing, you know."

The farmers were chiefly descendants of old Puritan families, and I began to fear that Nolan's religion might seriously interfere with his success. One or two red-hot dissenters I knew would support Mr Cottingham, but I was glad to hear from Nolan that most of the guardians were in his favour. The appointment was to be made at the next board-meeting, and I spent most of the week going round amongst the members of the board with Nolan, introducing him to those I knew, and getting introductions to those of them we did not.

It must have been an anxious time for my little friend, Mrs Nolan, for she felt, as we all did, that on this appointment depended to a greater or less extent the future success of her husband. Once allow Mr Cottingham to get a footing in the neighbourhood, then farewell to comfort and possible success in the practice—a practice for which he had paid over £1000 ready money. For though the two men could scarcely be compared for a moment in the way of ability, still a doctor's success so often depends on causes outside his professional acquirements, that the chances might go as much in favour of the one as the

other. Nolan, being a doctor of medicine, was especially indignant at Mr Cottingham styling himself doctor, and contrary to my advice, took the trouble to explain to his patients the difference between a M.D. or graduate in medicine of a University, and a mere licentiate of a second-rate college. He even took the trouble to write to the medical journals, asking if a L.R.C.P. of Edinburgh had any legal or legendary right to style himself doctor. The answer was, of course, that only the holder of the degree of M.D. could style himself doctor. This answer, I am sorry to say, Nolan published in the county papers, and by so doing, rather turned the local influence of his medical *confrères* against him. Most of the practitioners in the neighbourhood being only members or licentiates of a college, were naturally indignant that this young Irish graduate should so offensively parade his superior qualification at their expense. Mr Cottingham was not to be done, however, in this way, for instead of claiming the right to the title of doctor for himself alone, he took care to style all the medical men in the neighbourhood by the same ambitious title. This, of course, soon led to confusion in the public mind, and it was no uncommon thing to hear the "*profanum vulgus*" speaking of Dr So - and - So whether the latter had any claim to the title or not. Of course the county people, and those who knew what a degree meant, were not so lavish in conferring degrees, but it was amusing to notice how kindly some of the licentiates took to their installation.

About three days before the Union appointment was to be decided, a case occurred which turned the tide

completely in Nolan's favour. A farmer, a member of the Board of Guardians, and one of the chief supporters of Mr Cottingham, had his shoulder dislocated. As the accident happened in the village where Cottingham lived, he was, of course, sent for, but failed to reduce the displaced bone. Nolan, by good luck, was riding past, was called in, and much to Farmer Brown's delight, and Cottingham's disgust, succeeded in reducing the dislocation, and putting the groaning guardian out of his misery. Mr Brown shook hands with Nolan, and told him he was sorry he had gone against him so far, but would certainly vote for him on Monday. And the old gentleman was as good as his word, for he attended the meeting with his arm in a sling, and after recounting in a short hearty speech the surgical details of his accident, proposed Dr Nolan as the better man of the two. This was seconded by another guardian, who said that though Dr Nolan was a Roman Catholic, and he did not like Catholics, yet he thought he was the man with most skill, and he thought, as guardians of the poor, it was their duty to get the best doctor whatever his religion.

Nolan's principal opponent, a dissenting minister, living in the same village as Cottingham, now stood up, and in a long prosy speech, proposed "Dr" Cottingham on the following grounds:—(1) That he resided in the district; (2) Because Dr Nolan was a Roman Catholic. As to residence, he begged to remind the Board that if they appointed the latter gentleman, that appointment would not be confirmed by the Local Government Board, as the Act said that such appointments were

always to be given, if possible, to men residing in the district. And he might be allowed to say that it was rather hard on the poor to be obliged to send some miles for medicine and advice, when such could be provided for them at their own doors. As to the religious aspects of the case, he would merely say, that it would be a scandal to appoint a Roman Catholic and an Irishman, when they had as good a man, a Protestant, and at the same time a countryman. On these grounds he demanded, in common fairness, that "Dr" Cottingham be appointed.

Farmer Brown maintained that religion had nothing to do with giving physic, and pointing to his arm in the sling, thought that a sound arm, though a Catholic, was worth two of a damaged Protestant one.

Captain Seagrave, an *ex officio* member of the Board, and of much influence in the county, said that "after Brown's potent reason, he had little to add, but could not help thinking that it was a rather dishonourable thing for Mr Cottingham to oppose Dr Nolan, seeing the latter had bought the practice, and was the recognised successor to Mr Middleton, who had held this same appointment with credit to himself and satisfaction to the Board, for upwards of thirty years.

"It was not considered honourable in the profession, nor indeed in any sphere of life, for one man to take a mean advantage of another. We all know that it is the custom in England for a doctor to buy the goodwill (so to speak) of a practice, and he does so on the faith that his brother practitioners will not oppose him in securing the appointments connected with the prac-

tice. In a death vacancy, such as this is, the widow or orphans of the medical man have perhaps nothing else to trust to but the purchase money, and it does seem cruel and dishonourable in an outsider to step in and lower the value of the practice by his unwarranted opposition. It is this kind of dishonourable dealing which floods the country districts with inferior men, for it stands to reason, when a country practice gets broken up in this way, no really good man will apply for it. It is the look-out for all of us to keep up this conservatism, this monopoly if you will, for depend upon it, the better the practice the better the men who purchase. It is not a legal matter, but it is a matter of supply and demand. Good men demand and can get good incomes. Let us keep up the supply by discouraging all such underhand tricks which tend to cut down these incomes. This is the purely selfish view, but as I said before, the late Mr Middleton served this Board well for many, many years, and I think it will be hard if we do not pay this very slight tribute to his memory by supporting Dr Nolan, his recognised successor. I will therefore vote heart and soul for Dr Nolan, and I think if we guardians appoint him there is little fear but that the Local Government Board will confirm the appointment." This long generous speech of Captain Seagrave settled the matter, and Dr Nolan was appointed by a large majority.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THIS little difficulty of the Union appointment being settled, Nolan went to work with a will, and felt that he was gaining the hearts and confidence of his patients. Those who had left the "Weston doctor" began gradually to come back, and he seemed bringing the practice back to its old position.

Mr Cottingham, not content with fair dealing in the way of opposition, condescended to the meanest tricks of toadyism and quackery. He called regularly on all the farmers and tradespeople, whether patients or not, and tried to curry favour by giving dinner and supper parties. This at first seemed to tell well with a certain class, who spoke of Nolan as "all very well, but too proud and stuck up for their tastes."

A young doctor, if a gentlemen, must always feel difficulty in deciding in his own mind on whom he ought to call. In a city or large provincial town this difficulty is not felt, as the class to which the doctor should belong is generally large enough and important enough to indicate and approve the friends he makes. With the country doctor, the difficulty is where to draw the line. It stands to reason he cannot associate with all his patients, or even with all those holding, financially speaking, the same position. His time does not permit of this, and besides, on other grounds, it would scarcely be desirable. By selecting one here and there, he unconsciously draws invidious comparisons and gives offence. A clergyman can call on all his parishioners, if

he so choose to do, but in number these do not form a tithe of the doctor's possible acquaintance. And the clergyman has always the power of checking any undesirable visitor, whilst to the young doctor this may mean loss of income, and perhaps of success.

The best course, the one I adopted myself, and the one I seriously advised Nolan to follow, was not to make calls of ceremony at all. A doctor is not expected to make such calls, and his not doing so, will not be put down to want of good breeding or kindly civility. It is not to be expected that a doctor in anything like good practice will have time for this kind of thing.

Nolan, I found, was rather annoyed that some of his better-class patients had not called on him after his marriage. This I tried to show him was not a great misfortune, for to my way of thinking, classes should not mix, especially when there exists any feeling of patronage on the one hand and sufferance on the other.

"Yes, but Dr Gheist," said Nolan, to a remark of this kind, "I am a gentleman by birth, and have as good blood in my veins as many who stand aloof and consider themselves above me."

"Do as I do, Nolan," I replied, "and you will never regret it. Keep to your own class in society, and claim admittance to their attention, as a good medical practitioner, and nothing else."

"But what of my dear little wife? Is she to be buried in the country without a friend, without society, unless she chooses to accept the rustic and vulgar patronage of those who are not in her own position, either by birth or education?"

"That is one of the drawbacks in the life of the country doctor," I replied. "He stands alone in a social border-land of his own, neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, so to speak, thinking himself, and truly, too good to mix on equality with well-to-do tradesmen and small farmers, yet not good enough, and truly, to claim equality with the lower grades of the upper crust of society. His own class is in the minority in the country, and he has either to take a questionable and undesirable position in the lower or higher grades, or do without general society altogether. My advice to you, Nolan, is to forego the pleasure of general society, and try to attain, what in my eyes is far more worth having, a place in the upper ranks of scientific medicine. Such is my honest conviction, and though I cannot flatter myself that I have as yet placed my foot on the enchanted ground, I still struggle on, and hope one day to belong to the aristocracy of the profession."

"But, Gheist, you are a bachelor, and haven't a dear little wife pining at home for some one to speak to. She must have society, and the question is, where is she to get it?"

"Home duties, home interests, will soon claim all or most of her attention, and believe me, Mrs Nolan has too much sense to cry like a child for the moon. In a remote country district like this, society suitable for your wife is not to be had, unless under the difficulty of driving all over the country for it."

It is now some years since Nolan and I held this conversation, and I think he has followed my advice to the letter. He has made very few general friends,

but has many, many kind-hearted and devoted patients. A man of no common ability, he is beginning to attract attention amongst the upper ranks of the profession by his investigations in special departments of scientific medicine.

Mr Cottingham has long since left Nolan's neighbourhood, and now keeps an open surgery in the East-end of London. He is making money at this trade, and still keeps his *connection* together by an occasional supper, and constant toadyism.

Chatty Müller has still got her sleepy eyes, and fine honest face, but she no longer pines for society, for she and Nolan between them have almost filled the house with little ones, who keep the whole place bright with their merry laughter.

Miss Robb, cousin Jeanie, lives with them, and is thinner and more shrivelled than of yore. She travels no more, and the shares in the Atlantic and Dutch steamers have fallen in value in consequence. She still looks upon her nephew Nolan as the most wonderful interposition of Providence, and has still hopes that he may yet be converted.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A PATIENT once speaking to me about an old physician in one of the neighbouring towns, said, "He is very clever and skilful, but, Dr Gheist, he is getting old and *passé*." This was a

new idea to me at the time, and I stored it in my memory. Lately, however, this idea has cropped up again in a more disagreeable form, for it strikes me I am getting old and *passé* myself. I have been obliged to give up riding on horse-back, as too much physical exertion for my old bones, and have taken to a brougham. My hair is now quite white, and I often wonder if the time is drawing near when I shall be laid aside from the practice of my beloved profession. I have had, perhaps, more than my share of good fortune, as regards lucrative practice, but at seventy years of age, I am obliged to confess that I am still a comparatively poor man. A doctor seldom makes money enough to retire on in his old age, certainly very few country doctors do, and I cannot help thinking that an old bachelor like myself, with no son to take his place, and help his old and failing energies, is not in a very desirable position. Most, if not all the college friends who started in the race of life with me, are long since dead, and I feel at times dreadfully old, in fact, just like my dear old Arab horse, "Vedette," past work and good for nothing. Lonely feelings often come over me as I sit by my lonely fireside, and wonder to myself what kind of man Dr Gheist would have been with a houseful of bright, loving, protecting children. Truly Nolan was not far wrong in saying that a doctor was nowhere without a wife. I don't think any man is. When the cold grey mists of age come down upon us, we do feel the want of these family ties.

In some such lugubrious strain, I had written to Dr George, at the same time telling him that I had serious

thoughts of either retiring on what little I had, or of taking a junior partner. I had often pleased myself with the idea of spending the last few years of my career in finishing this story of my life, and one or two other papers which lay sketched out in my desk. I had been assured by one or two literary friends, to whom I had shown some of these papers, that however much a book of this kind might be wanted, it would not find a publisher, or if published, would never be read, except by a stray medical man here and there. In spite of this ominous warning from my friendly critics, I determined to finish what I had so nearly completed, and trusted that if a stray doctor, here and there, did look over its rather prosy pages, they might get as much pleasure in reading as I had in writing them.

A few days after receipt of my letter, Dr George answered it in person. He came down, he said, to see if I really meant what I had written, for if I did, he intended being the junior.

"But are you serious, George? You can't mean it."

"I most certainly do," said my old assistant, "never was more serious in my life."

"But I thought you were getting on so well where you are; were quite settled in fact."

"So I am, Doctor," said he, "but my father, as you know, died lately and left me comparatively well off, and as I don't like the place, though it is where my father and grandfather were before me, I will come down to the dear old Midlands, that is to say, if you will have me. The truth is, the old place is quite changed in character

since these furnaces and iron works have started, and the work is heavier than I care for."

"Not much hunting I suppose in a busy mining country like yours?" said I laughing, guessing that had something to do with George's desire for a change.

"You have hit the right nail on the head, Doctor, there is not, and as I can afford to keep a hunter now, nothing will please me better than getting back to the dear old Midlands."

"And what does the 'Rosebud' say to the change?"

"Oh! delighted at the idea," said George, "and she hopes, if we do come to terms, it will be arranged that you stay with us. She'll take such care of the 'old Doctor,' she says."

"I have a good mind to close with you at once, and spend the rest of my shaky days in flirting with the 'Rosebud.'"

"Do, Doctor; my little wife is a rare hand at flirtation, and she always liked you. I'm not in the least jealous now, you know, so we may enter that in the agreement, 'Senior partner allowed so many hours a-day flirting with junior's wife.'"

We both laughed, and I told George I would certainly hold out for this clause.

We were enjoying a chat over old times when Mr Pike was ushered into the room, and the old boy gave quite a joyous sneeze when he saw George, and smelt the steaming punch which we were just preparing, preparatory to drinking success to the new firm of "Gheist & George." Poor Pike was often down in the country now taking his rents, and he told me in confidence that

he enjoyed the holiday. "Mrs Pike is an admirable creature, a talented woman, Dr Gheist, but she has a most outrageous temper." Pike was getting old too like myself, though I considered mine a bed of roses when I thought of his cruel fate. Truly God is good, and such wives as Mrs Pike are not common in the world.

George looked upon Pike's arrival as a good omen, and there and then made the old lawyer make a rough draft of the future agreement. This the old gentleman did with great fuss and importance, but he refused to enter any stipulation as to the free flirting of the senior partner. And I was happy, and a weight of years seemed lifted from my life. With George and Pike sitting round the bright cheery fire, old memories of the past rose up and blinded my failing eyes with happy tears, and it seemed as if I had suddenly grown twenty years younger, and that all the intervening melancholy experiences were but a misty dream.

THE END.



