An arm-chair in the smoking-room, or, Fiction, anecdote, humour, and fancy for dreamy half-hours : With notes on cigars, meerschaums, and smoking / from various pens.

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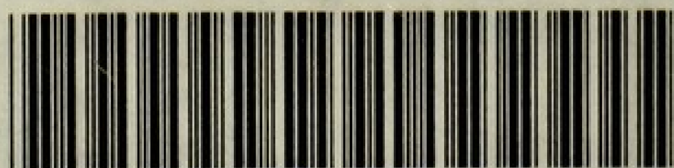
AN ARM-CHAIR

IN

THE SMOKING ROOM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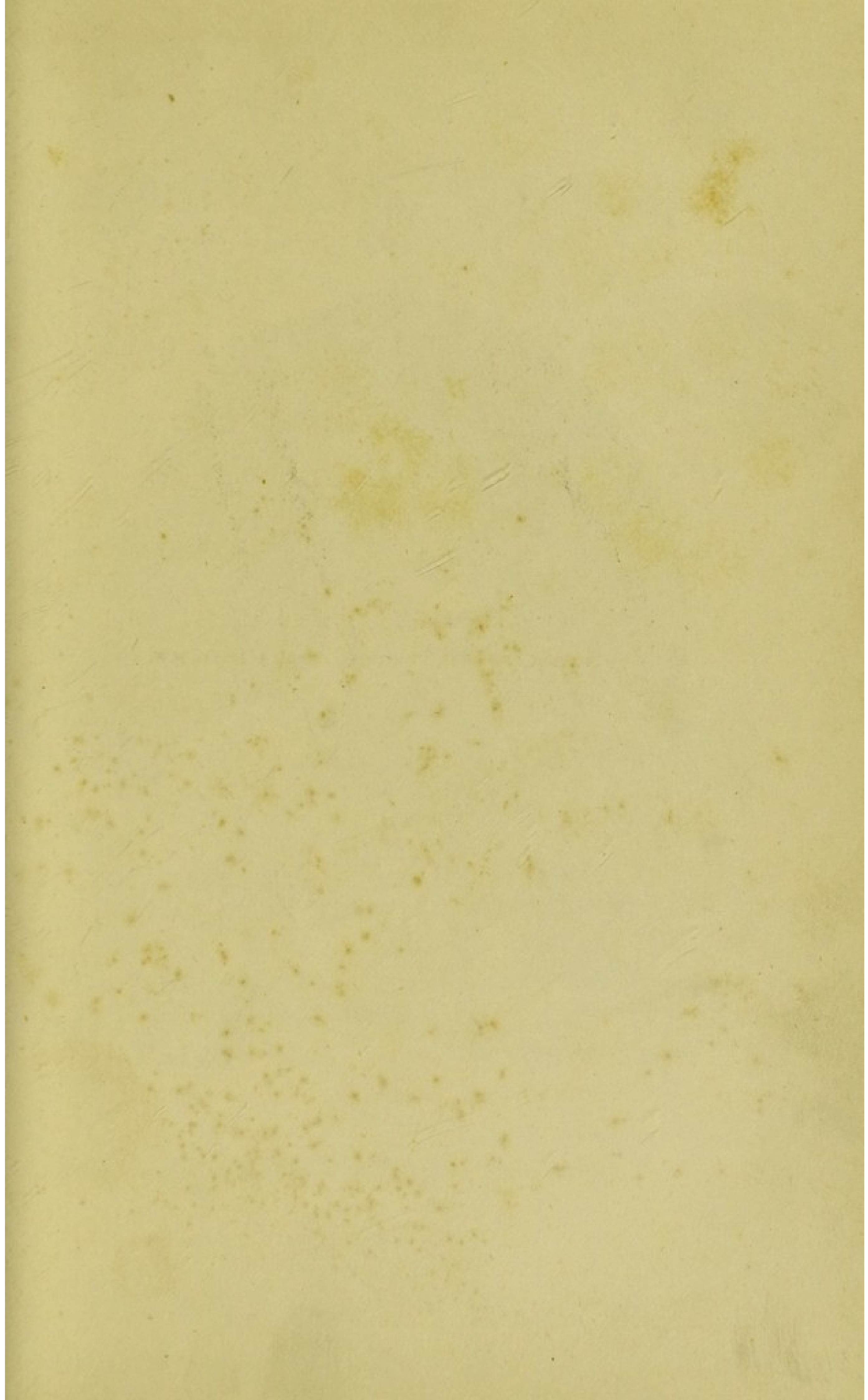

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ARM-CHAIR IN THE SMOKING-ROOM:

OR

FICTION, ANECDOTE, HUMOUR, AND FANCY

For Dreamy Half-hours.

WITH NOTES ON

Cigars, Meerschaums, and Smoking, from various Pens.

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AN

ARM-CHAIR IN THE SMOKING-ROOM.

ALL SMOKE:

Is a general proposition, which persons who are scrupulous to the letter in their statements might choose to modify into 'Nearly all people smoke.' There *is* a small minority who refrain from smoking; but those who do not smoke are considered, by those who do, as very poor creatures indeed.

Sometimes, on contemplating the hourly indulgence in this universal habit, this cosmopolitan luxury, I ask myself how the world—that is to say the Old World —got on before A.D. 1550, or thereabouts. We were all poor creatures then; our mouths were undecorated with cigars, our pockets ungarnished with lucifers, vestas, and neat little volumes of cigarette paper. No young ladies, then, embroidered tobacco-pouches, or sold them at fancy fairs for fancy prices. The tinder-

box and its substitutes were confined to the kitchen, or to the baggage of serious enterprising travellers who might have to roast their own dinner over dry sticks, after shooting it and preparing it themselves in the forest. The meerschaum, the yard of clay, and the *brule-gueule*, or short black muzzle-burner, were equally unknown and uninvented. There is no smoke without fire, and there is no tobacco-smoke without tobacco; and yet the world did get on, somehow, before A.D. 1550.

'All Smoke' is so slight an exaggeration, that it might be allowed to pass uncavilled at. All men smoke —as all ducks and geese swim—with exceptions which, if they do not confirm, certainly do not invalidate the rule. It may be granted, too, that the habit of smoking varies in intensity at different spots of the civilised globe. In France smoking wears the teeth out of the workman's mouth at an early age. He cannot work without his pipe; while his hands are busy, his lips must puff. He cannot walk to his meals without it; he cannot digest them afterwards without it. On a holiday, especially, he cannot take his pleasure without it; he cannot go to sleep without it. Paley said that teeth were made, not to ache, but to eat with. A French artisan's or labourer's teeth were given to him to hold a pipe. That is the final cause of French dentition ever since the creation of the human race. For the last five thousand years it has been perfecting itself for that main purpose. Iron would not stand the wear and tear that many of these teeth have stood.

But considering that teeth are also valuable for other purposes besides pipe-holding, I wonder that that ingenious nation has not invented some patent indestructible mouth pipe-holder.

Then again, in Germany, do they smoke, or don't they? It cannot be denied that they do, a little. Not to insist on what the vulgar does, I will merely instance in this respect the ways of a German professor, as sketched by an able contemporary.* Your German professor never gets on in the world, and he smokes all the day and most of the night. It must be allowed that no human being, not even a Turk, nor an English ensign, nor a French peasant of the département du Nord, can smoke anything like a German professor. A really practised and hardened German professor will not only smoke during every other moment of his waking hours, but he will smoke all through his dinner, taking alternately a mouthful of food and a mouthful of smoke. His spending years in proving that Being and Not-Being are the same, or that they are not the same, and if not, why not, and how otherwise, might seem to be irrelevant to the All-Smoke question; but some people might reasonably opine that it is only a natural consequence of the smoke.

In northern Italy at least, smoking on the wing has become so general a practice, that almost as much attention seems paid to your whiff by the way as to your reaching your final destination. At the Turin

* *Saturday Review*, March 18, 1865.

station, you step out on the platform, to take your place in a departing train.

'Fumare! Fumare!' shouts the guard, pointing to a second-class carriage.

'Non Fumare; Genoa!' says a traveller who is making his first appearance on this stage. 'I don't want to go to Fumare, but to Genoa. I don't even remember to have seen Fumare either on the time-table or on the map. "Non Fumare, non Fumare, se vi piace," if you please.'

'Non Fumare! Non Fumare!' again shouts the guard, pointing to a contiguous carriage.

Quoth I to my puzzled fellow-traveller, 'The train is going to Genoa, sir; but "fumare" indicates the carriages where you may smoke, "non fumare," where you may not.'

'Ah! Thank you! To be sure!' he said. 'My Italian has grown rusty for want of use. I took Fumare for a station!'

Nor may we in justice neglect American exploits in the smoking line. A letter from Winconsin mentioned the existence there of an individual named Joseph (it should have been Methuselah) Crilé, who was supposed at that date (April 1865) to be the oldest man on earth. He is, or was, a Frenchman, born in the neighbourhood of Yvetot, in Normandy. His baptismal register assigned him, then, the respectable age of one hundred and thirty-nine years. He was still active, able to cleave wood, and to walk distances of several miles. His habits were regular; his consump-

tion of drink was moderate ; but he could not live without smoking from morning till night. If tobacco be a poison, we must either admit that it is a very slow one, or else suppose that Methuselah Crilé had attained what is technically called 'a tolerance' of its influence.

From the aged, turn we to the juveniles. The *Journal of Education*, of Ohio (date unknown), informs us that in one of the schools of that state, consisting of five-and-thirty boys and girls, there are nine little boys who quid, and five little girls who smoke tobacco. The Journal seems annoyed by that statistical fact. 'We say nothing about the quidding,' it wails aloud ; 'but when we think of the smokeresses, we almost fancy ourselves at the Sandwich Islands.' The Journal is wrong to express surprise. In a go-ahead nation like the United States, the young idea, taught or untaught, will sometimes make extraordinary shoots. All that remains is for American mistresses of deportment to teach young ladies graceful ways of holding a cigarette, and of making the smoke, as it escapes, invariably curl in the line of beauty.

If the novelty with which America presented us, only three hundred years ago, had been attractive to any of the senses, we might be less surprised at the hold it has taken of all the Old-World populations. But its power is quite paradoxical. Although the plant itself is of portly mien, prepared tobacco has nothing which pleases or invites the eye ; while to the taste, the smell, the stomach, it is at the outset absolutely

offensive. Who is there who does not remember the painful experiment of learning to smoke?

Amongst others, Napoleon I. either never could or never would learn. In Egypt, he pretended to smoke —as he held out his possible conversion to Islamism —to please the Egyptians by adopting their customs. But he never could light his pipe himself. It was his Mameluke Roustan's duty to set it going. If his master let it go out again, charcoal and matches were not ruinously expensive.

Afterwards, when the Persian ambassador presented him with a very handsome pipe, he ordered his valet-de-chambre, Constant, to fill and light it. The fire being applied to the mouth of the bowl, all that remained was to make the tobacco catch; but in the way in which his majesty set about it, no smoke would have appeared from that time till doomsday. He simply closed and opened his lips, without drawing the least in the world.

'What the deuce!' he exclaimed at last. 'There is no setting light to it.'

Constant diffidently ventured to observe that the Emperor did not proceed exactly in the usual way, and showed him the right mode of going to work; but the inapt scholar still returned to his bad imitation of the act of yawning. Tired at last of his useless efforts, 'Constant,' he blurted out, 'do you light the pipe; I cannot.'

So said, so done. It was returned to him with the steam well up, going at a high-pressure rate with a

double Persian power of smoke. Scarcely had he drawn a whiff, when the smoke, which he did not know how to get rid of, went down his throat, coming out again through his nose and eyes. As soon as he had recovered his breath, 'Take it away!' he gasped, 'take it away! What an infection! What a set of pigs they must be! It has turned my stomach!'

He was ill for more than an hour afterwards; and he renounced for ever 'a pleasure, whose enjoyment,' he said, 'was only good to fill up the time of idle people with nothing better to do.'

Nature certainly has done her best to deter us from the use of the dreamy weed; and, as happened long ago, men cannot resist the temptation of forbidden fruit. And when I say men, I include with them women. Ladies might possibly be influenced by the same spirit of contradiction when they first thrust powdered tobacco up their pretty noses. According to the doggrel song put into the mouth of a snuff-taking lady, somebody said they should not; consequently, they would.

'A pinch of snuff,
That horrid stuff?
Take it? No, indeed, I *can't*.
Such, Sally dear,
Was my idea,
Until my husband said, "You *sha'n't!*"

"You sha'n't!" to me!
Fiddle-de-dee!
Of course I take it on the sly.
You know, dear Sall,
For "sha'n't" or "shall,"
What husbands say is—all my eye!'

This spirited personage deserved, in return, to be addressed in the highflown language in which Balzac (not the modern novelist) requested a pinch of a lady who flourished in the days of Louis XIV. 'Madame,' he said, 'permit my digital extremities to insinuate themselves into your tobacchic concavity, to obtain from it the subtle powder which dissipates and confounds the aquatic humours of my inundated and swampy brain.'

Who, again, would have supposed beforehand that the taxes on so detestable an article would ever produce an important item in the state's revenue? Yet such we know to be the case in more than one European country.

Fancy, some three hundred years ago, when Jean Nicot, king's advocate and ambassador extraordinary, first sent tobacco to France from Portugal, as a present to that amiable queen, Catherine de' Medicis—only fancy a bold financier requesting an audience of the Cardinal de Lorraine, and addressing him to the following purport.

'Monseigneur, knowing the treasury to be in a somewhat pitiable condition, I am come to propose a tax which will bring you in a couple of hundred millions of francs, cheerfully paid—voluntary contributions to the state revenue. There will be taxpayers in every family throughout the land, and you will never have to seize or squeeze to collect it.'

'State your project,' the cardinal might coldly reply.

'Monseigneur, it is simply this. The government has only to reserve to itself the exclusive privilege of selling a certain herb, which is to be reduced to a pow-

der sufficiently fine for people to stuff it up their noses. The plant may also be left in the leaf, to be chewed, or to be burnt for the purpose of inhaling its smoke.'

'Your plant, then, affords a delightful perfume sweeter than amber, musk, or roses?'

'By no means,' the speculator would reply. 'Its smell is unpleasant rather than not.'

'I understand. It is a panacea, a specific, endowed with marvellous healing virtues — perhaps snatching sick men out of the jaws of death.'

'Not at all, quite the contrary. The habit of sniffing-in the powdered herb weakens the memory and destroys the smell. It causes giddiness. There are instances of its bringing on blindness and even apoplexy. Chewed, it renders the breath offensive and puts the stomach out of order. Inhaling the smoke is a different affair. First attempts bring on pains in the chest, nausea, swimming in the head, colic, and cold perspiration; but in the course of time and by persevering, you gradually get accustomed to it.'

'How many people do you believe you will find to be fools and idiots enough to punish themselves for your tax-gathering purposes by smoking this plant or stuffing their nostrils with it?'

'There will one day be, Monseigneur, more than twenty millions in France alone. I don't mention the millions in England, Germany, and elsewhere, because they, Monseigneur, pay *us* no taxes.'

If the cardinal had ordered the schemer out of doors in a huff, or got him put into a lunatic asylum, his con-

temporaries would have given him small blame for it. And yet, as events have proved, he would have made a great mistake in rejecting that counsel.

This last bit of badinage is the whimsical view which Alphonse Karr takes of the tobacco-tax question; but he exaggerates, perhaps, the dangers of the weed when employed with ordinary precaution. Another of his countrymen, Eugene Pelletan, rivals our King James I. in the violence of his counterblast against tobacco, ascribing to it a considerable share in causing what he considers the decadence of France. Be it noted that he holds up for wine, lauding it as the genuine national beverage, and utterly proscribing the use of alcohol. Dram-drinking is his terror and aversion, while beer finds little favour in his eyes. Wine, for him, is his health and sanity; eau de vie and absinthe, madness and ruin. The flame of brandy burns up the blood, and the race of Frenchmen is dwindling away in consequence. The standard height for soldiers is obliged to be reduced. Thanks to absinthe, thanks to the distillers of beetroot—and the consumption of alcohol augments every year—in another century, perhaps in less, the world will really behold Frenchmen consumptive, puny, rickety, unable to handle either spade or gun, like the Frenchmen of old English caricatures. Now alcohol calls in the aid of tobacco, by the very nature of things, out of simple symmetry. One over-excites the brain, the other benumbs and stupefies it.

According to M. Pelletan, the very introduction of tobacco could not happen in an ordinary way. The cir-

cumstances accompanying it were necessarily startling and fantastic, like the compounding a charm or the completing an incantation. In the sixteenth century the monsoon wafted to Manilla a vessel manned by apes of a singular species. Dressed-up like men, they imitated human shape so well as to cause an illusion for the first few moments. But they ate fire-sticks, and ejected the smoke through a nasal protuberance of portentous length.

These curious animals were Spaniards, who had just learnt in America the art of smoking, and brought it piping hot to the coast of Asia. The inhabitants of the Indian Archipelago, accustomed to the small noses of the Malayan race, could not behold without secret horror the cornucopious aquiline of the Castilian type. The long noses got the upper hand of the short noses, thanks to the help of the arquebuse. The conquerors tamed the conquered race, reducing them to slavery. Do you know how? By stupefying and besotting them with cigars.

France offered a long resistance to the invasion of tobacco. The regent distributed it gratuitously, to excite a taste for it and create an artificial want. The tobacco-tax, at that time, brought in a few hundred thousand francs, at the very outside. It now produces two hundred millions.

But, at least, in the eighteenth century, tobacco was taken in powder by the nose, and there was something sympathetic in that fashion of taking it. The snuff-box passed from hand to hand; fingers were thrust

into it in turn. The box itself represented a work of art, a jewel of price, a breviary of the heart, a portrait of some beloved object.

It was a mode well suited to the affected society of effeminate seigneurs, smart little abbés, giddy-brained duchesses, crumpled-up beauties, and heart-shaped mouths constantly baited with a smile. The action of the thumb in administering the pinch, by making the nose turn up more and more, gave it a defiant air; and the snuff itself, by peppering the mucous membrane, spurred the intellect, and the witticism exploded. Heaven knows what sort of witticism! But the eighteenth century thought of little else than love-making, with an epigram now and then to break the monotony.

Snuff, incessantly injected into the nasal sinus, ended by destroying the sense of smell. If the eighteenth century indulged in the love of flowers, it did so unconscious of their perfume. Its nose was stopped up. Now whoever loses the impressionability of a sense, at the same time loses a portion of native modesty. Witness the blind and the deaf and dumb. The eighteenth century, through its nasal deafness, became mad after game kept until it was high and tainted—after putrefaction on a silver dish. For the same reason it courted coarse amours, the gallantry of the lamp-post and the gutter. The Du Barry reigned everywhere, from the highest to the lowest, in aristocratic circles. Society so foul could only be cleansed by plunging it in the wash-tub of revolution.

And now that man has recovered his nose—that

he can inhale the perfume of beauty and flowers—he extinguishes another sense, that is, another perception of modesty. He takes in tobacco by the mouth; he breathes it in smoke. He converts the sanctuary of taste into a chimney. He lines and impregnates every corner of his palate with a sooty coat of nicotine. And yet that is the place where the immortal soul gives audience, the dwelling-place of speech—speech, the glorious communication of man with man, of man with woman. And when he whispers a confidence of the heart, it floats from his lip infected by the pipe, like the hot puff of fulsome vapour which reeks up from the window of an underground kitchen. What poetry can words of love retain when they present themselves in such bad company? A woman must sadly want to pardon the man when she goes so far as to excuse the cigar.

It is in vain that Nature (who appoints sentinels to guard us from ourselves) protests against this internal fumigation of our persons. In vain does she charitably warn us of the danger by the very difficulty we have in acclimatising ourselves to tobacco-smoke. The contagion of example draws us on: the demon of the pipe has got possession of us. No doubt the novitiate is long. We suffer sea-sickness ten times a-day; we shudder with chilly ague-fits; but by dint of undergoing the penance, we acquire the right of smelling offensively.

'Tobacco has killed kissing,' says Michelet. It does more: it closes the drawing-room. Formerly people conversed after dinner. Men and women, as-

sembled round the same lamp, went through a course of mutual instruction. The men initiated the women into intellectual life; the women taught the men the graceful arts of pleasing. Both parties were gainers by the bargain. It was free exchange in all its splendour.

But the male portion of the French population are anxious to compete with Yarmouth red-herring and Hamburg smoked beef. Whenever they are asked to dinner, as soon as they get back to the drawing-room they cast melancholy glances in all directions. What does it matter to them that their hostess is handsome, or witty and clever? Has a young man of the present day any need to toss back the ball, and answer one amusing speech by another? After dinner he is faint and languid; his thoughts are absent; his heart is wandering after a Havana cigar.

But, as a well-bred woman cannot convert her drawing-room into a pothouse, every creature who wears or might wear a moustache takes his departure at the earliest occasion, and goes into female society where he can smoke at ease, lolling back with his legs on the chimneypiece. Every evening *la jeunesse dorée* takes practical lessons in cynicism. Now and then an *élégante*, moving in good society, in despair at the cigar's severing humanity in two, and condemning her to a life of conversational celibacy, endeavours to retain the deserters by opening a smoking-room in her mansion, and herself setting the example with a cigarette.

But tobacco has a fuller flavour in an equivocal than in a respectable house. There, at least, it can be

moistened with beer and brandy. And thus a stinking West-Indian plant, burnt in the human gullet, banishes the wine-glass more and more. Neither the perfumed produce of Médoc nor the electric vintages of Burgundy retain their hold on the smoker's palate. The unhappy wretch plunges his lip in a frothy and bitter decoction of hops, or swallows a glass of kirsch at a gulp, which is one way as good as another of firing a pistol into one's mouth.

Smoking, like dram-drinking, is the consequence of having nothing to do, of disenchantment of the heart and mind. A prisoner of state alleged, 'Before entering my cell, I was innocent of tobacco; but I learned to smoke under bolts and bars, to beguile the weariness of solitude.'

The increasing consumption of tobacco is frightful. Children ten years of age already smoke. But it is time to think of a remedy. Tobacco is a poison—a slow one, if you will—but certainly a poison; for it benumbs the brain, extinguishes the memory, brings on giddiness, and finally engenders those horrible diseases, cancer in the mouth and softening of the spinal marrow. When it does not kill totally, it kills partially. In concert with its comrade alcohol, it ravages the organism and dwarfs the species.

Tobacco injures the human race not only physically, but morally. It strikes thought with atrophy and paralyses action. With every whiff of tobacco-smoke a man exhales an energy or a virtue. Germany smokes and dreams; Spain smokes and sleeps. Turkey, who

has been smoking these last three hundred years, has no longer strength to stand on her legs; reclining on a divan, she dreams all day long. But Toussenel somewhere says, 'A vertical nation will always conquer a horizontal nation.' Take care of yourselves, O Gallic youth! Unless you throw your cigar away, France may possibly vanish in smoke. Such is the conclusion of M. Pelletan's invective.

Another French author, M. Jolly, member of the Imperial Academy of Medicine, is indignant that smoking should be openly permitted in a government school. 'As if,' he says, 'learning the pipe-and-cigar exercise were a necessary preparation for serious studies; as if such a novitiate were the best introduction to a career of science, arms, and letters.' Worse still; a physician, whose name he suppresses out of respect for the rest of his colleagues, had the singular idea of proposing the use of tobacco-smoke as a salutary regulation for French Lyceums!

Tobacco did not find its way into the different countries of Europe either through the same channel or exactly at the same date. Its employment as an excitant and a stupefier is probably as old as the aboriginal populations of the New World itself. But its first introduction to the Old World cannot have occurred earlier than the sixteenth century. We owe it to a Spanish missionary named Fray Romano Pane, who had been taken to America by Christopher Columbus to convert the natives to Christianity. The worthy friar having remarked, in the priests of the god Kiwasa, the

fanatic excitement produced by the vapour of tobacco-leaves in fermentation or combustion, took it into his head to send seeds of the plant to Charles V., in all probability little suspecting that he was transmitting to his sovereign the germs of a revolution destined one day to overrun the world.

Such at least appears to be the origin of the culture of tobacco by Europeans. Spain had it first. This occurred in 1518; an epoch equally fruitful in superstitious frivolities and historical events. Cuba was the first spot selected, on account of the superiority of its produce. Portugal soon followed Spain's example, by growing tobacco in several districts of Brazil. Portugal also, observing how its sale increased, was the first to draw a revenue from a tax on tobacco. About that time, Cardinal della Santa Croce, then the Pope's nuncio in Portugal, imported tobacco into Italy. At the instigation of Admiral Drake, the Anglo-Americans had already broken up portions of wilderness in Virginia and Maryland for the special culture of tobacco. All this implies a certain demand, which, though partial and limited at first, must have been steadily on the increase.

Tobacco, therefore, was not only grown by, but afforded a revenue to a portion of europe, when Jean Nicot, French envoy at Lisbon, who had cultivated it in his garden, and had experimented on himself with tobacco-powder as a cure for headache, offered it, in 1560, to Queen Catherine de' Medicis as a sovereign remedy against that complaint.

Hitherto tobacco had only been employed as a fumi-

gator, by the aid of various apparatus, which have undergone sundry modifications before reaching the state in which we see them at present. But this time it was no longer a question of inhaling the smoke of the plant; its powder had to be snuffed in by the nose. And it was thus that, after journeying by sea and by land, and traversing a portion of Europe, tobacco made its entry into France by the narrow passage of her nostrils.

The moment could not be better chosen nor more opportune. The queen, who, as well as her son Francis II., suffered from obstinate headaches, received the remedy with the hearty welcome always given to new and far-fetched specifics. Of its success nothing is recorded. All we know is, that from that date headaches have often been the pretext for snuff-taking.

The custom soon spread, with incredible rapidity, throughout all classes of society. There was a mania, a rage for snuff. Rich and poor, men and women, healthy and sick, every one, furnished with their little roll of tobacco, and the grater wherewith to reduce it to powder, strove who should offer it and take it the most eagerly. Far from falling into neglect as time wore on, as often happens with the best of things, the use of snuff was constantly on the increase; to such an extent that, during the reigns of Louis XIII. and Louis XIV., it was almost the etiquette to present one's self at court grater in hand, the shirt-frill bespattered with snuff, the nose more or less stuffed with the precious powder, the cheeks slightly tinged with its hue, and the clothing thoroughly scented with its smell. Some few

of our aged contemporaries may have seen the last relics of that memorable epoch.

But the tobacco-graters (although articles of finery which rivalled the most expensive fans) could not long survive the improvements in the art of reducing tobacco to dust by machinery. They were succeeded by snuff-boxes, displaying in turn the marks of extravagant luxury. Both graters and snuff-boxes are alike responsible for the immense consumption of tobacco in France. No nation ever snuffed to such an excess; and that in spite of criticism and raillery, in spite of the advice of physicians, in spite even of the authority of kings and popes.

The Sultan and the Muscovite sovereign threatened death, the king of Persia amputation of the nose, Urban VIII. excommunication, Christian IV. of Denmark the milder punishments of fines and whippings, to persons guilty of tobacco-taking. But we know what little influence both laws and reason, either singly or in combination, have in checking the spread of a foolish fashion. We need not search history for examples—we need not go back to Rome, nor even to Venice—having contemporary instances before our eyes. 'The mode' will ever manifest its despotism by forcing society to adopt some new-fangled folly of the day.

Nothing, indeed, proves better than the history of tobacco the strange turns taken by human affairs—by the ways and doings of men and women. An acrid, fetid, and repulsive plant, unused by and unknown to all except the savages of America, is brought over to

Europe. One would say, before the experiment was tried, that it was sure to be despised and rejected, or at least let alone, and consigned to a corner in a druggist's shop with other nauseous and medicinal articles. But instead of that, presto! it suddenly finds favour as if by enchantment. The habits of nations are changed in consequence; a new indulgence is created; a new want, of primary necessity, makes itself felt by the world at large. Tobacco's triumphant march in advance shows the power of imitation not only on the human mind, but over the destinies of a people.

Nevertheless, the French did not yet smoke, although smoking was already common in Spain, Holland, Switzerland, and Prussia. And although France tolerated foreign smokers in the spirit of her habitual courtesy, she still kept exclusively to her pinch of snuff, seemingly in protest against what appeared incompatible with national manners.

As to the time consumed in smoking, by way of parenthesis, I say nothing, because in many cases the amusement is adopted avowedly as a means of killing time. Snuffing, it has been calculated, is even a greater waste of time than smoking. People can smoke and go on with what they are about; while snuffing, they do that and nothing else. Now every habitual snuffer is estimated to take a pinch six times at least per hour. Every pinch requires the employment of the handkerchief, the taking out of and returning it to the pocket, the opening and shutting of the box, and other indispensable manœuvres, taking up in all not less than

a minute and a half, or nine minutes per hour, or two hours twenty-four minutes per day (of sixteen hours only, not twenty-four), or thirty-six days and a half (of twenty-four hours) per annum, or exactly four whole years during a life of forty years—just the tithe, in short, of a person's existence.

Somebody asked Abernethy whether the moderate use of snuff would injure his brain.

'No, sir,' replied the irritable doctor; 'for nobody with an ounce of brains in his head would ever think of taking snuff.'

Louis XIV. did not smoke, but at least he tolerated smokers. Jean Bart was one of the first personages who introduced the pipe to court, whither he had been sent for by the king. As it was not yet daylight when he presented himself, he had to wait in the antechamber before admission to the presence. Knowing nobody at Versailles, he found the time long; so he took out his pipe, struck a light with flint and steel, and set to smoking in right good earnest. Such conduct was naturally considered extremely improper — the height of impudence. Nobody had ever before smoked in the king's apartment. The courtiers were shocked; the guards wanted to turn him out.

He coolly replied, puffing away, 'I have contracted this habit in the king my master's service, and it has become a necessity. I believe him to be too just a monarch to be angry at my satisfying it.'

As he had never appeared at court, there was only the Comte de Forbin who knew him; and *he*, fearing

the consequences of the freak, dared not acknowledge him as his friend. So somebody went and told the king that a strange fellow had presumed to smoke, and refused to quit the antechamber.

'Let him do as he likes,' said the king with a laugh; 'I bet anything it is Jean Bart;' adding soon afterwards, 'Let him come in.'

On entering, his majesty received him cordially, remarking, 'You, Jean Bart, are the only person allowed to smoke here.'

The name of Jean Bart and the king's gracious reception made a strange alteration in the courtiers' manners. When he left the king, they thronged about him, asking how he managed to get out of Dunkerque with his little squadron in spite of the fleet blockading the port. Ranging them close together in a line before him, he pushed his way through, elbowing right and left and pommeling them with his fists. Then, turning round, he said, 'That is the way I managed it.'

Sailors elsewhere had already indulged themselves both with the pipe and the quid, and so distinguished themselves from the rest of the service. But examples like these spread quickly, if only for the gratification of curiosity — as happened even to the daughters of the Grand Monarque. One day, when they were indulging in the novelty, without asking their governess's permission, they were surprised by the entrance of their royal father, who was struck all of a heap at the sight.

Copying the navy, the army soon smoked, beginning with the officers and *not* ending with the common sol-

diers; for now all France smokes like one man, with a single mouth, keeping millions upon millions of pipes alight. The pastime is not confined to the bivouac, but is practised everywhere, at all times, in all weathers, in all ranks of society, from the imperial throne to the meanest hovel. Princes and ministers, masters and valets, rich and poor, great and little, everybody smokes, ALL SMOKE. Smoking is perpetrated on foot, on horseback, in private carriages, in railway ditto, at work, during repose, always and everywhere. Almost the only interruption are the hours devoted to rest and sleep; and that interruption will shortly cease, when France shall be as advanced as Germany. Tender youth is not held a sufficient reason for abstaining from the use of tobacco. The adolescent smokes; the child, the schoolboy would also smoke were he not prevented rather by paternal surveillance and scholastic discipline than by the giddiness, nausea, and intoxication which are consequent on his precocious attempts.

Declamation is powerless in the face of stubborn facts, and when people have resolved to do a thing, it is of no use advising them not to do it. Still, we cannot conceal from ourselves that England, as far as tobacco is concerned, is beginning to rival the social state above described. From the Continent doubtless we have imported smoking to excess, just as we have imported moustaches, beards, white tablecloths at dessert, and dinners *à la Russe*. The one may be as irresistible as the others; but, unfortunately, it is neither so inexpensive nor so harmless, for it involves the whole

question of national hygiène, of the popular health, of the dwarfing of our race and the spread of disease.

Hardened smokers will go on in their own way, in spite of all they may read or hear; but beginners would do well to peruse attentively Dr. Richardson's able treatise, *For and Against Tobacco*. Although it is more 'against' than 'for,' it is sufficiently impartial to command respect; witness the following passages:

'The influence of tobacco on the heart has been very differently estimated by different writers. Some have conceived that its influence is entirely imaginary; others that it is most dangerous. The truth again lies, in this case, in separating functions from organic mischief. I do not think there is any evidence to show that tobacco alone is capable of producing structural change either on the valvular mechanism or the muscular fibre of the heart; on the contrary, I believe that in persons strongly disposed to rheumatism and gout—diseases which arise from the presence and accumulation of acid matters in the blood—the tobacco, from its alkaline reaction, is rather a preventive to structural change in the heart than otherwise. I speak with diffidence on a subject which scarcely admits of demonstration; but yet I feel that I have had evidence and actual experience of the fact named. Once more; in persons who, either from necessity or ignorance, subject themselves to an unnatural degree of muscular exercise, and who make, as a consequence, egregious demands for labours on that pulsating organ which knows no rest; in such, I believe the influence of a

pipe daily (I do not mean of many pipes), is beneficial rather than otherwise. In these, the tobacco puts a curb on the extra excitement, and, acting as a sedative on the heart, prevents its over-action and arrests its excessive development.

'Nay, strange as it may appear, I am inclined to believe that tobacco, instead of increasing the evil effects of alcohol on the heart, renders them less determinate; for alcohol tends to create fermentative changes in the stomach and alimentary system, and to give rise to those acid modifications of the blood on which the more serious organic diseases of the heart mainly rest; while the tendency of tobacco is to stop those changes. Alcohol also excites the action of the heart; tobacco subdues it. Thus, if two men sit down together and take an equal quantity of spirituous drink, and if one smoke and the other do not, the action of the heart will be much less increased in the smoker. I do not, of course, put this forward as an advantage, because it is very foolish for any one to take alcohol in excess; but I name the fact, in its simple meaning, as a fact.'

Finally, the writer is not, nor likely to be, a member of any anti-tobacco society. He is neither a slave to the cigar, nor an utter stranger to it. When he wants one, he takes it; when he does not feel to want one, he goes without it.

THE THREE OVERHEARD WHISPERS.

Chapter I.

THE FIRST WHISPER.

Night after night the music clashed in our rear. It was very pleasant and interesting, as we lounged about in our little garden, or took coffee in the small building that served us for a summer-house. We were living in Paris, and, for the sake of economy, quite close to the barriers, for the rents get wonderfully cheaper as you clear away from the Champs Elysées and the Faubourg. Now close to our residence there was some place of public entertainment, the Salle d'Artois, I think they called it. We did not much like the proximity, but there was never any noise or disturbance, and the crash of the music through the summer air was at times pleasant enough. It is astonishing what children in respect to amusement our heroic neighbours are. In the pettiest locality they get up some parody of a theatre or some imitative Mabille. I am bound to say, however, that our Salle d'Artois was a considerable ornament to our avenue, which converged, like many other identical avenues close by, to the main boulevard and the per-

petual *rond point*. There was a revolving gate to the salle, or jardin, before which the inevitable gendarme lounged, and on each side there was a bowery expanse of foliage, and in the foliage were niched statues, claspedly holding lamps that shed a mild seductive lustre. The general notion conveyed by the whole was that this illuminated pathway led you on to some ideal hall of dazzling delight; but we knew by the view from our back windows that the place was a mere barn, and that it belonged to that numerous class of entertainments of which the best part is to be seen on the outside and for nothing. A very moderate price—half-a-franc, I think—would give admission, and of this half-franc half was to be returned to the ticket-holder in the way of *consummation*. It was, in fact, a mushroom-sort of concert or casino-place, of which so many spring up in the outskirts of Paris, and which provided a kind of rough entertainment for local patrons who wanted to do things cheap, and to be saved a journey into Paris.

The salle might be necessary for those people in *Les Ternes* who insisted upon some kind of amusement every night, and who, rather than not have it, would shoot for nuts or ride on horses in a whirligig. We Britishers do not require much amusement, and when we take it we like it of the very best. I don't know how often I had passed the alluring portal of the salle with its coloured lights. I don't know how often I hadn't had the benefit of its rapid dance-music. But I can truly say that the remotest intention of visiting this choice place of amusement never crossed my mind.

Neither can I explain to myself up to this day how I ever came to do so.

I remember that it had been very hot all that day; that I had stopped at home trying all sorts of combinations with ice and eau de Seltz, which had the invariable effect of making things in general much hotter; that in the evening I had gone to two or three places where that day was the reception-day; that I had come back and, as my custom was, had smoked and taken coffee, looked through the *Moniteur du Soir* and *Le Petit Journal*, favourite publications in our economical quarter of the city. After that, in the cool of the evening, I took my little constitutional turn round the garden, smelling the wall-flowers that were our chief horticultural ornament. Then I paused. It was *onze heures*. Being a man of regular habits, as an ordinary matter I should have gone in-doors, have tampered with my constitution with some more iced effervescing drink, and composed myself towards slumber with a book. But the music was crashing so emphatically, that, to the dismay of the concièrge, who, relying on my regular habits, had gone to bed, I sallied forth into the boulevard. 'I declare,' I said to myself, 'I will look up our little salle to-night. There's nobody who will know me. And I've heard the music so often that they ought to see the colour of my money.'

Near the entrance there was a narrow lane—about a stone's-throw off. I think I see it now—narrow, and so dark from the huge buildings that lined it. And in the lane that night—I remember it so well—was a

private cabriolet, with a dark-coloured panel, and two servants in livery, waiting in a leisurely way, as servants wait who have waited long and have long to wait. Then I paid my coin, and the enchanted portal received me. I advanced up the fairy path, which came to an abrupt termination at the first curve. I emerged on a mere shed, uncovered and opening on a bit of ground, the general effect being entirely sordid, the sordid effect harmonising with all the accompaniments. There was some dancing going on, of an irregular and free-and-easy kind, a few only indulging in terpsichorean vagaries, while many more, seated at little or long tables, looked critically on. Not a few men were in blouses, and some women in caps; a genuine *ouvrière* class, which had been working hard all day, steadily looking forward to their evening's relaxation. Then there were some very dressy young men, with companions equally ornamented. Cigars and cigarettes were freely going. Beer appeared to be the popular beverage—the black beer or the bière de Strasbourg, or that cheap fizzing beer of Paris which I suppose a good restaurant would hardly admit. Such as had Bordeaux, or vin ordinaire, were mollifying it with water and sugar. There were also one or two cadaverous men who even at that hour were partaking of the infernal absinthe. One young man I especially noticed, who was very quietly dressed, but whose very superior appearance seemed tacitly recognised. He was smoking a cigarette and sipping some maraschino.

Then the band played a fine piece of music, and

played it finely too; an overture to some little-known opera of Rossini's. Afterwards one of the band went round collecting coins in a saucer—another evidence of the lowly aims of the establishment. I gave largesse, remembering that this was not the first of my obligations to the musicians. The maraschino man, whose offering was expected with ill-repressed anxiety, dropped in the delicate, glittering, slight five-franc gold-piece. Presently a functionary announced that Mademoiselle Rose would favour the company with a song, and there was the heavy thud or knock which in France so ungracefully announces a new phase in an entertainment.

When Mademoiselle came forward I gave a start; for if ever Mademoiselle was equivalent to Miss, it was so here. And when she began to sing, though the pronunciation was French, the accent was English. She sang sweetly, but without much force, as sentimental a French song as such an audience could be expected to bear. I watched her face with much anxiety. It was a very pretty face, and, to my pleased astonishment, it had an expression of goodness and honesty about it, on which I am afraid I had no right to count in such a place and amid such a company. Her dress was fastened up to her throat, close fitting, and very neat and simple. Her manner was altogether lady-like—not the imitation lady-like of many minor professionals, but genuinely and unaffectedly so. I confess I began to entertain a very lively feeling of interest for the young cantatrice. I thought I should be glad to make her acquaintance. My motive was entirely

Platonic and philanthropic. I belong to the uninteresting order of Benedicts, and my notion was that I should like my wife to make friends with this young girl, who perhaps had no English friends, and who was certainly very unfavourably situated, and save her from what I felt must be a miasmatic moral atmosphere.

When she had finished singing, she made her curtsey and took her seat at a little table near the buffet of the salon. It appeared, then, that she was not likely to retire to a green-room—indeed it was hard to see where anything at all corresponding to a green-room might have a geographical position—but, with an opera-cloak thrown over her shoulders, continued an object of public admiration. I moved towards her table, and, relying on the integrity of my intentions, was about to make a self-introduction to her. I was anticipated, however, by the gentleman whom I had noticed as the only gentleman in the place, who finished his maraschino, threw away his cigarette, and came over and sat by her side. She gave him a winning smile of welcome—they were evidently no strangers—and entered into that close conversation that would evidently tolerate no intrusion. They were talking French, which she evidently understood quite well. I waited a little longer, in the expectation that she might sing again, but there were no signs that this was likely to happen. Then, as it drew towards midnight, I left the place.

But somehow I did not care to turn in even then. I paced up and down the boulevard, smoking my cigar in the balmy starlight night. Several times I passed

the entry of the jardin. The people were coming out, and by and by they came out in a considerable number. Then I knew the entertainment was come to a close. The carriage was still standing at the entry of the dark narrow lane, but the servants were manifestly getting under weigh for departure. I went leisurely along to the end of the avenue, and then turned once more, taking the same path. The carriage had now emerged from the lane into the boulevard, but was creeping on at a very slow pace, and presently became stationary. Turning up from the boulevard into the avenue, I came suddenly on a young girl and a man close by a bench beneath some linden trees. They were not sitting, but standing. They did not vouchsafe me any notice, but I recognised at once the songstress of the evening and the gentlemanly young Frenchman. She was leaning her head on his shoulder, and sobbing grievously, as if her heart would burst. To me it seemed—but the action was so momentary that I could not be sure—that he was pointing with his hand towards the carriage that was now within sight. Of course I could not venture to say a word, or even to pause; but as I walked very deliberately past them, I heard a convulsive sob, and then in English, in a low tone—quite a whisper—

'O, no, no! It cannot be until Friday!'

When I again turned back to resume my customary round, the door of the cabriolet was being opened by a servant, and methought it was the same young man who was entering, but I could not be certain. The young girl was sitting absorbed in thought on a bench

—not the same bench, but another higher up the avenue. With a sudden impulse I moved to address her, and respectfully raised my hat. As soon as she saw me, an expression of the greatest terror passed into her face, and she arose, and fled like lightning down the boulevard, and was soon lost amid the stems of trees.

Chapter II.

THE SECOND WHISPER.

I confess that, before I went to sleep that night, my mind was full of speculations on this little scene. At first I was full of commiseration about this young girl, concerning whom it was quite clear that she was lonely and that she was unhappy. Next my imaginative faculty set to work weaving a tissue of romance to suit the somewhat strange events that I had witnessed. I mentally resolved that I would make a point of dropping in at the Salle d'Artois for the next few nights, and observe how matters in general were progressing. In the morning, over the practical business of *déjeuner à la fourchette*, the little romance of last night lost all its colouring. There was nothing so remarkable that an English girl should be singing at a place of entertainment, that she should have a French sweetheart, and that her French sweetheart should make her cry. I had no business in the world to obtain a surreptitious

view of those tears. Then I did not see how I could carry my evening's investigations any further. That night we were going out to dinner to meet at the apartment of some English friends who invariably kept us very late. The night following we had the offer of a private box at the Théâtre Français—an offer too good to be refused. I must postpone any inquiry, or rather let the matter drop altogether. Everybody gets familiar with the experience of letting a thing drop. There is some clue to a difficulty, but we cannot carry it out; some fresh pursuit, but we have no time to prosecute it; an interesting correspondence, but we must give it up; a new introduction, but we cannot stay to see whither it may lead; and as grapes, hanging so high that we don't care to take the trouble of climbing for them, are probably sour, I told myself that the salle was a brutal hole not worth entering again, and that anything I thought remarkable about the girl was simply the result of my own frivolous fancy.

I may as well tell the reader what was my business and mode of life in Paris. I was a journalist, doing French work for English papers, and English work for French papers. I occupied the dignified position of Paris correspondent to the *Coketown Daily Express*, a flaming radical diurnal journal, which was published in one of our great industrial centres. The proprietors insisted that I should give my casual conversations with great ministers of state, and retail all the gossip that I might hear at the imperial ball at the Tuileries. As a matter of fact, I very rarely went *au château*, and my

visits were limited to occasions when, the court being absent from Paris, I obtained the usual order to go over the palace. Still I occasionally played a game of billiards with one of the attachés of our embassy, and I also knew a set of journalists to whom bits of political information occasionally oozed out. One of them, being of a metaphysical tone of mind, told me that he could 'project himself' into any political situation, and having arrived at all the data at command, he thought himself justified in making details out of his own inventive faculty. Availing myself of these hints, I proclaimed to my Coketown constituents plans of the Emperor for promoting the gradual growth of constitutionalism and the gradual approach of his frontiers to the Rhine. For the Parisian journal I edited and expounded the English news, and occasionally wrote an article on any subject of interest that might arrive.

To any one familiar with the tear and fret, the hurry and worry of a London newspaper, the change to Parisian journalism was most delightful. My paper was an evening paper, and that saved the night-work. Occasionally, if it was a saint's-day or fête-day, and the workmen wanted a holiday, we omitted our usual issue, and it did not make much difference. Then the way of transacting business was highly pleasing to the journalistic temperament. The hours between eleven and one are perhaps the busiest to our nation of shopkeepers; but to the Parisians it is a time of great ease and negligence. They take their breakfasts at cafés, and afterwards peruse the papers; sip *le petit verre*,

and ogle the women that pass by. If I wanted to find my newspaper manager, M. Alphonse Kock, about mid-day, I knew that I had only to go to a certain café on the Boulevard des Italiens, and I should find him picking his grapes or smoking his cigarette with a glass of liqueur by his side. It was about noon that I thus sought *mon cher ami*, Alphonse, to see if he wanted a few paragraphs for his evening issue, or could give me any sparkling items whereby the *Coketown Daily Express* might astonish the provincial mind.

'There's a girl run away from a convent,' he said. 'They brought a paragraph to the office last night. You English people always like to know any scandal about a convent.'

'There's a good deal of scandal about them at times,' I said, argumentatively.

'Ah yes, perhaps, poor little beggars!' said Alphonse. 'I don't think it does for us to notice this sort of thing in our paper. Catholic opinion is, after all, very strong in Paris.'

'Anything very sensational?' I inquired. 'Did the superior have her whipped, and kept on bread and water? did some gendarme, through a grating, espy her in a dungeon? did some one pick-up a piece of linen torn from her nightdress with an imploring entreaty written in blood?'

'O no,' said Alphonse, laughing; 'you will not have to write another chapter of the *Mysteries of Paris*. It is some convent where there is a large and good school; but they don't say the name of it. If I recol-

lect aright, it was neither novice nor nun, but some teacher, who had a right to go out a good deal, and went out one day and didn't come back. It's rather a spiteful paragraph, and calculated to get-up a little scandal and gossip. But the ground won't do for us to tread on. But will you have the paragraph?'

But as the paragraph did not seem to be sensational, I declined the offer, and was soon at work on the Funds and the Suez Canal, and, what was a still more important matter, inquiring whether the Empress really intended to put down the chignon, a point on which Coketown would naturally feel very anxious.

So I went about my usual avocations that day, and that matter of last night had quite faded away from my mind. It was my custom in those days to go and hear the band play in the gardens of the Tuileries. This lasted from five to six o'clock. It was a pleasant conclusion to the labours of the day, and gave plenty of time to dress for dinner afterwards. You paid two sous for your chair, and then a seat was provided for you in that open circular space in the midst of which the band was stationed. You heard the music better, to be sure, and you had a seat; but the heat was not so much mitigated as if you were in one of the alleys directly under the trees. The sun was very fierce that summer day, and I was driven to give up my seat. I went to a tree where I could rest myself partially, and also peruse a programme, being, as I call myself, 'constitutionally tired,' which my enemies construe as being 'habitually lazy.' In the path behind me two ladies were pacing

restlessly about. Once or twice they would pause, apparently to listen to the music, and then at once they resumed an eager conversation, with which the music had nothing to do. I confess that I had a momentary feeling of irritation against these ladies. If people don't care for music, why do they come to musical places? They were my own countrywomen, and I morosely thought that only English people would be guilty of such bad taste. What business had they there chatting and jabbering, instead of listening to the music?

Paris was at this time overflowing with English visitors, though many of the French residents were away. The Legislative sittings were just coming to a conclusion. But as these two Englishwomen once more promenaded down the path, they hardly appeared to be summer visitants belonging to any excursion of pleasure. I had done them an injustice. It was not mere 'chat and jabber,' as I had termed it. On the face of at least one of them there was an expression of terrible anxiety. The eye was wild, and the arm wildly struck out almost in an attitude of despair. As they once more passed by me, the elder one was speaking, and I heard her say in a compressed whisper of intense emotion, '*I should break my heart, if she has eloped from the convent with any Frenchman.*'

So saying, they turned abruptly from the alley, and went through a deserted path in the direction of the river.

Chapter III.

THE THIRD WHISPER.

The next night, my wife and I, and the young attaché, were at the Théâtre Français, at the Palais Royal, occupying a state-box.

This was not one of the little amenities, as might be supposed, of journalism. The box had been lent to the embassy, and the embassy had given it to the attaché, and the attaché had placed it at our disposal, subject to the pleasant condition of his own excellent company.

It was a most delicious box, such as you often get in Paris, but never in London. The London box retreats into bareness, ugliness, and shadow; but behind the sittings in this box there was a perfect miniature little drawing-room—a salon, cosy with couches and glittering with mirrors, where any number of one's friends might come round and chat between the acts.

The *parterre* was quite filled, not, as in the London pit, with a plentiful sprinkling of women and children, but with a critical audience of staid men, including, doubtless, a troop of *claqueurs;* but, nevertheless, sure to give eventually a clear discerning verdict on the merits of a new piece. It was a great night at the Français. There was a new piece by an eminent author, and this was also the début of a new pupil. Consequently, the house was completely filled, and M.

Alphonse Kock and his backers were there in great force that night.

The actress was a great success; she was one who, all her industrious and innocent life, had been working for and looking forward to this night. The piece was so good that in a very brief time it was plagiarised for the London and New York stage.

In the interval between the third and fourth acts, I had taken up my lorgnette and glanced through the house, and in the stage-box I saw the aristocratic young fellow who had been talking with the pretty English singing-girl at the Salle d'Artois.

That had been on the Monday night. On the Tuesday night we had been out to dinner, as I have mentioned. On Wednesday I had been concocting my lucubrations for the Coketown daily paper, which heard 'from our own correspondent' (great emphasis on the *own*); and to-day we were having this dramatic treat at the Français.

'Do you know,' I said to the attaché, 'who that man is in the upper stage-box opposite, with the bouquet, which I suppose he designs for Mademoiselle Reine?'

'Very likely,' returned my diplomatic friend. 'Papillon will be quite in love with Mademoiselle Reine. He's a terrible fellow, they say. Would you like to know him?' he continued. 'I can introduce you presently. I shall meet him at supper on the boulevards.'

'Who is he?' I said.

'Don't you know him? he belongs to the Jockey

Club, and is quite a great man just now. His father made all his money on the Bourse; but he is aristocratic-looking enough for the Faubourg St. Germain.'

'He is one of the Imperialist lot, then, I suppose; a new man and a rich?'

'O yes, he is rich enough, if he doesn't gamble it all away. He has got money, and his wife has money.'

'You don't mean to tell me that that young fellow is married?'

'O yes, he is. But when his wife has had a month or two at Paris, he sends her home into Normandy, and stays on as a bachelor. Lots of men do that. Paris is so expensive that they cut the season down as much as they can.'

'Is he a nice fellow?'

'Nice enough, according to Paris notions; but not very nice according to your English notions. A selfish lot, I expect. Very gentlemanly, but all on the surface, like most of them.'

I am very punctual and domestic as a rule, but having seen this young fellow under such very different circumstances the other night, I felt a curiosity to meet him. I accordingly accepted the attaché's offer to go with him to the supper at the Maison Dorée.

I put my wife safely into the carriage which we had waiting for us, and strolled with my friend, the Honourable Mr. R—, along the boulevards to the café where we should meet Papillon. There were one or two men from the Jockey Club there, the successful dramatist of the evening, and the attaché with some diplomatic

friends, who relieved the labours of the chancellerie with social relaxation at the Maison Dorée.

The supper was pleasant enough, as little Parisian suppers always are. But it is unnecessary that I should speak of it unless in reference to our gay young friend, Monsieur Papillon.

I was introduced to him, and he received me with the utmost *empressement.* His smile and his shrug were of the stereotyped Parisian character. I acknowledged, however, that his handsome face, his rich complexion, and his kindling eye would very probably make him a lady-killer, and his slightly-broken English speech, which on the whole he spoke exceedingly well, and his foreign accent, would prove little hindrance to his killing English ladies. It was easy to see, from the little he said in conversation, that he was devoted to pleasure, and had an utter abnegation of all principle. And so much is this the ordinary state of things in Paris, that I have sometimes wondered whether it might not be for the ultimate good of the world that Paris might be held beneath the Atlantic Ocean for a quarter of an hour.

Monsieur Papillon stared rather hard at me, as if haunted by some recollection of my face, but apparently he could not identify it. I had a momentary thought of reminding him of the Salle d'Artois; but, less from any reasonings on the subject than from an instinct, I mentally decided that it would be better not to do so.

He was certainly the most juvenile and joyous of Benedicts, and wore his married chains as lightly as if

they were roses. He made one or two jocular allusions to 'madame ma femme,' stowed away safely in the department of Calvados. As supper became prolonged, Monsieur Papillon said he would send away his carriage. Presently he told one of the waiters to send his servant in to him. At once a rather ill-looking fellow entered, whom I immediately recognised as having seen the other night amusing himself with the coachman while the carriage was waiting in that dark by-street in *Les Ternes*.

Monsieur Papillon beckoned the man to him, and spoke quietly a few words, in that quiet subdued tone in which people speak to servants when they do not wish to attract attention or to disturb company. Now it so happened that I sat next but one to this gentleman, my diplomatic young friend being interposed between us. I confess that I leaned back in my chair, and using him, as far as I could, as a screen, I sought to make out anything he might be saying. The attaché spoke to me, and I gave him a mechanical answer. I strained every nerve to hear what I could of that whispered conversation. At last, slightly raising his voice, but without departing from a whisper, he said,

'*Remember—the Maison Dupont at Fontainebleau.*'

Soon after, I departed. The fun of the party was growing too fast and furious for me. I was *very* married, and not able to regard connubial ties so slightly as that butterfly Papillon. It was a point of minor morals with me that I should get to bed by midnight. At mid-

night also the Salle d'Artois closed. Somehow there was an impulse on my mind that I would go and survey the ground, and see what the pretty English singer was doing with herself.

A *voiture de remise* took me quickly, and I arrived at the suburban place of amusement a good twenty minutes before it closed. But the company was thinning, and in a moment I saw that the principal person I sought was not there. I took some refreshment, and then tried, not unsuccessfully, to imitate the ways of those people who make a point of maintaining friendly relations with waiters and proprietors in the cafés they frequent.

'Had mademoiselle, the pretty Englishwoman, been singing that night?'

'Yes, but she was gone. She was gone at eleven hours.'

'Would she be there to-morrow night?'

'No—this was her last night. Her engagement was terminated.'

'How was that?' I asked next. 'She sang very nicely. Did not monsieur the proprietor think so?'

'Yes, certainly, she did sing very well—for an Englishwoman. But the public required novelties, and it did not do to keep the same singer long before them.'

'Had she been there very long?'

'Not very long.'

Here the man went away, and to my mind he did not seem to care to discuss the merits of the young lady who had just passed away from his employ.

That night I looked amid the contents of the parcel which M. Kock had sent me from the office for the paragraph to which he had referred, but I could not find it.

Chapter IV.

IN THE FOREST OF FONTAINEBLEAU.

The next morning, while I was dressing, I took a sheet of paper and wrote down the three whispers which I had overheard in the course of the last three days.

They were, of course—

(a) '*O no, no. It cannot be until Friday.*'

(b) '*I should break my heart, if she has eloped from the convent with any Frenchman.*'

(c) '*Remember—the Maison Dupont at Fontainebleau.*'

The curious notion had somehow wrought itself into my mind that it was possible that these three overheard whispers might stand in a certain relation and connection to each other.

It was just possible, but the chances were utterly against the truth of such a theory. There was indeed a certain speciousness in the idea. It might not be difficult to invent a framework of circumstances into which these three whispers might be tesselated and inwrought. But it was much more easy to suppose that the different whispers belonged to different sets of cir-

cumstances, standing in no sort of connection to each other. Of course, on any doctrine of chances, the odds were tremendously against the theory of any such correlation as I was supposing. Taking the three sentences in their chronological consecutiveness, what on earth could a Friday have to do with an elopement from a convent, and what on earth could an elopement from a convent have to do with any particular locality at Fontainebleau? And how extremely unlikely it must be that a gay, frivolous, and not over-reputable place like the Salle d'Artois could stand in any sort of connection with the staid solemnity of a convent! I had, indeed, it is true, certain information beyond these whispers, which might have a possible connection with their subject-matter. There had certainly been an escape from a convent. Here Kock's newspaper paragraph possibly corroborated and identified the second whisper. But I could not see in what possible connection the remark (b) could stand to (a) and (c). It was possible that (a) and (c) might stand in a definite relationship. The chances of a coincidence between the two were immeasurably better than the chances of a coincidence between the three. The existence of that charming gentleman, Monsieur Papillon, was a connecting link between the two. Was it also possible that his existence could be adumbrated in the second whisper? *i. e.* 'I should break my heart, if she has eloped from the convent with a Frenchman.' And now the subject, which had been gradually growing on my mind, made me feel quite hot and feverish. It seemed to me that some woeful drama

was being enacted that day, in which, quite involuntarily, I was called upon to play a principal part. And this very day, of which the golden moments were slipping away so fast, was Friday, the day on which something was to happen, the scene of which was laid at Fontainebleau. I flung down impatiently a set of numbers, which had just come in by post, of the *Coketown Daily Express*, though they contained some choice examples of my most careful observations and reasonings in politics.

'There is sometimes,' I said to my wife, 'a destiny in the overhearing of whispers. Do you remember the cranes of Ibycus?'

But my wife did not recollect the cranes of Ibycus.

'Ibycus,' I said, 'was a poet, who, travelling through a wild country, fell in company with two evilly-disposed men, who set upon him to rob and murder him, in which design they succeeded only too well. The dying poet looked around for succour, but saw nothing but some cranes hovering in the air. "O ye cranes!" he said, "avenge Ibycus!" A month or two later his two murderers were in an open-air theatre, and some cranes were visible not far off. "Behold," whispered one man to another, "the cranes of Ibycus!" Now this remark was overheard. Ibycus was bound to this city, and there was surprise and consternation that he had not arrived. It was manifest that these two men, whose physiognomy was probably hardly in their favour, knew something about Ibycus. They were seized, examined separately, and the truth coming out, were both exe-

cuted. Now these providential cranes brought murderers to justice. But it is manifest, my dear, that the casual overhearing of a speech was the moving cause of the discovery, though the cranes have always absorbed the credit.'

'Well,' said my wife, 'your overheard whispers gave a time, which is to-day, and a locality, which is Fontainebleau. There may be something worse than murder going on. Why don't you go down to Fontainebleau to-day?'

I was astonished at the direct simplicity of this suggestion, which had not occurred to my mind.

'Because,' I answered, 'I don't see how a convent can have anything to do with Friday or with Fontainebleau.'

'But I thought you gentlemen, if you had a lot of data, did not mind having an x in it, but sought to solve its value in an equation.'

This was really clever in the wife, and I thought there was something clever in the notion. Still I was by no means prepared to fling away a day on spec and make perchance a bootless excursion. 'But don't wait dinner,' was my *ultimatum;* 'for, after all, I might go down to Fontainebleau.'

I presently gained the knifeboard of the Courbevoie omnibus, and took three-sous worth of danger down to the Louvre. Then I continued to walk down the Rue Rivoli, bethinking myself that it was all in the direction of the railway-station whence I must start for Fontainebleau.

But how astonished I was when, just as I had gained the beautiful tower of St. Jacques, I came upon the very two women who had so greatly interested me in the garden of the Tuileries the day before yesterday.

Without the delay of a second I advanced to them and took off my hat. I turned to the elder one, who still had evident marks of grief and agitation on her countenance, and said—

'Madame, will you allow me to speak to you for a few minutes on a very important matter?'

She gave a little shriek. 'It must be about Clara, Mrs. Burns. O, sir, tell me where is my daughter?'

I asked them if they would step across the road, and enter into the little enclosure round the Tower. We sat down on one of the pleasant benches close by Pascal's statue. The air was scented with flowers, the little children were playing about with their *bonnes*, and there was the fountain's musical ripple.

'Is your daughter,' I asked, 'a tall, handsome girl—sings well—has fair hair and complexion, but dark eyes—about nineteen?'

'It must be she. It is the very same. O, sir, where is she?'

But I was phlegmatically obliged to say that I had not the least idea of her whereabouts.

They were so downcast at this that I ventured to explain that I thought it possible we might be put on the right track to find her. Then I soon succeeded in getting their little story from them.

The elder lady was the widow of a London merchant,

who, having always kept up a costly and luxurious establishment, had left his family only poorly off, owing to a great depreciation in the value of his property. There were several daughters, and it was necessary that at least one or two of them should become governesses, which was hard upon girls who were accustomed to a gay, and rather fast life. Mrs. Burns, an Anglo-Parisian friend of Mrs. Broadhurst's, had suggested to her that her daughter should enter a Dominican convent, where a school was kept, on what are called in England 'mutual terms.' The young lady was to give lessons in English, and receive some lessons in French. Board and lodging were to be provided for her, but no stipend was to be given. After a time Miss Clara Broadhurst grew exceedingly dissatisfied with her position. The early hours and the plain fare of the convent did not suit her. She had a great notion that she deserved a stipend. She had also a great notion that she had better go upon the stage, or that she might do well as a singer at public concerts. Although the living at the convent was so plain, and the rules so stringent, Miss Broadhurst was not called upon in any degree to be treated as a Roman Catholic inmate would be treated; and all her school-work being finished in the morning, she had full range of liberty between the early dinner and the early tea. There appeared to be no doubt but a great deal of this time was spent in the Bois de Boulogne. It appeared that she had made several undesirable acquaintances in Paris, in the case of English and French ladies, against whom Mrs. Burns could not ac-

tually allege anything, but of whom she disapproved as companions of the daughter of her friend. Latterly Miss Broadhurst had been dropping hints to her mother that she had an opening in life much more to her taste than teaching in a French convent. Then her letters grew rarer, and then they ceased. Later still she disappeared from the convent. She had gone out one afternoon as usual, and had never come back. It had evidently been a step studiously contemplated, for all her clothing and effects, for some days past, had gradually been in course of removal.

[I may here state, what subsequently transpired—that she had obtained an engagement to sing at the Salle d'Artois. I was never able rightly to make out whether she had formed the acquaintance of Monsieur Papillon previous to or during this musical engagement, but have reason to suspect that the former was the case.]

Mrs. Broadhurst had immediately been telegraphed for by her friend Mrs. Burns to come to Paris; and in a state almost of distraction she had been making inquiries everywhere in Paris about her daughter, but had not hitherto met with any success in the search.

Such is a brief outline of the hurried story which they told me; and they now looked impatiently towards me to see what consolation or guidance I could offer them. My own mind was in a state of utter incertitude. I was uncertain even on the question of identification—whether the girl I had seen was really the Clara Broad-

hurst who was missing. But here they were positive, and would allow no expression of doubt. I then told my trembling and astonished listeners that, assuming the identity, I knew that their Clara was intimate, and apparently deeply in love with a Frenchman; that I had heard her mention this present Friday to him in a way that looked like an assignation with him; that I knew that on this very day her engagement to sing in public terminated; and I also knew that on this very day the Frenchman was going to Fontainebleau. The almost irresistible inference was that she was going to accompany him to that place. I also told them that it was my intention to go to Fontainebleau that very day; but I did not think it necessary to say that I was going there simply on account of the young lady unknown, for then they might be building still higher expectations which might prove fallacious. I discovered that if we moved off at once we should be in time for as early a train as Monsieur Papillon was at all likely to take. We caught our train, and in about three quarters of an hour I and my two sudden and unexpected companions arrived at Fontainebleau.

The reader will probably recollect that long straight road, with its rows of straight trees, between the station and the town of Fontainebleau. We looked eagerly to see who might be our companions in the train; but no one whom I could recognise alighted at the station. When we got into the town, and had alighted at an ugly-looking hotel, I persuaded them to have some refreshment, and I endeavoured to calm Mrs. Broadhurst's

intense nervous excitement. Then I lighted a cigar, and strolled about, settling our plan of operations. My first object was to discover where the Maison Dupont might happen to be. I easily ascertained that it was a very respectable boarding-house, kept by M. Dupont, a respectable and responsible man, situated about twenty minutes' ride from the town, on the verge of the forest. Finding that some hours must elapse before the arrival of the next train, I persuaded them to visit the palace and grounds; showed them the spot where the first Napoleon kissed the eagles, and took his farewell; showed them the pond where the third Napoleon tumbled topsy-turvy among the great carp; pointed out the Empress's gondola, which I believed was the very same that Lord Byron had used at Venice; and, in fact, exhausted all my little store of Napoleonic reminiscences. The ladies, however, were hardly in a state of mind that permitted them to do justice to my agreeable and improving vein of anecdote. I thought it best, therefore, to dismiss all notions of sight-seeing, and confine ourselves strictly to the immediate business of the day. Mrs. Broadhurst and I were immediately to proceed to the Maison Dupont, and Mrs. Burns was to return to the station and watch for the runaways. It was curious how the impression that they would arrive had now become rooted in our minds.

We drove leisurely to the locality that had been indicated to me, obtaining glimpses of flowery spaces and deep forest glades. When we arrived at the Maison Dupont, we were ushered into the pleasant presence of

Madame Dupont, and, as I had agreed with my companion, I took charge of this sufficiently difficult and embarrassing business.

I asked Madame Dupont if she had room for any more inmates.

Madame Dupont was very full, and was expecting fresh arrivals. Still there was one chamber unoccupied.

Mrs. Broadhurst at once said that she would be glad to engage the room for herself.

Might I ask who were the new arrivals? We were daily expecting some friends of ours who were going to sketch in the forest.

She thought it was for a gentleman and his sister. The name was Bertrand. Her two best bedrooms were taken for them, by telegraph. They had also wanted a private sitting-room, but she had only the use of the public rooms to offer them; but for the day at least they would have these rooms pretty well to themselves.

I will now put down in chronological order the few remarkable events of that afternoon.

Good Mrs. Burns waited for many anxious hours at the uninteresting station. It had been arranged that if they came, and proceeded anywhere else than to the Maison Dupont, she should follow them, and at once communicate with us by a messenger. But if they went to the Maison Dupont, her mission was at an end, and she was to return to the hotel, where we would communicate with her.

The eight-o'clock train from Paris duly arrived, and then, sure as fate, Mrs. Burns recognised her young

acquaintance Clara Broadhurst, leaning on the arm of a young dandified Frenchman.

'Why, Clara,' said the good lady, 'what brings you here? and how d'ye do? They told me that you had returned to England. Didn't you like the convent?'

'Madame,' said Clara, very haughtily, and speaking in French, 'I am sorry that I have no time to speak to you now. I may tell you that I am engaged to marry this gentleman, Monsieur Bertrand, of Marseilles, and have come here on a visit to some of his friends.'

The gentleman had calmly ignored the stout English lady, and was hailing a voiture. Clara made a curtsey and swept past her. Mrs. Burns was petrified with astonishment. But she heard the word Dupont in the direction.

When Monsieur and his interesting companion arrived at the Maison Dupont, they were met by the smiling landlady, who told them that she was so sorry that she had no private room for them. There was only a gentleman in a *salon*, and she understood that he was going almost directly, as soon as he had done some little business for a friend.

There was a gentleman sitting at the window, with his hat in one hand, and that day's *Galignani* in the other. This individual was the esteemed Paris correspondent of the *Coketown Daily Express*.

As he entered, I rose from my seat and faced him. 'Ah, Monsieur Papillon,' I exclaimed, 'I am so happy; what an extraordinary encounter! I had the pleasure

of meeting you in very agreeable company last night on the Boulevards.'

He shook hands with me hurriedly and gave a forced laugh. '*Vous avez tort, monsieur.* I am M. Bertrand, of Marseilles, much at your service. What do you say — Papillon? it is one good joke. They call me that because I am light-hearted.'

'Just as you like,' I answered; 'it is of no importance; but I don't think our mutual friend, the Hon. Mr. B., of the English embassy, would take such a liberty with either of us as to make an introduction under false colours.'

I noticed that he bit his lips and appeared greatly disgusted. His companion turned first towards him, and then towards me, her large inquiring eyes.

'Ah, B., he is what you do call one funny dog.'

'And so are you, Monsieur Papillon,' I answered. 'But how is madame your wife — and the charming little infant in Calvados?'

He changed colour very much, and muttered a *mille tonnerres.* Then he seized his companion's resisting hand, and said smilingly, '*Voilà madame.*'

'No, no, no,' I said, laughingly; 'that is not Madame Papillon. Unless I am greatly mistaken, that is *Miss Clara Broadhurst.*'

She started up, almost as if shot. 'O, sir, and do you know me? And is not this gentleman M. Bertrand, of Marseilles?'

'My child,' I answered, 'his name is Papillon. He is a member of the Jockey Club at Paris. His place

is in the north of France, where he has left his wife.'

She cast on him a look of the most indignant reproach; then she burst into a flood of tears and began to moan. 'O, what shall I do? What shall I do? My mother, my poor mother! O, I wish I had never come to Paris! O, my mother, where are you?'

'I am here, my child,' said Mrs. Broadhurst, and she calmly glided from the *petite salon* adjoining, and folded her weeping daughter in her arms.

When I went up to Paris, a few hours later, by the night mail, among the gentlemen in the smoking compartment I recognised, with much satisfaction, my young friend M. Papillon. He was very affable, and offered me a light.

Miss Clara Broadhurst afterwards sang in a London concert-room. After a very short term of professional life, however, she married a very worthy man. I wonder, however, whether he—or indeed either of them—altogether knew about the curious incident of the *Three overheard Whispers.*

THE STORY I HEARD IN THE SMOKING-ROOM.

We were staying a large party at Thornton Court, at the beginning of the pheasant-shooting season, when I heard an account of an optical delusion, which is of such a novel character that I can hardly suppose it will not be interesting to many people. The ladies had gone, or at least were *supposed* to have gone, to bed; for I have often, on my way back from the smoking-room, at an hour when all but a few confirmed lovers of the weed are believed to be asleep in a country house, heard through the doors, which communicate between some of the young ladies' rooms and the corridor, sounds of voices and of laughter, which I hardly can imagine proceeded from sleeping occupants, and which have led me to believe that the vague stories we hear of little chats by members of the fairer sex over their bedroom fires are not altogether unfounded. At any rate every one had left the drawing-room; one by one, smokers in every variety and every colour of smoking-jacket and of dressing-gown, had dropped into the before-mentioned sanctuary of tobacco, where, under sporting pictures and one or two foxes' brushes, and shut off from the rest of the house by double baize doors, we formed a party of about half a dozen, round the cheerful fire which the chilly days of early October

rendered quite acceptable. After all the members of the social community were supplied with cigars and large glasses, which contained various compounds of effervescing waters, and had settled into their chairs, we chatted over the pheasants, the prospects of hunting, the merits of some well-known race-horses, and such other subjects as form the staple of conversation on similar occasions; somehow or other the conversation turned upon ghosts and spiritualism. All discussed the subject except the usually conversational Colonel Houghton, who silently pulled away at a large cigar and gazed steadfastly into the fire.

'Come, Houghton,' at last said Randon, our host, 'what is your opinion on the subject?'

'I certainly have not the least belief in ghosts; but a most curious case once occurred to myself for which I have never been able to account,' was the reply.

'O, let us hear it, by all means,' cried several, charmed with the idea of getting Houghton, who was rather sceptical in most matters, to tell a ghost-story.

'I have never told it; but I think that now I can do so, as, by giving others than the real names of the men I fancied I saw after their deaths, no one now will be able to tell who they were,' was the reply.

Several new cigars were lighted, some glasses were replenished, and we disposed ourselves to listen, when Colonel Houghton, looking very grave, and with an expression I have never before seen on his face, began his tale.

'I must tell you that my adventure occurred in a

country, which I think is the last place on earth where one would have expected to encounter anything mysterious or unnatural; for it was in China, the country of ideal dulness and practicality, that I witnessed the phenomenon I have hitherto been unable to account for satisfactorily. In order to understand the whole case, I must begin at a much earlier period of my life than that at which the circumstance I am about to relate occurred.

'When I was about sixteen years old, and at school at Eton, I was seized with a most ardent desire to enter the army, and in frequent letters implored my father to let me leave Eton and go to a private tutor's, where I might undergo a special preparation for the military profession. My father for a long time opposed the idea, as he wished me to go to the bar; and as I was not an over-diligent boy, imagined that in the army I should not do anything except smoke, and run into debt. At last my importunities led him to consent to a compromise, and I was removed from Eton, but not to a military tutor's; I was sent to a clergyman in the west of England, who received a very limited number of pupils, and who was to teach me thoroughly such subjects as would fit me for the army, in case I remained steadfast to my wishes, or which otherwise might be useful in a civil career. When I arrived at Dr. Warnborough's, I found there only two pupils, one named Charles Granger, and another who left soon after I joined. Granger and I in a short time became warm friends; we rode together, boated to-

gether, had no secrets from each other, and for eighteen months were almost inseparable. Dr. Warnborough and his wife were a most kind, goodhearted couple, and made us most comfortable in every way; an attention, I am afraid, we did not always entirely reciprocate, for we were both rather wild and foolish, although I must do Charles the justice to say that in all scrapes I was the leader and cause. One incident which amused us much at the time I may mention *en passant*. The village in which Dr. Warnborough's rectory was situated abounded with cats, against which we two boys declared a war of extermination. Many fell before our air-guns (bought surreptitiously at an ironmonger's in the neighbouring town) before the bright idea struck me of making a rug of their skins; but the idea, when it did come up in my not over well-stocked brain, was regarded, both by myself and Charles, as quite equal to Watt's conception of the steam-engine, or, what interested us more, the invention of air-guns. Naturally my idea was soon acted upon: the next cat that we killed was skinned with our pocket-knives, the body buried, and all seemed well; when a new difficulty arose. How were the skins to be dried? It would not be safe to place them in any of the outhouses; for the doctor might find them, and would lecture us on what would appear to him cruelty, although to us it seemed only in obedience to the dictates of youthful nature that we should kill cats. My invention again came to the front: the dining-room table was turned upside down, and the skin nailed on its under surface: the

table being restored to its proper position, and the cover put on, no trace of the currier's establishment below was visible. But vision is not our only sense: next day at breakfast Mrs. Warnborough began to think that some of the drains were out of order; but as desiccation had only just set in, her idea was pooh-poohed by the doctor, and we boys had too strong stomachs to feel any inconvenience from a smell of which we so well knew the cause. By dinner-time, however, there was no doubt on the subject, and the good lady felt, I think, almost a little triumph even on such a subject, when the doctor was obliged to confess she had been in the right in the morning. Every search was made to discover the cause of the evil, which increased hourly; the drains were examined, but all without avail; the room with the table (which no one thought of examining) standing in its centre was uninhabitable: and at last I felt I must tell the doctor; so I went to him, received a mild reproof, and the nuisance was repressed.'

At the first mention of the table with the catskin stretched below it, several of the audience expected some account of table-rapping, or of the supposed spiritualism, for the demonstrations of which this very useful article of domestic furniture used a few years ago to be the favourite instrument. Webb, of the Artillery, who knew that catskin generated electricity, was prepared to account for any phenomenon by the electric agency of the catskin below the table; but as the termination of this part of the story opened no chance to

him for broaching this theory, it was only in a confidential moment next morning he discovered to me what had been passing in his mind.

Colonel Houghton, after a few moments' pause, recommenced : 'For about eighteen months Granger and I lived most happily in Dr. Warnborough's house ; but at the end of that time the poor doctor caught a cold in returning at a late hour from a visit to a dying parishioner, which settled on his lungs, and from the effects of which he died within a few weeks. Both Granger and myself were deeply affected by the loss ; we had both loved sincerely the worthy, estimable man, whose only fault (if he had one at all) had been too much kindness to us. As this loss left Mrs. Warnborough totally unprovided for, the curate, who received the late doctor's living, being an unmarried man, generously gave Mrs. Warnborough the free use of the rectory, and engaged himself to read with us, so that Mrs. Warnborough might still receive what our parents paid for our board and lodging to help to eke out her own little income. About three months after Dr. Warnborough's death, a match at football took place in the village between our parish and a neighbouring one. Charles and I were players on our side, and worked hard at a rather uphill game all the afternoon. In the evening we left the drawing-room and retired to the dining-room, which after dinner was devoted to our use for the preparation of our lessons. This evening the severe exercise of the afternoon told on us so much, that Charles, after a vain attempt on a piece of French com-

position, threw himself on the sofa, and in a few minutes was fast asleep. A quarter of an hour more of Euclid made me follow his example in the arm-chair by the fire. The room was well lighted with four candles and a tolerably bright fire. Charles's sofa was at the end of the room furthest from the door, and I was sitting in the arm-chair, which had its back towards the door. After being asleep about an hour, and a little before ten o'clock, as I afterwards found by my watch, I was aroused by a sudden cry from Charles. On awaking, I distinctly saw Dr. Warnborough, dressed in his morning-gown, walk across the room from the end nearest Charles to the door, where he disappeared either through the door or by opening it and closing it after him; in my surprise I could not see which. A few moments sufficed to completely awake me, and I rushed out of the door to try to perceive something more of the extraordinary vision; but all was still and undisturbed in every part of the house. Charles and I discussed the matter very seriously. He informed me that he had awoke and seen the doctor standing looking at him; the sight caused him to call out and thus awake me. We neither of us believed in ghosts, but were much depressed and puzzled by this strange appearance, which we resolved to confide to no one, lest it might reach Mrs. Warnborough's ears and give her pain. Often and often we talked to each other, however, on the subject; and ultimately made a compact that if it were possible, whichever of us died first should appear to the other after death. In a few months after this I was removed from

Dr. Warnborough's, and at the same time Granger went abroad to look after his father's business in Austria. For six or seven years I was quartered with my regiment in several parts of the United Kingdom; I occasionally saw Granger when we both happened to come to London together, which was not often; but in the excitement of early military life, I thought no more of optical delusions, and almost forgot my compact with Granger and the vision of Dr. Warnborough. I was afterwards sent to India, where I still received occasional letters from Granger; but different tastes and pursuits rendered our correspondence unfrequent and uncertain. When the expedition to Pekin was determined on in 1860, the cavalry regiment to which I was attached was ordered to China, and we arrived without incident at Talien Bay, where the English army was disembarked in order to wait for the French previous to a common descent on China at the mouth of the Peiho. The shores of Talien Bay did not afford facilities for encamping the whole army together on account of the small space between the beach and a high rocky range of mountains which ran along the bay at a distance of about half a mile from the sea in some places, but which ran close down to the water in others. The cavalry were encamped at an open part of the shore where there was room for their camp between the hills and high-water mark. Another portion of the army occupied a similar encampment about six miles further up the bay. On account of the rocks running down to the sea between the two camps, there was no road or means of

communication along the shore: the only way to go from one camp to the other was to pass through a gap in the hills behind our camp, where we always had a picket, ride about five miles across a plain, and re-enter the hills by another gap behind the infantry camp, where pickets were also regularly established. I had many friends in the neighbouring camp, and used often to ride over there, not unfrequently staying to dine, and riding back at night. These expeditions were not, I believe, known to the superior authorities, who would probably have stopped my evening rides beyond the sentries, as it was not certain whether the country was infested with Tartars, who might have carried off any stragglers; but trusting to a revolver and my Arab horse, I had individually no fear of being taken even if attacked.

'One night I had been over to the infantry, and had stayed till about eleven o'clock, when I started to ride home. There was a tolerably bright moon shining, and I trotted quickly through the hills, past the infantry picket, and into the plain, where I drew my horse into a walk and smoked a cheroot while he walked quietly along on the smooth turf. About half way across the plain I was aroused from a deep reverie in which a certain lady in England, who is now my wife, took a prominent place, by my usually quiet horse manifesting an inclination to bolt. I attributed his restiveness to a desire to get home, but was astonished, after I had quieted him, to find he burst into a cold sweat and trembled violently. Fearing he was ill, I was about to

dismount, when a noise behind me struck upon my ear. I looked round, and saw a human figure walking behind me at a distance of about a hundred yards. My impression was that I was about to be attacked at last by some Tartars, so I got my revolver out and urged my horse with difficulty into a trot. In a few minutes I again looked behind, expecting to have left my pursuer far in the distance, but, to my great surprise, he had walked faster than my horse could trot and had gained upon me. I was more astonished still, when, as he continued to gain on me, I perceived he was dressed in ordinary English evening costume, especially as I did not think a dress of that kind could have been found in the whole army, for we always all wore uniform adapted to the climate, and had little enough baggage allowed us, without carrying any superfluities. My follower still continued to gain on me, and I was so much astonished, that I continued to gaze on him as, coming nearer and nearer, he became more distinctly visible. When he was within a few yards, I saw that the front of his shirt was entirely covered with something red, which looked to me as if a bottle of port had been spilled over it. Nearer and nearer he came: slowly and steadily the moon, high up in the sky, but directly on the way I was going, came from behind a slight cloud, just as he reached my girths. She shone full on a very pale face, which was turned up to mine, on a mouth from which blood was slowly issuing, and on a pair of eyes which, although now they appeared fierce and staring, I well knew. It was Charles Granger. Still

he walked steadily but quickly; he passed my horse's shoulder, then his head. The poor brute shook as if he were going to fall. I was so surprised that I could not speak, nor did I remember that I held a pistol in my right hand. When the spectre (for so I then thought it) had passed on, I could distinctly see it in front of me walking away from me, but straight along the path I was pursuing. Then I recovered my presence of mind and called after him; in vain I implored, imprecated, and threatened to fire if he did not stop; but on he went, steadily, though quickly, without appearing to hear me. I then urged my horse (who had recovered from his fright) into a canter and pursued, but could not gain on my extraordinary fellow-traveller; the faster I cantered and even galloped, the faster he went; but he never ran, his movement was always a long steady stride. After a pursuit of about ten minutes, I saw the sentry of the outpost at the pass of the hills leading to our camp standing directly in the path the figure was pursuing; loudly I called to him to let no one past. I saw the sentry bring his musket to the charge when the apparition was within thirty yards or so of him, heard his cry, "Turn out the guard." The men who were loitering near fell in almost instantaneously and quite closed the pass in the rocks, when the figure appeared to fade away. I hastened forward, asked the sentry,

"Did you see a man walking in front of me?"

"No, sir," was the answer; "no one has been past here to-night since we mounted."

"Why did you turn out the guard?" said I.

"Because I saw you galloping and calling out, sir, and I thought you were being chased by Chinamen."

'The sergeant and other soldiers fully confirmed the sentry's assertion that no person had passed their post; and as I did not wish to be thought absurd, I simply said I supposed I had been mistaken, and rode into camp without seeing any thing more of the figure of Granger.'

'Did you drink much wine at dinner, Houghton?' here inquired Randon.

'No; upon my honour, all I drank that day was one glass of rum-and-water, and that early in the afternoon. I never did drink much of anything in the East for the sake of health; and that I was perfectly sober at the time of the occurrence all my brother officers could testify.'

'Did you ever see *it* again?' asked some one, almost acknowledging, by the form of his interrogation, that the story had told on him.

'I soon got over the effect of this delusion, which I believe it must have been, although I cannot account for it,' resumed Houghton; 'but I received another shock when we were well on the road into Pekin, about two months afterwards, and the English mail arrived. I was away for a day or two from my own regiment when the letters came, and did not receive my own; but in the papers which came to the regiment I was quartered with, I read that Charles Granger had died on the very day I thought I had seen him at Talien

Bay. A day or two afterwards, my own letters came to me. One was in Mrs. Warnborough's handwriting. She was writing, she told me, to give me the particulars of the death of poor Charles, my old fellow-pupil, who had been cut off so suddenly, which she had heard from his relations. He had been dining at a public dinner at Vienna, when suddenly he fell forward senseless, having broken a blood-vessel. The blood poured in torrents over his shirt, and he had bled to death without speaking a word, before medical aid could arrive. She then gave the hour and day of his death. Allowing for the difference of time which exists between Northern China and Vienna, Charles Granger had died in Vienna, almost to a minute, at the very time I fancied I saw him on the plain of Chinese Tartary.'

THE CLARET SONG.

The autumn clouds are gathering,
The day grows dull and drear,
No sunbeam gilds the streamlet,
The forest-leaves are sere:
My blood is creeping chilly,
My pulse is flagging low;
So fill me up, my own love,
A glass of good Bordeaux.

Each grief that racks the bosom
Shall sink before its spell;
A truce to piercing sorrow,
To burdening care farewell.
There is a joy that palls not;
Nor yet subdued by woe
Is he for whom there sparkles
A glass of good Bordeaux.

Your Port's a full-fed trader,
Moselle's a lisping maid,
A dowager is Sherry,
Champagne a roystering blade;
And Burgundy's a cleric,
Grave, middle-aged, and slow;
The gentleman of wines is
A glass of good Bordeaux.

In each light purple bubble
  A thousand visions throng;
I see the vineyard redden,
  I hear the vintage-song;
The skies of France are o'er me,
  The blue Garonne below;
For fancy finds no friend like
  A glass of good Bordeaux.

And from that sunny south land
  Its thoughts the bright wine brings,
Of days when Gascon vineyards
  Were ruled by English kings;
Of knights who fought and conquered
  Five hundred years ago,
And quaffed with sable Edward
  A glass of good Bordeaux.

Well! gone are pride and pageant,
  As we must fleet away:
We've still the wine remaining,
  We've still the passing day.
The thought you'll say's a trite one,
  A wise one 'tis I know;
So pledge to me, my own love,
  A glass of good Bordeaux.

CHESS GOSSIP.

One of the reputed origins of chess is, that it was expressly invented for the purpose of teaching a youthful despot that a king, after all, although of course the most important personage in the realm, is still able to effect little or nothing without the assistance and support of his subjects. The Indian sage, who thus undertook the joint duties of reformer of royalty and professor of chess, improved the occasion both to convey other truths and to render access to the presence easier.

If chess at the outset served as a lesson, and also as an opportunity of communication between great personages and those below them, it has subsequently not less frequently answered the same purposes of introduction. When noble Ebbeson went to Bohemia to seek a wife for his master, king Valdemar of Denmark, they dressed the princess in blue silk, and led her into the great hall. They then brought the chess-board and the table of massive gold, that the noble Ebbeson might play with the princess and converse with her alone. At the third move they were agreed; noble Ebbeson had won a good wife for his king.

Ferdinand and Miranda's game, in the *Tempest*, had much the same sort of character, with the pleasant difference, however, of love-making in person, instead of by proxy.

MIRANDA. Sweet lord, you play me false.
FERDINAND. No, my dear'st love,
I would not for the world.
MIRANDA. Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,
And I would call it fair play.

A similar desire for semi-official *tête-à-têtes* with gentlemen attached to her court might be one reason of our queen Elizabeth's fondness for chess. She even flirted by means of chessmen; as when she sent Sir Charles Blount, afterwards Duke of Devonshire, a golden chessman, and that the queen, which he wore with a red favour; and which caused the Earl of Essex to remark, with affected contempt, 'I perceive now that every fool will have his favour.' The consequence was that Sir Charles challenged him. They fought in Mary-bone-park, where Essex was disarmed, and wounded in the thigh.

In good old times, when Charlemagne was the existing providential man, it was prudent to mind your moves, and what you were about, while playing chess. The *Histoire de Gallien restauré* relates that one day, when the hero was playing with his uncle Tibert, he cried in a loud voice, 'I say "mate;"' and took the king. The uncle, beaten, fell into a rage, pommelled his nephew's head with the chessboard till the blood flowed freely, and called him unpolite names, 'bastard' for instance. Gallien, naturally, went and told his mother, who comforted his sorrows and healed his wounds, but admitted that the title applied to him was true. At which, Gallien philosophically remarked, 'Better to be a bastard and a bold cavalier than a cow-

ardly lout born in lawful wedlock.' O the refinement of the good old times!

In western Europe the game of chess is played by two adversaries only; and never, like dominoes, cribbage, and some other games, by one against one, or by two partners against two, at pleasure. But the Russians have a chessboard for four players at once, who play two against two. The men for this chessboard are also more numerous than ours.

Chess is supposed to be an imitation of war. Phrenologists tell us that the faculty denoted by the organ of locality gives what is called *coup d'œil*, and judgment of the capabilities of ground. It is necessary to the military draughtsman, and is of great importance to a general. Dr. Gall mentions that he had observed the organ large in distinguished chess-players; and he conceived their talent to consist in the faculty of clearly mastering a great number of possible positions of the men.

The chessboard is a square field of battle, subdivided into sixty-four small squares, which gives eight squares along each side. The squares with us are alternately coloured white and black, or white or other uniform light tint and something else readily distinguishable from it. There are luxurious chessboards of white and parti-coloured marbles, of alabaster and mosaic squares, of gold alternating with inlaid jewels, and precious woods in chequered contrast.

Games, generally, resemble plants and flowers in being based on certain numbers. The key number of the lilies is six; of apples, pears, and roses, five.

Cruciferous flowers, as turnip and cabbage, are built on a ground-plan of twos and fours.

And so, at écarté, two players manipulate thirty-two cards; at whist, four players try the changes possible with a pack of fifty-two. There are plants, as the grasses, where three is the dominant figure; but an odd number is difficult to introduce into games between adversaries. As there are a few monandrous, one-stamened flowers, so there are (not very many) solitary monandrous or monogynous games. Round games are the Linnæan Polyandria polygynia of play, sometimes assuming ominous tints, rouge-et-noir—red, or gules, the colour of blood, and black or sable, the emblem of death.

The squares of the chessboard, amounting to sixty-four, constitute a very remarkable number. It is not divisible, in any way, by any odd number; but is divisible by multiples of two, and by two itself, until unity is reached at last. It is both a square number and a cube number; it is also both the square of a cube number and the cube of a square number. For it is the cube of four, which is the square of two; and it is the square of eight, which is the cube of two. Twice two are four, and twice four eight; and four times four are sixteen, and four times sixteen, sixty-four.

Chess has been played, on a regal scale, with living men in appropriate costume, on a natural fighting-ground—a lawn converted into a chessboard by paring the grass for the squares of white, or on a floor prepared for the purpose. Don Juan of Austria used one

of the halls in his palace as a chessboard; the different squares being represented by pavements of black and white marble, while disguised soldiers acted as the men.

At chess, each player has sixteen men, occupying at the outset the two rows of squares nearest to each player, and consequently leaving the four intermediate rows (consisting altogether of thirty-two squares) vacant and open for the conflict. The chessmen are of two classes. Eight pawns, *pions*, pioneers, or common soldiers, alike in form, occupy the second row from the player; while eight principal pieces, of different name, shape, and power, are ranged behind them. The positions of the pieces on the board are noteworthy, because they are not *exactly* the same for both players. It makes *some* difference, in the earliest moves, whether you are in the habit of playing black or white.

The chessboard is placed between the players in such a way that each has a white corner square to his right. The castles occupy the corner squares. The name and signification of the castle has curiously varied. In the middle ages it was *rokh*, from the name of the fabulous Arab bird which fetched Sinbad the sailor his diamonds. The Italians converted this into *rocca*, signifying also a rock, or fortress, whence the French naturally called it a *tour*. But the operation known as 'castling,' in which the rokh passes over the king, is evidently a much more appropriate act to be performed by a bird than by a fortress. On the Chinese chessboard the castles are called *tché*, or chariots of

war. The Icelanders replace the castles by little captains, which the schoolboys name centurions. They have swords by their sides, and their cheeks are swollen, as if they blew in the horn which they hold with both hands. The castle moves perpendicularly and horizontally, up or down, to the right or to the left. Its value is estimated as equal to five pawns. Next to the castles, on the same row, stand the two knights; and after them, in the same way, the two bishops.

Of all the pieces on the chessboard, the knight is the only one whose movements have never been modified; they are also the most singular and original, resembling those of none of the others. He goes from his own square to the second from him of an opposite colour, passing the square directly before, behind, or on either side of him, to the one diagonally situated either to the right or the left of it. In doing this, he only is at liberty to leap over either his own pieces or his adversary's. The sole condition requisite is, that the square to which he moves be vacant or occupied by an enemy's piece.

This peculiarity of the knight's move has given rise to a curious problem, whose origin is lost in that convenient hiding-place, the night of ages. The knight's problem consists in making him move to every one of the squares of the chessboard without alighting on the same square twice. Two thousand years ago the Brahmins had a way of doing it, which they seem to have kept a secret known only to their own caste, transmitting it from generation to generation. Modern travel-

lers in the Indian Peninsula have seen the feat performed by priests, who refused to communicate the clue to their method. About the middle of the last century the question attracted the attention of the learned; and in 1759 the Berlin Academy of Sciences offered a prize of 160*l.* for the best treatise on the subject.

Since that date many have been the solutions given, some even overcoming an increase of the original difficulty; thus the Abbé Durand, and one Solvyns or Slyvons, made the knight start from any indicated square, to finish on any other indicated square of the opposite colour to the first. The latter author demonstrated mathematically that there exist 20,160 different ways of resolving the knight's problem. Troupenas made the knight traverse the chessboard in two series of moves; the first series completely overrunning the thirty-two lower squares; the second series the thirty-two upper ones. Moreover, at the sixty-fourth square, the knight is exactly within a move of the first. Van der Monde also gave a solution with a like termination —an important improvement, for a reason to be mentioned.

We give three clues to this chequered labyrinth, in order somewhat to satisfy our readers' curiosity. In the first, the knight starts from the square numbered 1, then to 2, then to 3, and so on, till he arrives at 64, the square contiguous to that from which he set out on his travels.

42	59	44	9	40	21	46	7
61	10	41	58	45	8	39	20
12	43	60	55	22	57	6	47
53	62	11	30	25	28	19	38
32	13	54	27	56	23	48	5
63	52	31	24	29	26	37	18
14	33	2	51	16	35	4	49
1	64	15	34	3	50	17	36

In the second, Moivre's, he pursues a different course, finishing on a square remote from his starting-point.

34	49	22	11	36	39	24	1
21	10	35	50	23	12	37	40
48	33	62	57	38	25	2	13
9	20	51	54	63	60	41	26
32	47	58	61	56	53	14	3
19	8	55	52	59	64	27	42
46	31	6	17	44	29	4	15
7	18	45	30	5	16	43	28

It is evident that both these solutions can be commenced from any one of the four corner squares of the chessboard.

The third, and the most ingenious, was published by Euler, the celebrated mathematician, in 1766. It is performed as follows :

42	57	44	9	40	21	46	7
55	10	41	58	45	8	39	20
12	43	56	61	22	59	6	47
63	54	11	30	25	28	19	38
32	13	62	27	60	23	48	5
53	64	31	24	29	26	37	18
14	33	2	51	16	35	4	49
1	52	15	34	3	50	17	36

This set of moves has the signal merit of returning on itself, or being endless. At square 64 the knight is within a move of square 1. With the route well impressed on your memory, you may make the knight start from any indicated square on the chessboard. Suppose square 28 to be fixed on; you have only to move to square 29, and so on, till square 27 be reached, when the board will have been completely traversed.

The piece which we call 'bishop' is named by the French *fou*, meaning thereby not 'madman,' but fool, jester, or buffoon; as appears, amongst other proofs, from a chess masquerade danced before Henry IV. in 1607.

'The order thereof was this. Two men, masked, spread a great cloth chessboard, whose squares were red and white, each about a foot and a half in width.

'After that the violins sounded, and two dressed in Spanish costume, each with a long wand in their hand, entered, dancing a ballet of a grave measure, and then

placed themselves each on a camp-stool on opposite sides of the hall. When they were seated, to another *air de ballet* entered the eight carnation-coloured pawns; they were little children, who danced very prettily, and who performed amongst themselves a ballet of sundry and diverse figures. At the last figure each took rank on his square. The eight white pawns had also their own proper ballet, differing in airs, steps, and figures; these took their places straight in front of the others. The four rocs made their entry, and after several figures, stationed themselves behind the pawns, each on his proper square. In like manner, the knights danced their entry, and ranged themselves in their places. Also the *fools*, armed with baubles and bucklers in hand, with a certain form of combats and different figures, betook themselves into their squares.'

The Abbé Romain, in his poem on chess, says:

> 'Au jeu d'échecs tous les peuples ont mis
> Les animaux communs dans leur pays:
> L'Arabe y met le léger dromadaire,
> Et l'Indien l'éléphant; quant à nous,
> Peuple falot, nous y mettons des fous.

'Among their chessmen nations have put the animals common in their country. The Arab takes the light dromedary, and the Indian the elephant; as for us, a comical people, we employ fools.'

Vida, in his Latin poem, *Scacchia Ludus*, which has been greatly admired, calls the bishops *sagittiferi juvenes*, archers; a title very suitable to their diagonal movements. Among Charlemagne's chessmen, preserved

in the Abbey of St. Denis, the bishop was represented as about to let an arrow fly.

Turkish and Arabian chessmen, in obedience to religious scruples, never imitate the forms of men or animals. The Abbé Toderini saw a set made of oriental agate, enriched with gold. In Persia he found a greater tolerance of graven images on chessboards. An elephant (our castle) had two men on his back; and the king was enshrined, as it were, in an elaborate kiosk, belvedere, or bower.

The two middle squares, on the line nearest to each player, are the places of the king and the queen; but the white queen stands on a white square, and the black on a black one. Hence, one king has the queen on his right, while the other has *his* to his left.

Phillidor (the grandfather) called the pawns the soul of chess, asserting that no one could be a good player who did not play his pawns well. If a pawn manages to reach the eighth, or furthest row of the chessboard, it is promoted to the rank of queen, or of whatever other piece its owner chooses to give it. Thus, our James I., though he detested chess, could yet turn it to his own account. In a speech which he made to the Commons in 1609, he told them that kings have the power of abasing or elevating their subjects; just as, in the game of chess, a pawn may be converted into a bishop or a knight.

However popular it may have occasionally become, chess has always maintained for itself a certain aristocratic prestige. It was first introduced into France

during the reign of Charlemagne, who is said by his historians to have been passionately fond of it. As already mentioned, he presented the Abbey of St. Denis with a board and a set of men, 'all of ivory, a palm high, and greatly valued.' The Marquis de Chatre, in his *Jeux d'esprit et de mémoire,* says, 'I am aware that chess has always passed for a royal game, or rather for the king of games.' Charles VIII., by an ordonnance in 1485, forbade the prisoners in the Châtelet to play at dice; he permitted 'persons of quality only,' arrested for slight and purely civil offences, to play at trictrac (a complicated form of backgammon) and chess.

As to the intellectual ability required to make a good chess-player, opinions differ greatly; as well as respecting the value of chess as a means of intellectual training. Labruyère, in his *Caractères,* denies that a capacity for chess is any proof of genius. On the other hand, the Prince de Condé (Louis II. de Bourbon) maintained that learning chess was the first step to becoming a good general. Sundry modern Germans have advocated its compulsory introduction into schools as a branch of elementary education. Denis Diderot, in his *Neveu de Rameau,* has the boldness to say, 'Paris is the place in the world, and the Café de la Régence the place in Paris, where chess is played better than anywhere else. It is there that Légal the profound, Phillidor the subtle, and Mayot the solid, encounter each other; that you see the most surprising moves, and hear the most outrageous speeches. For if it is

possible to be, like Légal, at once a clever fellow and a great chess-player, it is equally possible to be at once a great chess-player and an ass, like Foubert and Mayot.'

Alfred Delvau speaks thus of the Café de la Régence, and of the pursuit to which it is mainly devoted. 'I could not enter this temple of *gambit* without great fear and great respect; respect for those who continue the traditions of Ulysses and Palymedes, of Tamerlane and Alexander the Great; and fear, because the game, in all its forms, and under all its denominations, has always terrified me, as being a sort of deliberate madness, not to employ a harsher term. True,' I continued, addressing my introducer, 'it is better to push little bits of ivory backwards and forwards, without uttering a word or tasting food or drink, for eight hours together by the clock—certainly, that is a hundred times better than to employ the same time in slandering one's neighbour. But, under correction, I believe that a man in his right senses has other functions and duties to perform besides gaming and calumny. The slanderer is a shabby wretch; but the gambler is a useless and unproductive cipher. We have all of us some respectable and decent occupation to employ our time. Those who, for one reason or another, refuse to attend to it, are neither more nor less than deserters; and I do not see any objection to their being shot as such.'

'My dear fellow,' replied his friend, 'you compel me to quote Méry's observations, which I know as thoroughly by heart as if they were my own. "It is desirable that the science of the chessboard should be

cultivated in our public schools; especially as we already learn there many tiresome things which weary the lad and are of no use to the man. There is, at the bottom of the game of chess, a wonderful fund of practical philosophy. Our life is a perpetual duel between ourselves and destiny. The world is a chessboard on which we push our pieces, often at hazard, against a train of circumstances which give us 'mate' at every step. Hence so many faults, so many clumsy combinations, so many wrong moves. He who, in early life, has trained his mind to the calculations of the chessboard, has unconsciously contracted habits of prudence, which will retain their force beyond the horizon of the squares. By keeping on our guard against the harmless stratagems set to entrap us by wooden images, we continue to practise in the world similar tactics of defensive good sense and sharpsightedness. Life thus becomes a grand game of chess, in which you behold, in all who come in contact with you, persons who, sooner or later, will try to make use of you for their own advantage. Every man you meet is either a piece or a pawn; you guess his intended moves, and lay out your own manœuvres accordingly." '

'But what a melancholy view of life and society!'

'If it is the true one, you must accept it all the same. And there is no occasion to be afraid that this continual mental tension will degenerate into a monomania, or keep the mind in perpetual restlessness. Chess-players are (mostly) pleasant and cheerful people. M. de Labourdonnais, for instance, intersperses his play

with many sallies and witticisms, which never prevent his giving checkmate. In this way, thanks to habit, perpetual combinations become a second nature; we are hardly conscious of the working of an intellectual mechanism which never stops; the springs set going by the first impulsion serve their purpose by a simple act of the will. How often have chess-players ameliorated an ugly aspect of their worldly affairs by clever arrangements, without suspecting that they owed their tact to the study of material combinations!'

The *gambit* above alluded to is the opening of a game, in which a pawn, sometimes a piece, is sacrificed, in order to make a good attack on the enemy. The word comes from the Italian 'gambetto,' a tripping-up, a turning-out, a supplanting. There are multitudes of gambits, and of works on gambits. *The Chess World* for April 1865, gives a variation of the 'beautiful Evans gambit.' Muzio's gambit, one of the prettiest known, consists in sacrificing a knight to gain proportionate advantages. It has been analysed, commentated, and varied, by several writers of different nations. In short, there are so many gambits — Cunningham's, Ponziani's, Allgaier's, Bryan's, and others—that the thorough study of gambits alone is a formidable undertaking.

At this same Café de la Régence, Napoleon I., before he became Emperor, very often used to play. He opened his games badly; and if his adversary took too long time for consideration, he grew impatient, pinched his lips, and drummed a tattoo on the edge of the board,

which soon set the men dancing, and so made a mess of the game. If he lost, it was still worse; he thumped the table with his fist, and sent everything flying. Nevertheless, when once the contest was fairly begun, and the strife of battle growing warm, he often made very brilliant moves. He also frequently played chess in the Empress Josephine's apartments. M. Thiers records, on Madame de Remusat's authority, the game he played at Malmaison while the Duke d'Enghien was being tried, or rather sentenced, at Vincennes.

In Egypt he used to play with M. Poussielgue, a superior performer, who sometimes beat the conqueror of the Pyramids. During the Polish campaign, the Persian Ambassador was introduced to the Emperor while he was playing a game of chess with Berthier. Napoleon did not put himself out of his way, but gave the audience while continuing to move his men. Chess beguiled the weariness of his passage on board the Northumberland, and at St. Helena he indulged in his game almost every day. The castle was the piece of which he made the most use. His nephew, Napoleon III., when in England, was considered a very skilful chess-player.

Paul I., Emperor of Russia, travelling as the Comte du Nord, visited the Café de la Régence at the hour of four in the afternoon, when the battles of the chess-board were at their height. Paul went up to a couple of combatants and betted on a difficult move. His stake was a louis. He won, took his money, and retired. Nothing hitherto had betrayed who he was,

until the exclamation of the waiter, to whom he gave all his winnings, attracted the attention of the company. For this, and several other anecdotes, we are indebted to M. Jean Gay's learned and instructive *Bibliographie du Jeu des Echecs*.

The following is stated to be of doubtful authority, which is a pity. One evening, when Robespierre, already surrounded with his halo of terror, was sitting in the Café de la Régence, a young little exquisite entered the saloon, and unceremoniously installing himself at his table, moved a man on the chessboard which stood in front of Robespierre, who responded to the move. The game went on, and was lost by the latter. They began a second game, which he likewise lost. Seeing this, Robespierre felt his honour engaged, and inquired for what stake they were playing. 'For the head of a man,' the lad replied. 'I have won it; give it me.' Robespierre drew from his pocket a sheet of paper, and wrote an order to set at liberty the Comte de R. then imprisoned in the Conciérgerie. The smart little dandy, it seems, was no other than the Comte's affianced bride.

The excitement caused by chess is too much for many people's nerves to support with impunity. The Czar John the Terrible died in 1584, of an apoplectic fit, while playing chess with one of his courtiers. Lord Harvey, in No. 37 of the *Craftsman*, says that, although chess is not usually played for a stake, nobody is indifferent about winning or losing; and that it is very rare for warm-tempered people ever to become good

players. Olaus Magnus, Archbishop of Upsala, died 1560, maintains that hidden tendencies to anger, impatience, vanity, avarice, and other failings, are brought out by the game of chess; and it is for that reason that the nobles of Gothland and Sweden, before bestowing their daughters in marriage, have the custom of trying, principally by chess, the temper of the suitors who present themselves. Some amateurs, of nervous constitution, cannot sleep after a hard-fought game; others, when the decisive move approaches, are seized with feverish agitation. Some are so impressed with the contest that, next day, they could go over every move again. Quintilian relates that Scævola, after losing a game of chess, started for the country. On the way he went over in his head every move that had been made in the game, and so discovered the error which had caused his defeat. He returned and found out his opponent, who acknowledged the perfect accuracy of his memory. As a precautionary measure, to keep their heads clear and their tempers cool, Carrera, in his *Avvertimenti,* recommends chess-players to eat sparingly, and to take aperient medicine before setting to work in a serious contest.

Defeats at chess are not easily either forgotten or forgiven. Leonardo di Cutri was poisoned in Calabria, by a rival, at the age of forty-six, while on a visit to the Prince of Bisignano. A Spanish nobleman, who had for some time been in the habit of playing with Philip II., used to win every game. One day, when their chess-playing had terminated in the customary

result, he perceived that the king was excessively annoyed. If the fact took him by surprise, his stock of common sense must have been but small. On reaching his home, he said to his family, 'My dear children, we may as well pack-up and take ourselves off at once. This is no longer a place for us; for the king has fallen into a violent rage because he could not beat me at chess.'

Richer, monk of Senones, in the History of his Abbey, relates that Ferraud, Count of Flanders, always ill-treated his wife when she played chess with him and won. One sort of beating involved another. The battle of Bouvines (July 12th, 1214) was a consequence of a game thus ungallantly concluded, in which battle the count was made prisoner, brought to Paris ironed hand and foot, and shut up in the tower of the Louvre. The Countess Jeanne (who was daughter of the Emperor of Constantinople, and ward of Philip Augustus) was consequently left to govern his dominions all her own way, and to have her quiet game of chess with a more amiable adversary.

One is unwilling to question King Canute's magnanimity after his famous rebuke of his courtiers; but his mind seems to have been less proof against the excitements of chess than the blandishments of flattery. While playing with the Count Ulf, the king made a great mistake, in consequence of which the count took one of his knights. The king would not allow this, but replaced the piece, insisting that the count should make a different move. The latter got angry, upset the

chessboard, and retired. 'Ulf,' shouted the king after him, 'you are a coward; you run away.'

The count returned to the door, and answered, 'You would have run away into the river Helga, in very different style, if I had not come to your assistance when the Swedes were beating you like a dog. You did not call me coward then.' With these words, he walked off; and the next day the king had him put to death.

An Italian village-priest was in the habit of playing with a neighbour who never would allow himself to be beaten, although he lost five games out of six. To convince him that such was really the case, the priest rang the alarm-bell of his parsonage, summoning in that way his parishioners, to make them umpires of the dispute. As the same trick was frequently repeated, his flock got tired of the proceeding, and took no further notice of the summons.

One day his house did catch fire. The priest rang his alarm-bell in vain. Nobody came; and when he complained, he was told that people could not leave their household affairs for the sake of a trumpery game of chess. 'Alas!' he said, 'this time I played chess with the fire, and the fire has checkmated me.'

The jealousies excited by chess have often been accompanied by mystery. The president Nicolai, who passed for the best chess-player of his time in France, was one day visited by a stranger who had travelled sixty leagues—a considerable distance then—to challenge him. The chessboard was brought, and Nicolai

was beaten. The unknown victor would neither play a second game nor make known who he was.

Finally, monkeys have been trained to play chess—doubtless in the same way as learned pigs have been taught to spell. The creature, obeying an imperceptible signal from his master, made the indicated move. The animal was really no more than what the artificial Turk of the chess automaton was to the human player concealed beneath it.

RESERVED MEN.

There is no quality of mind more disputed about than reserve. Some praise it, and others condemn it. But that is mainly because the disputants do not start from the same point. They have not first agreed upon its definition.

In its primary sense it is something which is kept back for a time of need, like a part of an army for some special emergency. When used to denote a mental quality, it indicates something concealed in the mind, and hence modesty or caution in personal behaviour.

When used disparagingly it expresses closeness, the direct opposite of frankness and openness, which have an especial charm, and win favour easily.

It has its counterfeits, like all other good qualities; and where it is excessive it provokes dislike.

In its good sense it is an element of great strength of character; and for this reason, that it leads a man to pause before he acts, and to reflect before he speaks; that it secures to him the opportunity for self-defence, as well as leisure for employing his own resources.

It is impossible for any one to rule well who has not a certain amount of reserve. A king, a statesman, and a general must know how to keep their own counsel, else the one will lose his influence, and perhaps risk

his crown; the other be outwitted; and the third lose the victory. None of them can afford to admit the many within the circle of their own secret thoughts and purposes. The ultimate end of each must be kept out of sight. There is a security in that atmosphere of mystery which more or less surrounds every reserved man.

It is a trite saying, that no man is a hero to his valet-de-chambre. The meaning of this is, that, speaking generally, the closer we come to people the less we admire them; that we lose prestige in the same proportion that the wall of reserve is broken down which should exist between man and man; for it is the tendency of intimacy to dispel whatever illusions we may have indulged respecting any individual; partly because our ideal is too high, and partly because nothing human is perfect. The old proverb, that 'familiarity breeds contempt,' points in the same direction.

If we seek for an instance of reserve, we need only cast our eyes across the Channel, where we shall find one as remarkable for its intensity as for its success. It is impossible not to be struck with the power of reserve in the hands of the present ruler of a warlike and capricious people. It is perhaps the most striking feature in that character, and it renders him peculiarly fit to rule over that gay, light-hearted, impulsive, and uncertain race. The public knows nothing of his plans till the word of command is given, and the sword is drawn from the scabbard. And hence a kind of awe surrounds his presence. Men scarcely know what to

think or do. They may be on the very verge of events which his will is bringing about, and his eye only foresees. They may be on a mine to which his hand alone conveys the torch; and an instinct is abroad that all are in the dark as to the purpose of that man of reserve who holds in his hands, to a great extent, the destinies of Europe. It is impossible not to see this, whether we recall the few words spoken to an Austrian ambassador, which were the prelude to a fatal war, for which every preparation was afterwards found to have been secretly made; or whether we call to mind the memorable *coup d'état* by which he secured the throne; or consider the life-long habit of reserve which this remarkable man acquired in adversity, when he, in very deed and truth, laid-by knowledge, experience, and judgment against the day of need, storing up the lessons he had so painfully learned, and keeping secret within himself the conclusions to which he had been led. Divest him of his reserve, and he will become comparatively weak and powerless.

But—descending to a lower level—if we go into any of our public schools, we shall see how some boys are protected by their very reserve from dangers into which their more frank and open companions too easily fall. You cannot tell why, but they seem to live and move within a charmed circle. Respect is paid them almost involuntarily and as a matter of course. No liberties are taken with them. Their reserve is a shield and defence to them. Pass over a few years, and see the same boys at the universities. Again it is the same

story. Older in years, their character has acquired strength, and the secret of that strength was reserve; and, as years pass on, and these youths, having ripened into manhood, are found in the councils of the nation, the testimony of other men bears witness that they are to be relied on, and may not be trifled with; that there is a depth and an earnestness about them, a dependableness, which if combined with great intellectual gifts insures success, and which even if unsupported by any extraordinary talent, yet always realises its value where caution and prudence are in demand, and but rarely found.

The reserved man is hardly ever off his guard. He is never the sport of those who play upon the frank and open-hearted. He can keep his own counsel, and bide his time, and set a watch upon his lips, and master his countenance.

But there is another side of the question. The medal has its reverse. When we speak of reserve as being a tower of strength, we refer more to the life of public men—to the part which each man has to play in the world. If a man would shine as a statesman or a diplomatist, as a barrister or a military man, he must practise reserve in all his dealings with the public. This is essential to his success. He will never be great without it. But there is something more valuable than even a great name. The friendship of a true friend is worth it all, and this is seldom gained by reserve.

It is necessary to friendship that men should be, mutually, well disposed to give and take.

If the giving is all on one side, and the taking on the other, the growth of friendship will be stunted; it will dwindle away. We are not by any means saying that it is necessary that friends should resemble each other in character. On the contrary, we believe it to be better, and more conducive to lasting friendship, that there should be some dissimilarity—sufficient to give it raciness and to prevent insipidity. But we maintain it to be necessary to its existence that a man should feel that while he gives confidence, he also receives it.

Reserve interferes with this exchange; and hence we see men who succeed wonderfully well in the line of their ambition, but who live and die without friends. While reserve is of inestimable service to a man in his public life, it is injurious to him socially. It keeps men at a distance from him; oftentimes repelling even those who have a legitimate right of access to him; and the very point which is its recommendation in one case becomes a hindrance in the other.

Again and again have we seen it happen that the most careful endeavours to make and cement a friendship have come to nothing without any apparent cause. Perhaps some peculiarity of manner, something in the circumstances of meeting, some intonation of voice, or wish expressed by some mutual friend whose opinion we value, has led us to desire that an acquaintance which we have formed should ripen into friendship. We adopt every means to bring this about, and believing it worth an effort, we do not allow ourselves to be repelled by any apparent coldness which may be, after all, only an

attitude of manner, or our own fancy. We are not at first met half way; but we hail the earliest indication of reciprocity, the first symptom of a thaw; and as time goes on, we think we have gained a friend, all the more valuable because of the difficulty in acquiring it. And so we go on perhaps for years, till some circumstance or event takes place which reveals to us the fact that all our trust has been but the 'baseless fabric of a dream.' We find that, while we have been free and generous in our confidence, there has been no corresponding generosity. We have had to do with a niggard. The shell of his reserve could not be broken through, and we discover that we have known no more of our friend's mind and purpose than the world at large; that he has not given us his confidence till it has been, in a manner, wrested from him by the force of circumstances. We find that we have been all along investing our friend with qualities which he did not possess. We have pictured him as we hoped to find him, and not as he really is—reserved, incapable of true and generous friendship.

There are few who have not found their hands thus pierced by the reed on which they have leaned. Foolish so to lean, you will perhaps say. But we deny it to be so. If it is better to trust and be deceived than to lose the 'bliss of believing,' as Mrs. Butler so well expresses it, so is it better to fail in gaining a friend, than to be so wary, so cautious, so cold, as to shrink from making ventures to win one.

The reserve that stands in the way of making friends is hateful. It prevents a man from ever getting outside

himself. He may have admirers if he is clever, and toadies if he is powerful and rich; but if he cannot, for a time, turn his back upon himself, open the sluices of his own heart, and lose himself and his interest, his hopes and his fears, his joys and his sorrows generously in his friend's, he is not really 'worth his salt.'

It has been well said, that there is a greater grace in receiving favours well than in conferring them. But the reserved man cannot receive them well. He cannot unbend himself to do so; and while he may, perhaps, expect homage and respect, he is himself undemonstrative. In fact, we generally find a man to be *exigeant* in his demands upon our attention in proportion to his own undemonstrativeness to others.

When reserve is carried on into domestic life, it is of course a far worse and greater evil. A man may say that he is not bound to make friendships—no duty or obligation of any kind calls upon him to do so, and even prudence may forbid it, on the ground that so many have suffered through their friends. But no such plea can be urged where a man has the ties of home. If he has a wife and children, and shuts them out from all his interests and cares—lives his life apart from them, and allows them no share in his hopes and ambitions—can he justify himself? Yet have we not known those who have been strangers in their own home? Can we not recall any instance, within our own knowledge, of a young wife, in all the glow of her early love, gradually awakening to the fact that she is no helpmate; that she is but a toy, a bright jewel, perhaps an ornament in the

house; but not a companion, not a sharer of her husband's trials, not a partner in his schemes and hopes? She entered his new home full of joyful visions of usefulness; but on the very threshold the veil was torn from her eyes, and she found that she was doomed to live a lonely life, to be a widowed wife, because, in an evil hour, she had chosen for her husband a man of reserve.

As with the wife, so with the children. They grow up under their father's roof, but have no knowledge of him. His eye and voice have no attraction for them, for they do not betray any tenderness towards them. Hours grow into days, and weeks, and months, and years, without their ever being drawn more closely together. In their infancy and youth they were not encouraged to come to him with their griefs and joys, and so in later years they come not for counsel and support under graver difficulties.

It may be said that reserve is natural to some persons, and that it is therefore harsh to condemn it; but we are not saying what is its cause, nor whether it is acquired or otherwise. We are simply speaking of it in its results and effects. Nature may have endowed us with many peculiarities which are not desirable, and which it is the business of life to tone down, to counteract, or uproot.

It must not, however, be supposed that every man who has the credit of being reserved is really so. There have been instances of men who have passed through life with that reputation, but who have no real claim

to it. Reserve generally belongs to characters of some depth, and has no fellowship with shallowness and superficialness. It may frequently happen that we do not get beyond the surface with some people; but that may be easily accounted for by the fact that there is nothing below the surface.

To be able to feel and to express sympathy is a faculty which seldom accompanies reserve. Yet it is the food which nourishes friendship. It is impossible to go on for ever taking it upon trust, without at least some occasional indications of the existence expressed by word or deed, for there is much truth in the old saying, 'Si vis me flere, dolendum est.' We cannot hope to move others to tears unless we too weep. It is one of the laws of our being. The dull, cold, impassive manner, suggestive of like faculties of heart, can never kindle a fire in others. We must weep with those that weep, and laugh with those that rejoice, if we would brighten with our sympathy the chequered life of those among whom we live.

TACT.

'THERE is a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to speak, and a time to keep silence.'

In quoting these words of the Preacher, we have no desire to preach or to moralise upon undisputed truths. Our object is very different. We wish to speak of *tact*, which may be said to be the knowledge when and how to speak and to act; and hence the words of the Preacher seem to form an apt introduction to the remarks we propose to make.

Gifted as we are with powers of mind and body, of thought, speech, and action; living amongst human beings possessing like faculties and passions; we find ourselves encompassed by difficulties out of which we cannot escape, unless we practically acknowledge that to everything there is a season.

The word *tact* is really a French word; but by use and custom it has become naturalised; and nowhere can we find any other word—certainly none in the English language—to express its meaning.

The French *tact* is, in its first sense, 'le sens du toucher;' but it has also a further and figurative meaning, 'le jugement fin et délicat;' and a person who has tact is said 'd'avoir le jugement fin et subtil.'

It is not discretion, for that is the art of directing oneself; nor experience, which is knowledge gained by practice: but it is something distinct from these, and infinitely more delicate. Discretion and experience may be acquired; but tact is innate—may almost be called a natural instinct, an intuitive guide, which not all, but only a few possess. 'L'homme qui joint à l'expérience le tact des convenances est aussi rare qu'il est utile.' Rare indeed! for how frequently do we find men of genius, of cultivated intellect, failing in the game of life because they have not this invaluable gift! For want of it, even wise and kind men go blundering on, saying and doing the most *mal-à-propos* things, marring their influence, and wounding where they least desire to wound. Beauty, wit, and talent acquire a tenfold greater influence when combined with tact. A beautiful woman without tact is closely allied to the 'fair woman without discretion;' and the man of wit and humour, who knows not when to exercise his talents, converts himself and his jests into a nuisance.

Tact has especial reference to the proprieties of life —to what is seasonable and fit. This is well expressed in the French saying which we have quoted, 'le tact des convenances.' It is the salt which seasons other great and good gifts that we value so highly. It adds a grace to the smallest acts, and embellishes mediocrity more than anything else, giving it a power and a place which it would otherwise fail to attain.

There have always been men of very moderate ability, who have been able to take and maintain a prominent

position in the political world, for the simple reason that they have tact, which prevents their making mistakes, enables them to reconcile and remove opposition, and to take advantage of favourable circumstances as they arise.

We have at this moment before our minds a very striking illustration of this in a statesman who, with a moderate amount of talent, has attained to considerable eminence through his consummate tact. It may have been owing to his early and intimate acquaintance with French men and women, who certainly excel us in this respect; or, more likely still, that he inherited it from his parents, who also were remarkable for it—his father, a man of great reputation in the diplomatic world, and his mother conspicuous for the way in which she could gather together men of every shade of opinion, without offending any, because she was so encompassed with an atmosphere of tact, that her very presence softened animosities and promoted good humour, making even 'sunshine in a shady place.'

Lord Palmerston was conspicuous for the tact with which he ruled over the House of Commons for so many years; and a living prelate possesses almost too large a share of this great gift.

Tact is like the soft answer that turneth away wrath. It mollifies, it soothes, it reconciles. It teaches men how to give and take. As the expert angler knows when to run out his line and to play with his fish, so the man of tact knows, by a kind of instinct, all the turns and twists of those among whom he lives, and

can wait till the convenient season comes before he speaks or acts. Herein lies the secret of his success in life. He wastes neither words nor time in needless discussions, but, like the prudent husbandman, keeps his store ready against the time of need.

We have often heard it said by those who affect to despise it, that tact is a kind of hypocrisy. But this is a great mistake. There is no affinity between the two. There is no more want of truth in tact than there was in him who desired to be 'all things to all men.' Hypocrisy is pretending to be what we are not. What relation, then, can it have to that which is the knowledge when and what to say and do? We are not bound to blurt out all we think and know, at the bidding of any fool that asks a question. We are not living in such a Palace of Truth that we are bound to expose all the workings of our minds to the public gaze; nor are we bound to take upon ourselves the odious office of mentor to our friends and acquaintance, and show our approval or disapproval of things that are happening around us. But it will be found that they who would depreciate tact are either persons of very brusque manners, or exaggerated specimens of that characteristic which is peculiar to English men and women. We say 'exaggerated specimens,' because we refer to an intensity of that blunt honesty upon which our countrymen pride themselves; and one can well imagine that they who consider it to be a duty to say what comes into their minds, irrespective of time and place and society, must be very intolerant of that tender consideration and

instinctive thoughtfulness for others which is comprised in that one most expressive word, tact. The greatest harm we would wish them is, that they may experience its blessing, and then acknowledge its value. Then will they, we would fain hope, inflict less pain upon their friends, whom they so continually 'flay alive.'

It was cleverly and amusingly said of a mother and daughter, who are apt illustrations of the two qualities of mind now under discussion, that the mother was continually going about to put plaster on the wounds which her daughter made—the mother always saying and doing the right thing, and putting the world into good humour with itself; the daughter 'frumping' everybody, and 'honest as the day,' always saying some unpalatable truth for which there was no necessity.

Wounds indeed they are which these anti-tact people inflict, and very deep wounds too. If there is a sore point—a tender subject—a raw anywhere, it is unfailingly hit; not maliciously, nor intentionally, but because they lack that invisible rein to guide and control them.

How often have we seen some poor victim almost vivisected during a morning call, when question after question is indiscreetly asked in the most blind and pertinacious manner, utterly regardless of the torture that is being inflicted!

How often have we seen the 'cat let out of the bag,' and heard the secret told, or been let behind the scenes by some unfortunately communicative person, who is sure to say what ought not to be said! There is an

amusing story told of a lady who was complimented upon a speech which her husband had made at some public meeting where he was anxious, for sufficient reasons, to create a sensation. Her friend, seeing how much pleasure he gave, continued speaking upon the subject, especially commenting upon a particular line of argument which he considered to be well and conclusively put. 'Ah!' she said, 'I am very glad you were struck by that; for, dear fellow, he took so much pains with that passage.' So she, for want of tact, lost to her husband for ever the reputation he so much desired, of having made an impromptu speech.

An impatient temper, which cannot brook delays, but insists upon a hearing and a reply, regardless of the 'convenient season,' is utterly subversive of all tact, and is a direct rebellion against its very first principles.

But if there is one subject which more than any other needs the aid of tact, it is the education of the young. It is said that one great secret of education is in knowing what to notice and what to pass over unnoticed. Sometimes the germ of a very serious fault may lie hidden beneath some inoffensive habit which escapes comment, if not attention; while that which is but a passing phase of childhood or youth, and which would not leave a trace behind, becomes the object of the severest and most irritating scrutiny.

How often those precious early years, which should be years of happiness wherein we lay up, as in a storehouse, the antidote for coming sorrows and trials, are embittered by tactless management! The very evils

which it is so much desired to eradicate are fixed by the way in which they are combated.

A parent, a governess, or a tutor, has a theory about education, and must bend the child or pupil to it, utterly regardless of the peculiar constitution of its mind. Some particular virtue is, perhaps, to be inculcated, and by continually harping upon it, it becomes odious in the pupil's eyes; or it may be desired that a particular friendship should be formed in order that some quality, or grace, or tone of thought should be cultivated, but by perpetually forcing it upon the pupil feelings of envy or dislike are engendered. We remember to have heard that, when a man was asked why he disliked another who was really worthy of his regard, he said, 'he could not tell, unless it was that, when they were young, he was always crammed down his throat as a pattern boy.'

Nor is this all. In the daily intercourse of life we find ourselves constrained to keep some people at a distance, for fear of what they may say or do. We dare not expose our inmost feelings and tenderest memories to their rough and impertinent handling.

The absence of tact also blunts men's perceptions. They cannot appreciate those delicate shades of character which go far to make a man great. We have not long since had a striking instance of this in a controversy that has taken place, in which one of the most remarkable men of our times has laid bare the workings of his own mind, and has shown to the world at large how deficient his adversary is in that delicate instinct

called tact, which would have enabled him to have understood and respected the transparent beauty of that character which is not the less beautiful in that it is unlike his own.

In society we find a just tribute paid to it in the welcome that is invariably given to the man who possesses this gift. He says the right thing at the right time and in the right place. He puts every one at his ease. There is none of that 'sitting upon thorns' as to what he may say or do. He never outstays his welcome; never obtrudes himself where he is not wanted; is never *gauche;* and when he takes his leave we are conscious that something pleasant has gone from us.

Generally speaking, the selfish, the vain, the conceited have no tact, for it involves a certain amount of the spirit of self-sacrifice; neither does it take up its abode by the side of ambition or self-will; nor does it associate with irreverence or a dictatorial and domineering temper.

It prefers the will of others to its own; with gentleness it abstains from wounding another's feelings, and treats adverse opinions with respect, having an especial reverence for the aged and infirm, or those who have a natural claim upon its dutiful consideration. It cannot exist where there is not some self-discipline and self-control; for its very essence lies in quiet forgetfulness of self, and tender consideration for others.

It is a beautiful and touching sight to see the young acting upon its impulses. Youth is especially the age of thoughtlessness—the present absorbing every other

interest; but when this gives place to a tender and almost sensitive regard for the feelings and wants of others, and the young put a constraint upon themselves that they may not say or do what can displease, it is a sight which is as beautiful as it is rare.

It has often occurred to us as doubtful whether it ever goes hand in hand with great intellectual vigour. Of course there are exceptions to every rule; but, generally speaking, we very much doubt whether, by one of those just laws of compensation, it does not belong rather to moderate ability. We are inclined to think that it has no place with very high intellectual power, which is apt to absorb into itself all other lesser things, and cannot condescend to those smaller details which make up our daily life. We do not say that it is so: we merely throw it out as a suggestion, as a possibility. But if be so, it accounts for the way in which so many of our greatest men have it not; why it generally belongs to women; why the French are so conspicuous for it; for, as a nation, they are not such deep thinkers as either the German or the English, amongst whom it is more rarely found.

It certainly exists among the poor, and among the country poor, who are more simple in their tastes. It seems to us to be one of those gifts by which the balance of good and evil is equalised in the world.

Precious gift! 'Aussi rare qu'il est utile.' How can it be obtained? That is the question, for we must all desire it; and to this we can only reply, that we believe it cannot be acquired; that it is a natural instinct, a

sixth sense, which is given only to a few. As there are some who have a talent for music or drawing, others for the study of foreign languages or for philosophy, so there are others who have this gift of tact, by which they are enabled to avoid the shoals and quicksands, the Scylla and Charybdis, which founder the barks of other men.

To what purpose, then, you may ask, have we introduced the subject, if it may not be attained, like many other graces? To this we reply, that if we have been able to dissociate it in the minds of any from hypocrisy, from uncertain and double dealing, we shall have gained our point; for there are so many who have persuaded themselves that it is contemptible and inconsistent with true manliness of character, whereas we believe it to be one of the rarest and greatest gifts we can possess, which will enable us, if we fortunately possess it, to do much good in our generation.

THE GULLIBILITY OF MAN.

Not long since, a case of swindling before a London magistrate made known the fact that a livery-stable keeper—a man with some opportunity of learning the habits of society—had actually lent a man five shillings and paid for two glasses of gin-and-water at eleven o'clock in the morning, on the representation that he was Lord John Russell, in a great hurry to hire a carriage to go down to Windsor.

A humorous friend of ours while boasting of the success of some absurd poem he had published, gravely said the Queen-dowager was so much pleased with it that she sent him a very friendly note, to say she should like to make his acquaintance, and if he came near Bushey Park, she trusted he would slip in and take a glass of sherry.

This, of course, was a jest; but the following, which would betray no less ignorance of the manners and customs of the royal family of England in the middle of the nineteenth century, was no jest at all; but we can honestly venture to record it as evidence of the extraordinary degree of ignorance which is compatible even with age, experience, and fair standing in society.

A retired naval officer, apt to boast at the expense

of truth, a man of good property and standing in the society of North Devon, who also possessed landed property in the Isle of Wight, actually described over a dinner-table a half-hour's haggle he pretended to have carried on face to face with her Majesty about some fields adjoining Osborne, which fields, he alleged, her Majesty wanted to buy too cheap; but he plainly told her Majesty that, happy as he should be to oblige her, 'land was land now-a-days; so *we* parted without a deal.'

The remarks we have to make upon man's gullibility we preface with these instances of ignorance, because where such ignorance is possible, credulity and imposition must of course be possible to the same extent. Whenever anything occurs to startle us with the credulity of the world, we shall find, on consideration, that error is traceable to one of two distinct principles.

The first is, that the standard of probability is at fault; the dupe is a poor observer of reality and a bad judge of truth. The *vraisemblance* of the French, or the *verisimile*, the 'truth-like' of the Romans, are more expressive words than our word 'probable.' These words remind us that probability depends on resemblance to the truth; and, naturally, persons who have an imperfect knowledge of the real must also be bad judges of the counterfeit. They may argue rationally, but from wrong data, which lead them to ridiculous conclusions.

The second cause of credulity is, that the greed of money, or other violent passion or affection of the mind, makes us see through a delusive medium. We see only

one side of the matter, the mind being dragged so forcibly in one direction that we cannot see the other.

In the latter case, it matters not how 'sensible and sane on other points' may be the victim of the temporary hallucination, for it is not a question of wit, but of attention; and Bishop Butler very wisely observed, 'though a man have the best eyes in the world, he can only see the way he turns them.'

In all the notable instances of imposture on the one hand, and of credulity on the other, we shall find the two sources of error centering in one and the same person. We may trace a degree of ignorance of men and manners and of the way persons in any given state of society, rank, or character, act under particular circumstances. We may trace also a state of mental delusion, an impatience of testing a made-up story even by the little experience that the victim happened to possess.

In the last novel* by the author of *Twenty Years in the Church*, the plot turns on the clever devices of one Hannah Hengen, a very remarkable adventuress. The scheme is so strange, that the author vindicates the probability of his story by saying that 'he pledges himself that, from his own limited experience, he could name no less than three adventuresses who severally victimised gentlemen of good standing and worldly experience by stories yet more easy to detect.'

Having reason to believe—especially from some remarks in the press while reviewing this popular story—that some curiosity has been excited on the subject,

* *Dragons' Teeth*, by Rev. James Pycroft.

we are happy in being favoured with the following account of the three 'facts stranger than fiction' to which the novelist referred.

I. A friend of the author one day told him that an extraordinary adventure in real life, with which members of his family had been nearly connected, happened in the manner following:

One day, about twenty years since, at the end of the session, as Mr. Salter, an Irish Member of Parliament, was returning home by the London and North-Western Railway, he became much interested in the conversation of two of his fellow-travellers—a young officer with a lady companion. When the train stopped at the Wolverhampton station, the officer came up to Mr. Salter and said, that, however strange it might seem, he was encouraged by his profession to reveal to Mr. Salter circumstances personal to himself and lady friend. The fact was, they were both on their way to Gretna Green: the lady was flying from a brute of a father, who, because she would not be persuaded to sacrifice herself and fortune to some very objectionable suitor, had used her so ill that she did not dare to return to his house again; while the young officer was fired with love ennobled by pity, at once to rescue a charming girl from the extremity of misery, and (of course he promised himself) to raise her to the serenest altitudes of mortal bliss and joy without end.

'Well, well!' said the M.P., 'no man alive is more ready than I am to help a fine fellow in a strait like

this. But—but—you know what the world is made of; you know business is business: there are some ordinary forms and precautions in use among men of the world; and therefore, not that I really suspect anything for a moment, all is so simple and artless; but, the long and short of the matter is, I must just, *pro formâ*, have the satisfaction of hearing the sad case you relate, and asking a few questions of the lady also.'

The story of the fugitive lady seemed to the open-hearted M.P. as simple, as ingenuous, and as transparent as that of the gentleman; and—as a striking corroboration of the description which the officer had given of the suddenness of the determination to elope—the lady had no luggage of any kind! Young runaway ladies do usually secrete a bundle by help of the waiting-maid, but one pocket-handkerchief and one parasol formed the complete inventory of the lady's superfluities. The officer related that he met the lady of his love that very morning in Rotten-row, attended, as usual, by her maid; and from painful information from that maid received, he had hurried the ill-used lady all in a moment to fly from the cruel designs of her most unnatural father on the wings of love and—the London and North-Western Railway.

The Irish gentleman was quite excited by the tale. He was also, like his countrymen in general, delighted at the dash of adventure and the romance of the movement. What Irishman's sympathies ever failed to take part with those who show themselves superior to the stupidities of order or of law?

'My purse,' he said, 'is at your command, but unfortunately, at the present moment, there is nothing in it. All I can say is, come over with me to Dublin; I then can get at my money. This unavoidable delay, however provoking, will, at all events, baffle all imaginable pursuit, and Gretna will be reached without further impediments of any kind.'

The officer and lady accepted the kind proposal, accompanied this friend in need to Dublin, and received cash quite equal to their necessities. The good friend's wife also volunteered her assistance, and lent articles from her wardrobe to obviate the inconveniences of so precipitate an expedition.

As soon as we had heard the story so far, we naturally anticipated that the end of the matter would prove to be, that the Irish gentleman never saw his money, and that his good lady's wardrobe remained minus all the garments so kindly supplied. But not so. The money was punctually repaid, and the wearing apparel was as honestly returned. That there was a dupe in the case was true enough; but that dupe was the *officer*, not the friend.

For the officer conducted his bride to his father's house; and as soon as time had been allowed for some kind of overtures to the relatives of the runaway lady, to appear only reasonable, all parties were surprised at observing that there was a continued refusal on the part of the lady, who every day found some fresh reason for delay when offers of intercession were forced upon her. At last, some one remarked that never once, in the

morning's distribution of the contents of the letter-bag, had there been a single epistle for the bride—albeit a lady of fortune with a wide circle of family connections. 'Surely all her relatives and friends could not be so implacably offended; and if so, displeasure finds its vent in words as often as in emphatic silence.'

When suspicion is once excited, the days of imposture are few indeed; and the bride was soon compelled to confess that she had no father, cruel or kind; that she had no fortune, and—it was readily concluded—she had no *character;* and her pretended 'lady's-maid' as little as herself.

And what became of the unhappy officer who had linked himself to an abandoned woman for life?

Most fortunately, a rigid investigation of her antecedents elicited that she had another husband living; so the second marriage was void; and the threat of a prosecution for bigamy gave the family little trouble for the future.

II. The second case of successful imposture to which the author of *Dragons' Teeth* alludes, he has related thus:

Some years since, while living in the city of Chester, I became acquainted with a Mr. Buller (this name will serve), an Oxonian, about three-and-twenty years of age—a member of an excellent family, who was reading for holy orders. He was a man of excellent character, of some accomplishments, especially music, and was generally much esteemed as a man highly honourable and utterly incapable of deceit by all who knew him.

After about a year, he went to visit his father and mother—persons of middle age and of ordinary intelligence and worldly experience; and during his absence a report reached Chester that Mr. Buller was engaged to be married to a ward in chancery, a lady of noble family and of immense estates in England, with chateaux and wide domains in Italy also.

In course of time, Mr. Buller rejoined his Chester relatives, but only for a visit of a few days, and brought his intended wife and introduced her to my family as among the most intimate of his friends in that city. The morning after, he visited us alone, was very communicative, and related incidents in the lady's history more like a romance than sober truth. However, the more strange this adventure, we felt the more impossible that he could be deceived; for, as to staring improbabilities, where we believe the narrator, we naturally think no one would dare to mention them if not true. Still, everything seemed to set at defiance the experience of our lives, as also the evidence of all our senses.

1. The lady, he said, wanted a few weeks of being of age, although she seemed to us five-and-thirty at least; but—she had survived an illness so remarkable, and had also an accident which resulted in diminishing the bloom of her youthful features.

2. The lady was an accomplished musician; her singing and playing were the envy of professors; but —just at that time there was a reason why she could not give even her intended husband a sample of either.

3. She was an excellent linguist, but—when some ladies from the continent addressed her in French as naturally as they would speak English, she drew back at once; she did not deem it consistent with the etiquette of high life to parade her accomplishments by talking French in English society.

In short, a mystery hung over everything: if Lord Eldon (he was then Chancellor) knew—for so she persuaded Mr. Buller—what he was doing with so wealthy a ward, above all, if he dared to marry her before she was of age, he would be imprisoned for contempt of court.

It so happened that the Marchioness of Conyngham was at that time announced as spending a few days in Chester; whereupon the lady exclaimed at once, 'I must avoid all the leading streets; for if the marchioness only catches a glimpse of me, she will tell Lord Eldon to a certainty, and we shall be undone.' The end of all was, Mr. Buller was tricked into marrying a woman whose connection with the peerage and extensive estates will best be understood if we say she had once been a servant in the family of Lord ——.

This adventuress deceived not only one young man, but all his family, carrying on the imposition over a period of many months. She was even working coronets on a baby's robe when the imposture was discovered! Mr. Buller and his family were as select in their society as most country gentlemen; so it has always been unintelligible how this woman ever attained a position even to attempt so audacious a deception.

III. The third instance of marrying under a mistake, which the author of *Dragons' Teeth* had in view, happened about twenty years since in the west of England, and at that time supplied points for repeated application to the law-courts for setting aside the marriage, but we believe without effect. This case may be more briefly told, though it resembles the plot of the novel aforesaid more nearly than either of the other instances.

A merchant of middle age had, unhappily for him, provoked either the mirth or the malice of a female relative—Mrs. Clyde—who determined to practise on his credulity by taking advantage at the same time both of his vanity and his greed.

It was well known to the merchant that an heiress of large estate was living in Steep-street. With this lady Mrs. Clyde pretended to have become acquainted; and, being quite her confidante in affairs of the heart, gladdened the ears of the merchant with the news that the heiress had set her affections upon him, fired by his mere looks — a case of love at the very first sight.

The only personal communication the bridegroom elect could be allowed, was on one occasion to kiss the hand of the lady through a half-opened door.

The connection between Mrs. Clyde and the heiress, who in reality was quite a stranger to her pretended confidante and go-between, was established to the satisfaction of the gentleman in a very ingenious way. While Mrs. Clyde and the gentleman were passing the lady's

house on one occasion, the lady was observed at the window. In an instant Mrs. Clyde said she would just run in and bring him a few words in the lady's handwriting. Accordingly, she knocked at the door, ran in past the servant, as if quite intimate, saying, 'Your mistress, I see, is in the drawing-room,' pretended that she and the clergyman of the parish were collecting for coals for the poor, and with an apology for the sudden intrusion, said that the loan of pen and ink for one moment would oblige. Pen and ink were produced, when Mrs. Clyde's hand, she said, was too numbed, and 'would you be so kind as to write these few words for me?' From that hour all chance of suspicion was obviated, in this vital point at all events.

The end of all was that the merchant met at the altar, and plighted his troth, 'for better, for worse, till death us do part,' to a bride enveloped in a thick veil, which veil was no sooner thrown off than it revealed the well-known features of—a fishwoman!

Mammas and daughters may learn a useful lesson from these three stories. Such imposition, involving misery for life, it has been proved is possible, even where there is no love to charm with siren spell, no passion to drown the voice of reason—none of that blissful hallucination which makes all the hours between the 'offer' and the wedding hours of the heart, but not of the head; hours during which we have seen even a lady of half a hundred years in a mood to credit everything from her hoary-headed lover, deaf to the warnings of all the world besides.

Affection of all kinds makes men gullible, because it blinds them. The folly of parents with their children is so proverbial that *fond* and *foolish* have become convertible terms. Most romantic and marvellous stories in a court of justice have been traced to the creative powers of a parent's mind; leading on, step by step, some wicked lying child who had wit enough to adopt the suggestions of leading questions. For nothing is too improbable for a parent to believe, in excuse for a child.

It is commonly remarked, 'If persons would dispassionately consider;' 'If they would honestly consult their own sense,' and the like. But on any question vitally affecting us, it is not so easy to think dispassionately. Do you doubt it? This shall be the proof: How seldom do persons really ask advice; how much more frequently do they only ask for confirmation? Every lawyer will tell you that the very client who comes for an opinion invariably rather argues than consults; and so pertinaciously conceals or glosses over the very facts on which any impartial opinion can possibly be formed, that it is often hard to torture and to wrest them from him. And could not the mentor within the breast tell the same story? Can we imagine we are ever likely to advise with ourselves at all more honestly than when we consult our lawyer or our friend?

The reason of this preposterous folly is, that a man never takes the trouble to consult or ask advice till he is already interested in one conclusion; and that interest draws the mind aside so forcibly in one direction,

that he proves utterly impatient of being made to look in the other.

In the three cases related, the greed of money, as well as conceit and self-love, supplied the delusive medium. Of all dust to throw in a man's eyes, there is none like gold-dust. The very news of a fortune to be had almost for the asking; the lottery prize, the opening of the millionaire's will, or the ventures of California—the very thoughts of such golden visions will throw even sober-minded people off their balance in a moment. In the times of bubble manias, more brains have been turned by fortunes gained than by fortunes lost; and every season of speculation proves again and again that, if once you quicken the pulse—if once you fire the minds of men by the prospect of sudden riches, and the earnings of a life all grasped within an hour—so all-engrossing is the object, that there is no limit to a man's credulity about the means of realising it. It is true now, as in the days of Thucydides, that in all such exciting moments, men will only talk one way; and whoever is bold enough to talk the other is at once set down as disaffected, or at all events as a very disagreeable sort of fellow.

One fact in the merchant's history singularly illustrates a very common fallacy—one that has hoodwinked many a dupe. When Mrs. Clyde had been seen to run like an intimate friend into the rich lady's house, this confirmation of one point was taken as a confirmation of all; so very slight a matter will satisfy us of what we wish to find true. In looking for proofs, men are

too ready to generalise. After cracking one or two nuts, though chosen by the audacious seller, we too fondly believe well of the rest.

While, then, we are so ready to deceive ourselves, who can wonder at the success of any imposture, where others are artfully flattering and inflaming our own self-love, and leading us on in the very direction in which we are already too prone to go?

CHRISTMAS ROSES.

TWIN roses on one stem,
  Twin cherries on one bough,
Twin rubies in one diadem—
  A perfect pair ; I vow

I know not which is sweeter,
  I know not which is rarer ;
    And if I had to grapple
    The question of the apple,
And *pulchriori detur*,
  I'd not know which is fairer.

Sweet music, and its echo sweet,
  A swan and its reflection,—
Such is the pair of twins complete,
  A duplicate perfection !

Was ever poor mortal
  So troubled as I am ?
To Felicity's portal
  I feel that I nigh am,
  And not very shy am !
But what can I do,
  When I cannot discover
Of which of the two
  I am truly the lover ?

Then pity me, who
Am condemned for my sins
To be deeply in love with the beautiful twins.

There's Ethel, the fair
With the rose in her hair,
I think she's the lovelier—almost—of the pair;
Especially too when her sister's not there!

But when Maud's in the way,
Well! I really can't say!
For Maud has such eyes
For colour and size,
And they've both necks and shoulders
That dazzle beholders,
And voices as sweet as the throstles in May.

O, blest is the fortunate fellow who wins
Either one of the beautiful, beautiful twins!

To what can the poet distracted compare
These beauties so rare?—
At a loss for a figure I am, I declare!

They're the new double-barrel Dan Cupid is armed with
(His old bow-and-arrows no longer he's charmed with),
The prize double-bloom out of Beauty's own green'us,
A charming two-volume edition of Venus!
All nature admires them; the beasts and the birds
Find joy in their glances—delight in their words;
And no fish so cold-blooded but twiddles his fins
As he drinks to the health of the beautiful twins.

O, what shall I do,
To decide 'twixt the two ?
For each is so neat,
So sweet and complete !
O, my course of true love has arrived at a hitch,
For I mustn't wed both, and I can't decide which !

I've tried to decide
Which to take for my bride,
But my puzzling all ends in the way it begins !
At a loss what to do
For a choice of the two,
I exclaim to myself,
Poor unfortunate elf,
'Since I can't marry both—O, why wasn't *I* twins ?'

SULKERIES.

I AM about to speak upon a question of domestic architecture. I have no new theory to propound concerning ventilation or drainage, or other sanitary arrangements; nor have I anything to say about over-crowded dwellings, and the number of cubic feet of air each person ought to have allotted to him in his sleeping-room. Such questions, unlike the houses and bedrooms they relate to, have been already thoroughly ventilated. My intention upon this occasion is to advocate the universal adoption in every dwelling-house of an institution without which no family residence can be deemed complete. I would maintain that every house imperatively needs a 'sulkery.'

In houses already built and occupied, it may, perhaps, be advisable, rather than incur the expense and annoyance of fresh buildings and alterations, to adapt some existing apartment—some out-of-the-way housekeeper's room, or long-disused lumber-room, even some ancient coal-cellar (if dry, and capable of admitting daylight)—to the purpose; but in all new erections, proper provision for a 'sulkery' should form as essential a part of the architect's plan as the dining-room itself.

It is quite possible—so slow is mankind at large in

comprehending any novel idea—that I may be asked, 'What is a sulkery?' I answer simply, it is a kind of sanctum, a retreat—a den, if you will—in which the head of the house can, when afflicted with ill-temper, shut himself up, away from all other members of the family, and there remain in strict seclusion, until again fitted to associate with his kind.

The bachelor living in chambers cannot appreciate the necessity of a sulkery. He has but to turn the key of his outer door, and isolate himself from the world. In well-appointed houses there is the 'library' and the master's 'study.' But these, though somewhat approaching it in character, are neither of them, strictly speaking, a 'sulkery.' Your library is open to your family, your guests. Even your study is accessible. Your wife, your sons, your daughters, your very housekeeper may intrude upon you there. They will, if properly behaved, declare their reverence for the apartment by knocking at the door before they enter, which they would probably not do with any other room. But that is all: they still come in. But in your 'sulkery' proper there is none of this. No knocking at *that* door! Once get a 'sulkery' thoroughly established, and there needs no painted caution of 'Trespassers beware!' There is an understood prohibition, a *lex non scripta*, which says plainly as though the words were stuck up in black and white, 'No admission *even upon business*.'

Not even upon business of the most pressing, urgent kind can admission to the sulkery be allowed. No matter who may want to see its occupant, he is 'not at

home.' Nor need there be any hesitation in making such an assertion on the ground of its untruthfulness. The man who requires the seclusion of his 'sulkery,' is, in fact, not 'in.' How can a man be 'in,' who has so recently been *put out?*

The 'sulkery' should be, whenever practicable, in some outlying wing of the main building (I have known a case, as I have already hinted, in which a very satisfactory one was constructed out of what had been a coal-cellar). It should, if possible, be situated on the ground-floor. The man who is in need of temporary seclusion in his 'sulkery' will not be in a good state of mind for mounting staircases. It should, above all things, be well apart from the rooms commonly used by the family. No sound of life's ordinary business, still less of anything like mirth or enjoyment on the part of other members of the household, should be allowed to penetrate its walls. Lacking this precaution, the 'sulkery' would be deprived of all advantage to the patient.

I have said the patient. Shall I recall the word? Why should I? A family is, after all, a microcosm; and that which passes in the world at large has ever its counterpart in the restricted circle of a household. Society builds lunatic asylums—*maisons de santé*, what not?—for those of its members whom it would not be well to leave at liberty. So, in the little world of a family, under somewhat similar circumstances, I would have a 'sulkery.'

For what is it, in truth—this anger, this ill-humour,

this sulking—call it what you will—what but a temporary madness?

You doubt it? Then let me ask what you say to this? Here is a certificate for you; drawn up in all accordance with the forms prescribed by law; one upon which no keeper of an asylum could refuse to receive a patient; and yet it is but the description of a very angry man:

'I, the undersigned A. B., hereby certify that I have personally examined C. D., and that the said C. D. is a person of unsound mind, and a proper person to be taken charge of and detained under care and treatment, and that I have formed this opinion upon the following grounds, viz.:

'1. Facts indicating insanity observed by myself.

'His aspect is wild and menacing; his eyebrows are knitted; his eyes wandering and sparkling; his lips are retracted, his canine teeth shown; his nostrils are dilated; his speech is loud, vociferous, and incoherent; he walks about the room, breaking the furniture, and asserting that he is surrounded by enemies.

'2. Other facts indicating insanity communicated to me by others.

'His wife tells me that his language is blasphemous, contrary to his usual manner; that he threatens to take her life or his own; and that he accuses her, without the slightest reason, of having "aggravated" him; she being, in reality, a perfect lamb for quietness and amiability.

'His man-servant informs me that his master is

totally incapable of remembering the nature and uses of objects around him; so much so, that on his offering him the boot-jack, he, instead of applying it to its proper purpose, seemed to imagine it to be a warlike weapon, and at once hurled it at my informant's head.'

Now, who shall say the patient described above is fit to be at large? No, let us slightly paraphrase Hamlet's address to the fair Ophelia, and bid him

'Go, get thee to a sulkery.'

For the patient thus described, as for those to deal with whose more lasting madness society has built asylums, the first essential is seclusion—total seclusion, where his disorganised mental state will lead him to do no harm, either to himself or others. We have retreats for downright madmen, whence they not unfrequently depart restored to reason. For the momentary madman, carried away by anger and ill-temper, let us have 'sulkeries' at home. An hour or two of solitude and reflection for such would work a wondrous cure, and, I have little doubt, prevent a week or more of 'grumpiness' and ill-humour.

The sulkery may or may not have books in it. That entirely depends upon the usual habits—whether studious or otherwise—of the patient. But as we have already said, it must *not* be the library. There must be no excuse for any one's intrusion in search of any particular book. The occupant of the sulkery must be alone—quite alone, during his treatment. I have been for some time debating in my own mind whether or not

the sulkery should have a bell to communicate with the servants. Upon mature reflection I think the bell should be allowed. It will tend materially to calm the patient's mind to know that, while no one can come near him unless he chooses, he has still the power of summoning a human being to his presence when he pleases. The bell is not at all likely to be used, but it will comfort him to know there is a bell. In fact, when the bell does ring, it may be taken as a sign of the patient's speedy convalescence. As soon as he is in a state to ring for servants, he is very nearly fit to mix once more with his fellow-creatures.

The sulkery should contain writing materials, pens, ink, and paper; especial care being taken that they are kept in the very highest state of excellence. A scratchy pen or cloggy ink is more calculated to neutralise the benefits sought in the sulkery than anything of which I know. Good pens, good ink, and paper should be always there—but on no account either sealing-wax or postage-stamps.

The patient should be allowed to write anything he pleases, but to send nothing off. No letter or other writing must be dispatched from the sulkery, until the writer has time to read and reconsider it after his cure is complete.

The sulkery should be built as far as possible away from the hall-door. The sound of the knocker or door-bell must not be allowed to penetrate its walls. A postman's knock, or a tradesman ringing at the bell, especially about the time the quarter's bills are falling due,

is apt very seriously to retard the patient's recovery. Should his avocations be such that immediate attention to his correspondence is absolutely necessary, it may possibly be advisable, though I am far from recommending it, that his letters should be pushed under the sulkery-door to him. But even to this rule there must be an exception. Under whatever circumstances, and all orders he may have given to the contrary notwithstanding, no letter, on the outside of which is printed in black ink, 'On Her Majesty's service. Private!' and which looks, feels, or smells like a claim for Income Tax, must be allowed to reach him until he emerges cured from the sulkery.

As to the style of diet for the patient under treatment, I scarce know what to say. It must vary with the requirements of each particular case. Under no circumstances must 'humble-pie' be insisted upon as a portion of his food. This would seriously retard his recovery.

Where the attack is acute, violent, and sudden, there will be no food needed in the sulkery at all. The cure will probably be effected in an hour or two, and the patient sufficiently restored by dinner-time to take his place at the family table, as though nothing had occurred to him. Or if not this, he will, by the time that he gets hungry, have so far recovered as to be able to ring his bell (an act in itself, as I have already said, denoting convalescence), and order what he wants. In cases, however, which seem more of a chronic character, in which the patient keeps to his sulkery for days

together, he must of course be fed. Considerable care will be required in such cases. Not only must the kind of food he likes best be studied, but the time and mode of supplying him therewith must be considered. It would never do for an intrusive servant to burst in upon him without ceremony whenever it seemed, in such servant's judgment, time to lay the cloth. This would defeat my whole scheme of sulkeries. No; the patient's habits must be watched. He will of course occasionally step out for fresh air and exercise. At all such times advantage should be taken of his absence silently to place a meal upon his table, and at the same time to dust, arrange, and in winter-time make-up the fire in the sulkery. Nor let it be thought that these brief absences would be too irregular and uncertain to be trusted. I have noticed among those patients whose lengthened dwellings in their sulkeries has induced me to distinguish their cases as chronic, an extraordinary tendency to make their apparently fitful and wayward strollings-out coincident with meal-times. Of course there is no method in their madness; but so potent is the influence of habit on the human mind, that they almost invariably turn out just when it is time to lay the cloth. But then, let it not be forgotten, the chronic cases are not the most severe ones.

And now a word about this walking out for air and exercise, which is so necessary for patients whose attack lasts more than a few hours—for those who let the sun go down upon their wrath, and keep to their solitude beyond a day. How are they to go out for ever so short

a time from their sulkeries, and yet keep-up their seclusion? The question is a difficult one, I grant. It would be well if every sulkery could have its own exercise-ground and pleasure-garden attached, as our asylums have. But, considering the value of land, especially in or near great cities, this is more than we dare hope for. In fact, the patient, when he goes out, must in a great measure take his chance. His immediate family, of course, know that he does not wish to be approached or spoken to. But none the less is he at the mercy of any chance visitor or friend who may drop in. All I can say in such a case is—the worse luck for the friend or visitor! Worse also for the patient, doubtless.

A friend of mine once hit upon an admirable mode of insuring seclusion even while he walked about among his fellow-men, when such seclusion was required by his frame of mind. My friend invariably had two hats in wear, a white one and a black one. I will do him the justice of admitting that the latter was far more frequently seen upon his head. Why this eulogium? you will ask. What superior merit was it in him that his hat was more often black than white? I will tell you. At the period of which I speak, my grand idea of sulkeries had not been given to the world. My friend had no retreat in which he could, when necessary, shut himself up till he regained his temper; so he resorted to the plan of different-coloured hats. It was thoroughly well known to all his family and friends that when the hat he wore was white, he was in an ill-humour, and was on no account to be spoken to; and so, go where

he would, he was to all intents and purposes secluded. In fact, my friend's white hat — like the yellow flag hoisted by ships in quarantine—was a well-understood signal, and cautioned all who saw it to keep at a respectful distance.

It would be a great aid to my proposed institution of sulkeries, if signalling by divers-coloured hats were universally adopted.

But I have said my say. I have enunciated the broad principles of my idea — have thrown out such hints for the working-out of its minor details as seemed to me necessary. I claim no copyright or patent in the notion. I shall not register it like Pepper's Ghost, nor will I enter it at Stationers' Hall; I claim no royalty for the use of it, nor will any colourable imitation of it be met by an ex-parte injunction. I give the notion to the world at large. Society may make use of it without any infringement of any patent.

In fact, I want it done. The more it is adopted, the better pleased shall I be. I seek no personal reward; I am careless even of fame. I do not so much as ask that my name shall go down to posterity in connection with the institution. But believing honestly that it would be conducive to the happiness of humanity, I do wish for its general adoption, so that—in the words of advertising purveyors of sewing machines and other domestic requirements—there shall be 'no home without a—sulkery.'

DE PROFUNDIS.

She has left me alone in my sorrow,
The maid with the fathomless eye—
And her heart was betrothed to another
Ere the tear of our parting was dry.

Ah! youth was my bane, little Cupid!
And razors no comfort can bring,
For my whiskers are all in prospective,
My moustache is a pitiful thing.

She knew that I loved her to madness,
And youth made my passion sublime;
O, had she but waited a little—
It was merely a matter of time—

I'd have poured out my soul in her praises,
Written sonnets and songs by the score,
And swamped these dear magazine-pages
With a flood of poetical lore!

But vanished the mists and the glory,
Queen Mab with her fairy-like team—
And I waken like one who was dreaming,
And finds it was only a dream.

I will stroll through the fields and the meadows,
    And weep to the lapwing's cry,
With a brier-root pipe in my pocket
    And a packet of Bristol bird's-eye.

And the smoke will arise like incense
    In clouds from the reeking bowl,
Far up on the woodlands and meadows,
    Like the sigh of a weary soul.

ON MEN AND WOMEN AS LETTER-WRITING ANIMALS.

LETTERS, as I understand the term, appear to have been practically unknown to the ancients. They wrote epistles instead, stately, elegant, serious deliverances of their minds, thought in full dress, solemn-faced news in the act of becoming history. They never trifled, for as yet humour was not. Moreover they took time about their correspondence. The dashing-off of passing impressions, a slight sketch in profile of the Cynthia of the minute, was impossible at a time when writing materials were so scarce, cumbrous, and dear. Unlike us, they were in no hurry to be communicative; first thinking over things before they indited them. When they did indite them, it was generally, as the Psalmist says, a good matter. If they were slow, they were sure, and gave you the clear liquor of their cogitations, not the first yeasty workings. I fancy, too, that when a man, in that far-away time, began to write, he wrote a good clerkly hand. He took pains over a very serious matter. A letter then lasted a generation. There were no waste-paper baskets in those days. A man was proud of his performance; he built-up a stately edifice of caligraphy with majestic flourishes and Corinthian capitals. There was something to look at as well as

to read; it was as good as a picture, pleasant to the eyes and elevating to the mind. You left it as a legacy to your sister's family, or bequeathed it as an heirloom to your own.

But such tremendous feats of epistolary difficulty were not what you might call 'letters.' Perhaps the national character of those old Greeks and Romans (and two-thirds of antiquity seem shared between them) was a too unkindly soil for these delicate productions: they could take no root in it; perhaps other causes were more adverse. To mention one — the absence from their social life of the element of female influence. There was no gallantry in the sterner sex, or intrigue in the weaker; knowledge was not diffused; public notions of what constituted society were very crude; gentility did not exist; ambition in the upper classes was coarse; content in the lower was sordid. Their ears never heard nor did their hearts ever vibrate to those multitudinous, complex undertones of the social harp of life which result from community of thought and knowledge, and reciprocation of interests. These, which make our own lives so full of business and entertainment, acting and reacting upon them with influences the most subtle and various, were then, for the most part, unknown; there was not much to talk about, and therefore little to write.

And yet what piquant scandals might have been chronicled in the court of Semiramis! what tales of the tender assignations made at Ninus' tomb! Fancy reading in the diary of some Egyptian Pepys, 'Went to-day

to see the new Pyramid; not so large as the others, but mighty fine!'

I think it was the late Archbishop of Dublin who assigned even a higher value to the discovery of paper-making than to that of printing. And shall we not say that letter-writing was not a general accomplishment in old times because there was then no stationery? Your beggar, ignorant of the tattered value in which he stood encased, gave his rags with content to the four winds of dissolution. O that he had been wiser in his generation! so haply we had missed some classical inutilities, and known a vast deal more of the inner life and social relations of our elders and ancestors. There is always a tendency in mankind to chronicle small beer; but who could have had the heart to do so on stone slabs, metal plates, wooden blocks, the bark of trees, flat rushes, and prepared skins? Who could have felt himself justified in inscribing on half a hundred waxen tablets the details of a banquet given by Lucullus—in using-up the right bank of the Nile in making a topography of Thebes—or in running through the last budget of news from Palmyra along half a mile of vellum? The thing is absurd. Fancy Mr. Tennyson's curled and oiled Assyrian bull, conscious of a bent towards satire, going out into the desert to cut his impressions of Esar-haddon on the rocks! Or do you suppose that dear old gossip, Herodotus, ever, on one fine morning, received a note to the following effect: 'My dear Herodotus, I have great pleasure in sending you my memoirs of King Cambyses, *on three wagons!*'

We must come to modern times before we find specimens of the letter proper. I don't mean business letters, the dry algebra of commerce; or letters about law, science, or art. I don't mean letters indited under the influence of excited feelings, revenge, indignation, snarling, self-love, &c. And yet, gracious powers! what a wonderful command of language do these passions endow us with! How rapidly the vast word-floods rush along, bearing upon their bosom such figures of speech, such tropes, metaphors, audacities of rhetoric and sweeping impetuosities of style, that if we could only transfer the inspiration, maintain the glow after the original fire has gone out, our literary fortune would be made. Still, these are not the letters present to my mind. Mine are *literæ humaniores*. Mild, mirthful, serious, grave or gay, lively or severe, calm, joyous, meditative or jolly, begetting a smile, a tear, a laugh. They are the births of the hour, the literary butterflies of society, the moths of the mind; they instruct, please, refine. Yet so to do is not their prime intention. They are the inspirations of mother-wit dealing with such materials as time, taste, men, women, fantastic manners, and the general hurly-burly of events create. They are light and airy, yet need not be trifling. In the glitter of their smiles is often the trace of a tear, and the honest laugh will give birth to an echo very like a sigh. But the good letter is neither a sermon nor an essay, does not read like a comic paragraph or a bit of a smart review-paper; it is simply what it is—a good letter; is generally more good-humoured than witty, more genial

than clever. Friendship produces it, affection gossips in it, and civility—that exercise of a benevolence in small things—bestows upon it a delicate preservative aroma of good-breeding.

We owe most of the letters, which can be thus characterised, to the ladies. I have sometimes thought the turn of women for writing good and long letters is due to the fact that they sit down so much. From knitting, netting, sewing, darning, and other domestic employments, they can easily betake themselves to pen and ink. Nine hours out of the day they are literally in a position to write, and can turn to at any time.

But men, especially Englishmen, are by nature short-letter-writing animals. The business of most of us lies out of doors, or deals with such stern interests as makes us both indisposed and leave us little time for a correspondence stimulated chiefly by desire to please a friend, evince a talent, or gratify a love of gossip. No man makes warmer friendships than the Englishman: friendships which he will vindicate through fire and water. But to write his friend long letters! it is not in the bond. He cannot gossip; to be sentimental he is ashamed. Nor, speaking generally, does he possess the art of letter-writing, even if he were inclined to use it. He is but a poor hand at hitting off, lightly and effectively, the outward show of things; dancing, with elegance and humour, the straw of news on his pen's point; or gliding rapidly but gracefully along the surface of events, not without insight into their hidden causes: your true Briton is mostly incapable of this. He can

be serious, profound, severe, pathetic, even poetical; but his talents are commonly too heavy, his character too sombre, for a species of composition requiring some wit, more humour, a great deal of social observation, a few touches of sentiment, and much liveliness of manner united to constant neatness of expression.

Yes, the ladies, bless them! certainly surpass us here. I daresay many of my readers have only to open their writing-desks to put their hand upon letters, intended solely for their private gratification, which in wit, sense, airiness of style, humour of narration, and good-nature in spirit, are no mean rivals of the best productions in this class of literature. Generally speaking, in every family or friendly circle, there is some one person, mostly a woman, whose talent for letter-writing is well known and recognised, whose correspondence is sought for and valued as something *sui generis*, delightful, peculiar. To those whose unhappy lot it is to receive and answer many letters, a friend like this is invaluable. One such plum makes up for a vast amount of epistolary dough.

Of all agreeable letters let me recommend those of Madame de Sévigné, née De Rabutin-Chantal, 1627. Entertaining an affection for her daughter which almost amounted to a passion, this excellent woman and most charming letter-writer consoled herself for the void in her family circle caused by that young lady's marriage, with an increasing correspondence, ranging over all things done below the sun—a Frenchwoman's sun to be sure. No infrequent or unhonoured attendant at

the court of Louis the Magnificent (though in her heart preferring the quiet of the country), Madame de Sévigné found abundant opportunities for the exercise of her peculiar talent, and regularly dished-up for the entertainment of her daughter a mess of news wherein one does not know which to admire most, the good spirits and amiability of the writer, or the clear lively style, the shrewd observations, the sweet feminine transitions of thought, and unaffected prettiness of expression of the letters. The charm and hilarity of the lady's manner in telling a piece of news are unrivalled. But, then, seldom has there been a woman of such a thoroughly joyous disposition. When her daughter was staying with her no one could be happier. She loved gardens and a life out of doors. She went singing to herself as she wandered among her flower-beds. At her country retreat herself and friends, laic and cleric, young and old, handsome and ugly, were always dying of laughter. It needed but a look, a half-uttered jest, a plain girl's vanity, a pretty girl's fit of devotion, Mdlle. du Plessis, that notorious fibber, Mons. de Pomenars, the ridiculous transgressor, to bring on attacks of mirth under which they all immediately expired. A thousand blessings on the genius which has prolonged the echoes of that joyous laughter to my nineteenth-century ears! As I sit in my quiet room, I fancy myself popping my post-natal face within that courtly circle, and grin with sympathetic muscle at the joke going round.

What a charming letter is that to her cousin, Bussy-Rabutin, on the birth of her boy! I wonder if the

writer knew it was a good letter? Not she. The chief thing one sees in it is the figure of the proud and happy young mother, bending with shining limpid eyes over the cradle of her first-born.

'You are a pretty fellow, are you not? to have written nothing these two months. Have you forgotten who I am, and the rank I hold in the family? 'Faith, little cadet, I will make you remember it. You knew I was about to be confined, and yet took no more trouble to ask after my health than if I had remained a spinster. Very well. Be informed, to your confusion, that I have got a boy who shall suck hatred of you into his veins with his mother's milk, and that I mean to have a great many more, purely to provide you with enemies. You have not the wit to do as much, you, with your feminine productions!

'After all, my dear cousin, my regard for you is not to be concealed: Nature will proclaim it in spite of art. I thought to scold you for your laziness through all this letter; but I do my heart too great a violence, and must conclude with telling you that M. de Sévigné and myself love you very much, and often talk of the pleasure we have in your company.'

The boy whose birth is here announced so pleasantly, was that Marquis de Sévigné of whom, so cold was his temperament, Ninon de l'Enclos affirmed that he had a soul of pap, and the heart of a cucumber fried in snow.

But to return to Madame la mère. Never was the art of exciting or sustaining expectation more cleverly

and prettily shown than in her letter concerning the marriage of M. de Lauzun with Mademoiselle, grand-daughter of Henry IV. Never was reader involved in such a whirl of suspicions, such a giddy dance of conjectures; never was such a maze of animated phrases. Curiosity is driven to its last gasp; titillation is carried to its extreme piquancy. The secret is ever on the tip of the growing sentence, but still it eludes us. It is the most fantastic, Puck-like, Ariel style of news-vending possible, but too long to be inserted here.

Do any of my fair readers wish to know how to make hay? If so, attend: 'Hay-making is the prettiest thing in the world. You play at turning over the grass in a meadow; and as soon as you can do that, you know how to make hay.'

After the letters of Madame de Sévigné, I love but little those of Horace Walpole, Lord Hervey, or Lady Mary Wortley. They are witty, satirical, scandalous, brilliant; but the Frenchwoman equals them in their best qualities, and possesses, in addition, that infinite charm which only a good heart and an amiable character can bestow. Some of the letters of Cowper, to be sure, are likewise wonderfully pleasant, sensible, airy, humorous; but his cheerfulness is but an April sunshine, in which we snatch a fearful joy, knowing that a cloud has gone before, and a cloud is coming after.

Those letters of Addison which have been preserved, though few in number, and for the most part written at an early period of his life, yet exhibit many evidences of that delightful humour, for the matured excellence of

which we must look in the pages of the *Spectator*. Here is one, a favourable specimen of the easy playful style of that admirable writer and sincere Christian.

'About three days ago Mr. Bocher put a very pretty snuff-box into my hand. I was not a little pleased to hear that it belonged to myself, and much more so when I found it was a present from a gentleman that I have so great an honour for. For my part, I can no more accept of a snuff-box without returning my acknowledgments, than I can take snuff without sneezing after it. This last, I must own to you, is so great an absurdity, that I should be ashamed to confess it, were I not in hopes of correcting it very speedily. I am observed to have my box oftener in my hand than those who have been used to one these twenty years; for I can't forbear taking it out of my pocket whenever I think of Mr. Dashwood. You know Mr. Bayes recommends snuff as a great provocative of wit; but you may produce this letter as a standing evidence against him. I have since the beginning of it taken above a dozen pinches, and still find myself more inclined to sneeze than to jest. From whence I conclude that wit and tobacco are not inseparable, or, to make a pun of it, though a man be master of a snuff-box,

'Non cuicumque datum est habere nasum.'

I should be afraid of being thought a pedant for my quotation, did I not know that the gentleman I am writing to always carries a Horace in his pocket.'

As a *bonne bouche* and wind-up of this very discur-

sive paper, let me recommend my readers to peruse the following letter, written by a sailor to his brother. It is on business certainly, but in this case the business is so entirely subordinated to the personal anxiety of the writer, that it becomes a perfect medium of characterising *him* and delighting *us*. Remark too, that the severest training in logic could not have given him a greater tenacity in sticking to the point. I have preserved the original spelling; it is merely a roughness in the husk, which does not affect the flavour of the kernel.

Warren Hastings, East Indiaman,
off Gravesend, 24th March.

DEAR BRO' TOM,

This cums hopein to find you in good helth as it leaves me safe ankord here yesterday at 4 P.M. arter a plesent vyage tolerable short and few squalls. Dear Tom, hopes to find poor old father stout, am quite out of pigtail. Sights of pigtail at Gravesend but unfortinly not fit for a dog to chor. Dear Tom, captains boy will bring you this and put pigtail in his pocket when bort. Best in London at the black boy 7 diles, where go, ax for best pigtail, pound a pigtail will do. And am short of shirts. Dear Tom, as for shirts onley took 2, whereof 1 is quite wore out and tother most, but dont forget the pigtail as I arnt had nere a quid to chor never sins Thursday. Dear Tom as for the shirts your size will do only longer. I liks um long, got one at present, best at Tower hill and cheap, but be pertickler to go to 7 diles for the pigtail at the black boy and dear Tom ax for a pound of best pigtail and let it be good. Captains boy will put

the pigtail in his pocket, *he likes pigtail so tie it up*. Dear Tom shall be up about Monday or thereabouts. Not so perticler for the shirts as the present can be washed, but dont forget the pigtail without fail, so am your lovein brother,

JACK.

P.S.—Dont forget the pigtail.

THE ETHICS OF LOVE-AFFAIRS.

'At lovers' perjuries,' they say, 'Jove laughs.' This is, of course, a pestilent heresy, a heathenish and atheistic remark. But it embodies a fallacy which I am afraid is only too common. An immense amount of false swearing goes on in love-affairs. That morality, which is mixed up with all the affairs of life, is certainly not relegated from a region which is as important as any, and to nearly all of us more interesting. Something may certainly be said concerning the Ethics of Love-Affairs.

There is to my mind something very unsatisfactory in the way in which love-making is at present carried on. Of course it was very different in the days when I was still young. But as it is said at chess, that lookers-on see most of the game, so I am annoyed by seeing a vast number of false moves by those who are playing this game of love-making, the most delicate, important, and complicated of all. The result is, that a man or woman when mated, is frequently just as often checkmated. And very often the failure in the higher game is from the same cause as the checkmate on the board; want of thoughtfulness, of close attention, briefly of brain, which has led to some stupid blunder. Moreover, the intellectual causes and the moral causes, as usual, are inextricably mixed up to-

gether. It is always the case, that a bad man is not only a bad man but a miserable fool. To divorce ethics or morality from certain episodes of life, is an equally effectual divorce from wisdom and from happiness. There is something to my mind ineffably sad in the low comic view which is so often taken of those relationships concerning which we are now writing with some distrust and hesitation; in that spasmodic unnatural fun, or weak, shallow, unreflecting sentiment. It is as bad as the levity, or selfishness, or cool calculation, which one so frequently meets with in real life. One infinitely prefers a little generous romance and enthusiasm; for, although they do not count for much, they are often preparatory and prophetic of real ripe fruit to come. Our country is peculiar in this respect, that, thanks mainly to Lord Westbury, the picture of married unhappiness is always before the mind and eye of the country. Perhaps a good deal of that folly and guilt which we often see in the married state may be shifted back to the earlier stage of the love-affair.

I am not speaking of dark and flagrant matters—although every now and then one is startled to hear of such—but of circumstances which, according to ordinary considerations, are not judged harshly. The business habits of our business age are now largely imported into matters from which they are best kept distinct; not that they should be entirely overlooked, but that a broad distinction should be maintained. Young men and women are often as mercenary as their seniors. There are a great many young ladies even, who could

pass a very satisfactory examination in the rights of primogeniture, and on the differences between post-nuptial and ante-nuptial settlements. Your very prudent marriages, when, for instance, young May weds January, because January is rich or titled, giving very scant happiness, although they may not crop-up in the court which is the latest boast of our civilisation. Natural rules, whenever violated, ultimately obtain their revenge. Again, how very much of the misery of private life is occasioned simply by an absence of right principle, and even stability of character! When a love-affair is in full progress, young people think they have entered on a phase of life where pleasures and romance are everything, and the true notions of duty and responsibility need scarcely enter. But for want of these the little romance often speedily vanishes away. We have all known of various unhappy cases, although they were generally withdrawn from light very quickly. You see a worthy young fellow meet some worthless shallow girl, or some really nice girl meet some worthless fellow, and they are thrown a good deal together, and become, or fancy that they become lovers. Then a period of illusion, oftentimes fraught with disaster, sets in. Youth is reckless and generous, and attributes readily to others the qualities which it possesses itself. A being generous, affectionate, devoted, at once attributes generosity, affection, devotedness to this other being, when in fact these attributes exist very scantily, or rather have no proper existence at all. When there is no moral worth as the substratum of affection between young people,

the affection itself depends on a most fragile link. If young Lovelace is only attracted by pouting lips and pretty eyes, he is unable to resist lips of a brighter ruby and eyes of a deeper sapphire. Then the fickle affections are lightly transferred to another choice; the first engagement comes to a bad end; but it frequently happens that in the one case while only an engagement is broken, in the other a heart is broken. I am as sceptical as the Duke of Wellington himself respecting young people dying of love. 'We read occasionally,' says his Iron Grace, 'of desperate cases of this description; but I cannot say that I have ever yet known of a young lady dying of love. They contrive in some measure to live and look tolerably well, notwithstanding their despair and continued absence of the lover; and some have even been known to recover so far as to take a second lover, if the absence of the first has lasted too long.' Of course people do not literally die of love, but they may suffer that, compared with which any physical rupture of the heart, of which physicians tell us, is a mere trifle. I believe, however, that physicians will tell us that when there is a predisposition to disease, unhappiness of this sort—'something on the mind,' is the phrase—has been the determining cause of death. Thus an incalculable amount of misery is produced, not by any deliberate wickedness, but by fickle feeling and light-hearted selfishness. A really tender and profound nature is tortured until sensibility is blunted by some gaudy worthless insect of a moment, only noteworthy for its terrible capacity of inflicting pain.

There is something most deteriorating to the moral character in flirtation, using the word in its extreme and odious sense. In this universal flirting there is such a waste of feeling and emotion. Waste is at all times an extravagant and wicked thing. Our feelings, like all the good gifts of the Creator, are to be guarded and treasured and rightly developed. The muscles must not be stretched beyond a due degree of tension. Brain and heart will do their appointed work, but will avenge too frequent and undue demands. The young man who flirts with half-a-hundred girls is depriving his own true future wife of a portion of that love and loyalty which he owes her. Those feelings which are the tenderest and deepest of our fallen nature—reliquary graces of the lost Eden happiness—lose their brightness, sweetness, graciousness, with their marvellous healing, regenerating power. The unhappy man or woman is perhaps so far fallen as to scoff at them, or deny, or deride, or to find herein a theme for polished sarcasm or coarse jeering. I believe it is a common saying among young people, that a piece of the heart has been given here, and a piece there, until no heart is left to offer. And then, for such, the matter-of-fact marriage, in the highest and most blessed sense, is no real marriage at all; the sweet virginal emotions have long ago been dissipated and lost; the feelings are all blunted and worn-out; and it is true of these reforming rakes, the married male and female flirt, that they are, in the language of Professor Plumptre's fine poem of Gomer—

> 'Renouncing all the joys,
> The blessings of the bridegroom and the bride,
> When each in other brings the virgin heart,
> The Eden-bliss of lilies white and pure,
> The stainless passion purifying sense.'

It is also to be remembered that we are all the creatures of habit; and the habit of flirting, though laid aside for the honeymoon, is too often speedily resumed. The inveterate flirt of half-a-score seasons is too often an inveterate flirt to the last, and too often the pleasant vice indeed becomes a scourge. The slight want of conscience in the outset becomes a total want of conscience in the issue. The domestic misery and public scandal may often be traced back to the want of Ethics in Love-Affairs.

It is not my intention, however, to dwell exclusively on the gloomy and unhappy side of things. It is unnecessary also to dwell on the bright *per contra* side of things, which even English family life evermore furnishes. Let us notice a few points which arise in our social life, as well as some which have occupied the attention of jurists and casuists.

In the second edition of Addison, on the *Law of Contracts*, that great legal authority goes into questions of this kind with a particularity to which in subsequent editions he does not condescend. Some of the legal particulars which he lays down connected with love-making are highly amusing. A letter conveying an offer does not require a stamp. 'An offer or promise of marriage, sent by post, or left at a lady's residence for her consideration, is deemed to be continually re-

newed, until she has had an opportunity of accepting or rejecting it.' Generally speaking, European law has taken a highly ethical view of these matters, and embodied it in jurisprudence. Sometimes it administers that kind of justice which is called poetical justice. Mademoiselle Bourdenet made the Lord Desportes promise to marry her. The clever French woman was only too clever. She got a note from him, thus written: 'I promise to Mademoiselle Bourdenet to marry her.' In this case the French law held that marriage is a reciprocal, and as there was a promise from the gentleman to marry the lady, so there ought to have been in existence a promise from the lady to marry the gentleman. Our own law, however, is much more gallant to the ladies; and when an express promise is shown on the one side, makes little difficulty in implying a promise on the other. Coke and Hardwicke declare 'the modesty of the sex is considered by the common law,' and regard the lady as *semper parata*, although 'it can hardly be expected that a lady should say to a gentleman, "I am ready to marry you; pray marry me."' The case of a thorough snob is recorded on the books. He was courting the daughter of a rich man, and, in a clandestine interview, obtained from the girl a bond, in which she bound herself in a penalty of five hundred pounds not to marry any other person; and he, on his part, gives her a bond of a similar description. The young lady, grown wiser after her father's death, filed a bill in Chancery to be released from this penalty, and the court ordered it to be delivered up to be cancelled.

The bond, however, would have been valid, if it had not been clandestinely obtained. The English law indorses the axiom that silence gives consent. When a gentleman asked for and obtained the consent of the parents to his marriage with their daughter, and the young lady stayed in the room within the hearing of the parties, and made no objection to the match, it was held that her silence under such circumstances afforded as cogent evidence of her assent as an express affirmation. This position is to enable a young lady to recover damages if she wants them. But if she be the defendant, here the English law, with its usual gallantry, steps in to help her, and rules that there must be an express promise on her part to enable a man to sustain an action. Again, the law does not object to long engagements in the case of young people, and even encourages them ; but in the case of older persons requires a little more alacrity in espousals. It seems to view with approbation the maxim of the Roman law, that an engagement should not extend over two years. A curious case is given, that of Mallett *v.* Holfpenny, in which the fair behaved in a very faithless and disgraceful way. A father promised an intended husband to give his daughter a certain sum as a marriage-portion, and the unnatural parent misliking this circumstance, contrives with the daughter that she 'should put on a good humour,' and should get possession of the document and deliver it back to him, and then get married; which she did, the father standing at the corner of the street to see her go to church. In this case the court of Chancery, like a

benignant genius, interfered, and ordered the agreement to be carried into effect. It is very curious to notice the pleas which are sometimes brought among those humble people with whom this description of action is not uncommon. A bucolic case occurs to me, tried somewhere down in the country. The defendant pleaded drunkenness as his set-off. He said that he was drunk when he made the promise, drunk when he spoke to the parents, drunk when he bought the ring, drunk when he fixed the day. This plea, I have no doubt, had no effect beyond eliciting some severe remarks from the presiding judge.

There was a rather remarkable case tried in the city a few years since, and one of the jury subsequently explained to me how he and his brethren decided the case. The wretched defendant had represented to the young lady and her friends, from motives of silly wrong-headed vanity, that he was an exceedingly rich man, whereas he was only moderately rich. He had acted very badly, and the question was simply one of damages. He had retained Sir Alexander Cockburn, the present chief-justice, and Mr. Edwin James, as his counsel, perhaps hoping to crush his gentle opponent by this monopoly of the most fervid eloquence of the bar. It was, however, generally thought that Sir Alexander's eloquence on behalf of the defendant was very tame indeed compared with what it might have been if he had been on the side of the plaintiff. The judge summed up, and the jury retired to consider their verdict. When they had entered the room, one

of the number proposed that each juryman should write down on a separate slip of paper the amount of damages which he proposed to award. A very remarkable amount of variation was exhibited. One juryman gave in an estimate as low, I think, as a hundred pounds ; another certainly proposed as high as ten thousand pounds. I suppose the first estimate was given by some gay young fellow who failed to comprehend the full enormity of the offence, and the last by some father of a family, who could better appreciate a case of outraged feelings. One of the jury proposed that an average should be struck, and this was found to be three thousand pounds. But neither the young gentleman nor the old gentleman were satisfied. To one the sum was ridiculously too high, to the other too low. Each maintained his side with much zeal and eloquence, the other ten being content with the average. At last the time arrived when mortals dine. One of the two then thought it would be highly presumptuous on his side to oppose himself to the opinions of so many men his seniors in years and wisdom, and then the other could not think of disturbing the unanimity of the party. A verdict for three thousand pounds damages was accordingly given. An attempt was afterwards made to set aside the verdict. One ground was, that the defendant's means had been greatly exaggerated ; but as the wrong impression had been created by his own lying vanity, this was set aside. He complained grievously that at the consultation his learned counsel had 'chaffed' him, and not

done much besides; but Sir Alexander Cockburn, who called him a most troublesome client, gave a full and complete version of the matter.

Let me now add a few words respecting the case when a breach of promise of marriage occurs in addition to these legal notes. Most of my readers must have casually noticed the newspaper literature of the subject. Of course, no lady or gentleman ever brings any such action. This litigation seems to appertain exclusively to the lower orders. To this I only remember one exception, which is remarkable enough, as the plaintiff was a gentleman, and recovered really substantial damages. To the best of my recollection he was an officer in the army, whom some worthless woman, becoming rich, had jilted, and then spread lies about him to justify her heartlessness. In this case the plaintiff was both an officer and a gentleman, and probably took a right line of conduct, which met with a proper result. But I do not think that any lady of real feminine feeling — like a beggar exhibiting his sores—would parade her injured feelings before a jury of her civilised countrymen; and when a man brings such an action, generally and deservedly he is cast. But these cases, tried in no formal tribunal, but in the court of one's own conscience, are often of a very painful and difficult character. I remember the case of a very good girl who went to consult the clergyman of her parish whether she ought to fulfil an engagement which she had formed. Her difficulty was, that she was not certain whether she loved him enough,

and she would have to swear that she would love him. The clergyman, who was one who took high ground on the inviolability of promises, ruled that she could not relinquish her engagement. He doubtless explained that love, as an ecclesiastical term, did not mean the high-flown feeling of young lasses, but the feeling of affection and regard which might be looked on as satisfying and sufficient. Whether this advice was quite right or not, the young lady took it as a direction from the confessional, and made what proved a tolerably happy marriage. Many of my readers are doubtless acquainted with Mr. Trollope's current amusing serial, *Can you forgive Her?* It is a question which most readers will answer in the affirmative, but many also will answer in the negative. A young lady accepts a lover and discards him; she then accepts a second lover and discards him; she then returns to her first lover, and at the present stage of the story is evidently about to discard him, and marry, or ought to marry, the worthy man of the story, John Grey. The facts thus nakedly stated, of course insure an unfavourable verdict; but then Mr. Trollope brings forward so very many 'extenuating circumstances,' that the verdict is modified or altogether altered. You are probably acquainted with Milton's *Tetrachordon*, — a treatise arguing in favour of the permissibility of divorce. As the illustrious author, in his well-known sonnet, relinquishes his case, it is not worth while to show its weakness. But some of the cases put, though insufficient to justify a divorce, would justify the annulling of an engage-

ment. 'Indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind arising from a cause in nature unchangeable, hindering, and ever likely to hinder, the main benefits of conjugal society, which are solace and peace,' is, according to Milton's abjured argument, a sufficient plea for the dissolution of marriage. It might, however, be very plausibly maintained that such is a sufficient plea for the dissolution of an engagement. I have observed in civil trials that when some sensible hard-headed man has urged on his own behalf that he really believed that he had made a mistake in selecting an unfit partner for his future wife, although this was of course no defence in point of law, yet the judge has commented on it with approbation, and the damages have been substantially modified.

And yet perhaps a man of very refined and generous nature might reasonably hesitate before taking up such ground as this. There is a certain saying respecting the blessedness of the man who swears to his neighbour, and disappoints him not, although it be to his own injury. I knew a man once, something of a student and recluse, who carried out a rather unwise engagement into which he had entered, on the strength of a passage in the writings of Bishop Butler, the substance of which is, that he who can in a small matter forfeit the highest worldly advantages, for the sake of adherence to equity, will, at the last, find himself immeasurably the gainer. It all depends whether you take a selfish or unselfish view in such matters. If the maiden is poor, or fragile in health, or broken in

spirits, or in other respects disappoints the taste and the ambition, all this surely involves a plea for tenderness and forbearance, and is a plea for the strong support and guidance which might be rendered, to elevate and make happy. 'If,' says the French jurist Pothier, who is very fond of placing himself in all kinds of imaginary positions connected with love-making, 'anything has happened to my betrothed which would have prevented me from entering into the contract, could I have foreseen it at the time I promised to marry her, I am discharged from my engagement.' We are sorry to say that we have only a low opinion of Pothier's principles. From such positions some consequences would flow, from which all right feeling revolts. A man becomes engaged to a girl because she has a fair face or a fair fortune. But disease may mar the one or reverses destroy the last. This may be French law, but we do not believe that it is English law; or that any English gentleman would thus forfeit his honour for merely selfish considerations.

There is a small matter connected with the minor ethics of love-affairs which should be mentioned. Lovers are proverbially selfish; and this selfishness is often shown in their treatment of their kin. I confess I have much sympathy with Paterfamilias. He has been educating his daughter with infinite pains and expense, and she has become a charming and intelligent companion, full of kindness and good sense and honest feeling; and suddenly some big fellow comes hulking about the premises, with demonstrative whis-

kers, and full of his youthful self-conceit. In Mr. Burgon's charming *Portrait of a Christian Gentleman* —a memoir of the historian Tyler—something like this is brought out. The following is the historian's love-experience as mentioned by his sister: 'He himself, after being introduced to her, found it very difficult to penetrate those convent walls; but the old gentleman, after he had recovered from the first shock of seeing a young gentleman frequently calling on what appeared to him very frivolous pretences, became so fond of my brother, that soon no pretence whatever was necessary: his visits appearing to give equal pleasure to all parties.' My friend Jones remarked to me once that he had married Mary Ann, and had not married the family. Herein I think he was wrong. Having married into the family, in a certain sense he marries the family. Having become a son of the house, he owes, after a sort, a son and brother's duty to the parents and to the brotherhood and sisterhood. I think my ethics apply here. Mary Ann had a younger brother in the days before the engagement—a tall, gaunt, thin-shanked, hulking youth. The regard and friendship which Jones at that time professed for this generally objectionable young man was simply preposterous. He used to call upon him, and make engagements with him, and lend him books, and volunteer to correct his exercises for his private tutor. The youth mildly suffered himself to be surprised into this violent friendship. This Pythias became very cool with his Damon after he felt his ground sure with Miss Damon. After

the marriage, though young Damon continued his affability and easy familiarity, Mr. Jones 'didn't seem to see it;' and when he at any time makes himself an unbidden guest, Jones is hardly prepared to treat him with brother-in-law civility. I think Jones is quite wrong. All the wonted friendship and hospitality is still due, and in redoubled measure, to the youthful Damon. And now that he is going up to St. John's, where he will really prove himself a credit to his new connection, I hope that Jones, with the becoming spirit of new relationship, will put in a handsome quota towards the bearing of those college expenses which Mary Ann's family single-handed would find it hard to sustain.

I repeat what I said at the outset, that the onlookers see most of the game. I see a good deal that some young people would give worlds to see. There is that lovely and demure Kate Newton. Young Morrell, the scholar of Trinity, loves her devotedly; but he is shortsighted and shy, awkward and embarrassed, and without that little encouragement which she will never give, will never have the courage to tell her so, although if she knew him better she would certainly like him very much. No; that rattling, flippant, thin-brained lieutenant, who has nothing but his pay and is troubled with no modest scruples about his own merit, will probably woo and win high-souled Kate. Your Titania is always involving herself with a certain description of animal. Bright gay little Fanny would suit him admirably; but bright gay little Fanny is not

to have him. She is to marry that elderly and morose-looking conveyancing solicitor, who will make her happy life gloomy and morose. It is only what we see throughout life. There is a wonderful love of contradictions. I see so many fair prospects nipped in the bud, and so many marriages where we instinctively feel that a higher degree of happiness will be missed and only a lower degree of comfort and happiness be attained. Let me tell the story of my friend Lascelles —who tried to be so very clever in these things—and which I think has a 'moral' in it.

Lascelles is the fellow of a Cambridge college. With everything in the world to make him comfortable, he is a most uncomfortable man. Possessed of a lucrative fellowship, he is always sighing after a fellowship of a different description. And what a quantity of mathematics the man knows! He will weigh the world for you, or calculate the recurrence of a comet, or tell you where in the heavens you are to look for a planet. His fame is not very far behind that of Le Verrier or Adams. But starry eyes have a charm for him beyond all mixed mathematics. Indeed I believe that he irretrievably mixes up in his mind the starry eyes and the mixed mathematics. He will inly murmur to himself, with Romeo,

> 'Two of the fairest stars in all the heavens
> Having some business, do entreat her eyes
> To twinkle in their place till they return.'

When he turns his telescope on the distant luminaries,

he thinks of the fire of celestial eyes; and when he beholds the beautiful human eyes, he murmurs something to himself about a near conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter. As a matter of fact, Lascelles is a most retired, bashful, modest man; but mentally, theoretically, imaginarily, he is quite a Lothario, wandering and pondering amid half a hundred beauties, in a manner little becoming the gravity of a fellow of a college. He is wondering whom he shall promote to the vacant wifeship, what time old Bunkum shall vacate the living of Foot-in-Clover, and he shall succeed, as he is entitled according to his seniority, to that greatest prize in the gift of his college. In the meantime Lascelles' efforts to please are not happy. The tradition will long remain of the grand evening party which Lascelles gave in his fine rooms. He was very nervous, and the unpolished manners of his early youth crept out: for he was brought up in a northern farm-house, and came up to the University from a great northern grammar-school. He wished to be very polite; but the actual expression which he addressed to this brilliant bevy was briefly this: '*Ladies, are you full?*' You may imagine the titter and little shrieks which went round the festive board.

Lascelles is a public examiner of his University; and it occurred to his powerful mind that the system of marks and classes pursued in the senate-house might be applied to the various young ladies, and enable him to discover who among them was entitled to the honour of being senior wrangler. Dear Lascelles, I hope the

term is not ominous, that thy wife will not be a veritable wrangler, nay one who has attained to the highest honours in the wrangling art. The application of this system to social life abounded in some curious and interesting results.

One evening I called upon Lascelles. It was in the early dusk of a day in early spring. In his excellent library, abounding with mathematical treatises and 'Books of Beauty,' with that enormous telescope by his side, with the attendant microscope not far off, the grave college don and tutor sat, to use a vulgar undergraduate phrase, 'mooning.' I think that old Bunkum—who seemed in a fair way of practically solving the question whether human beings can live to be centenarians—had shown symptoms of an ultimate breaking-up. That question of the vacant wifeship more than ever assumed a paramount importance. But there was a pleased and satisfied expression about my friend's visage to which it had long been a stranger. When he had poured me out a glass of college port—a wine of rare vintage—he silently and contemplatively handed me over a paper, which I perused with great amazement, and shall do best if I simply copy it for my readers.

Wranglers.

{ Clara Lawson.
{ Adelaide Monroe.
Mary Clay.
Julia Augusta Addington.
Hon. Lucy Saville.
Kate Wilson.

Senior Optimes.

Elizabeth Kingsley.
Elizabeth Merton.
Kate Merton.
Adelgiza Johnson.
Louisa Smith.
Constance Ellis.
Sarah Garth.

Junior Optimes.

Arabella Smethwick.
Alice de Crespigny.
Ellen Jeffreson.
Anna Maria Hodgkinson.
Mrs. Worthington.

'Your list is much smaller than the Cambridge tripos,' I observed.

'True,' replied Mr. Lascelles; 'but then you must also consider that it is much larger than the average Oxford mathematical list. You see,' continued he, 'that my great difficulty lies between Miss Lawson and Miss Monroe. They are bracketed; and, do what I can, I cannot get them out of the bracket.'

'How do you get at the result?' I ventured to inquire.

'Nothing can be more beautifully simple and precise,' he replied. 'You see there are six subjects, in each of which there is a certain standard of marks. There are principles, including temper; education, which includes mental power; beauty, family, fortune. Fifty is the highest number of marks to which each young lady can attain.'

'But where is your sixth subject?'

'O, that I call my *problem* paper. It depends on how much I may like any young lady, and how much any young lady may like me. But here too the marks are rigorously confined to fifty. And this occasions my difficulty; for I undoubtedly like Clara Lawson the best, although all the marks point unhesitatingly in the direction of Miss Monroe, who has got both a straighter nose and two thousand pounds additional fortune.'

'I think you give rather an undue preponderance to family.'

'Yes, I have a weakness that way,' returned Mr. Lascelles. (It was natural enough, considering his own humble origin.) 'I frankly confess that that alone got the Honourable Lucy her first-class; and her Norman name was of considerable use to Miss de Crespigny.'

'I see you have only given a second place to those nice Merton girls.'

'No money, my dear fellow. They stand very high on my problem paper—in fact, I disinterestedly gave them equal marks—otherwise they would not be where they are. It was her money alone which got the widow, Mrs. Worthington, a place on the class list; otherwise she would have been "gulfed."'

'Been—how much?' I exclaimed with horror.

'Gulfed,' repeated Lascelles; 'that is to say, not good enough to be classed, and too good to be plucked.'

'What about the Lorimers?' I inquired.

'Ah! poor girls,' returned Mr. Lascelles, 'they look very pretty; but they came out very badly on paper. The one was gulfed, and the other plucked.'

My friend had certainly shown a good deal of judgment and taste in this classification. I had the honour of being acquainted with a large proportion of these young ladies, confessedly very nice girls. A sudden thought occurred to me.

'Observe, my dear Lascelles. Suppose one of these very clever girls has alighted upon some similar scheme of classification, and should apply it to yourself. Let us see how you would come out under such a scrutiny.'

Lascelles expressed an opinion that this was rather coming down upon a man.

'You are not good-looking, my friend, indeed you are not!' I ruthlessly continued, notwithstanding his deprecating gesture. I thus proceeded in that vein of candour which is so truly delightful among friends:

'You are very bald, and rather near-sighted; your hands and feet are clumsy; and your voice has a grating northern provincial accent. As for fortune, if you gave up your fellowship to marry before Foot-in-Clover vicarage fell vacant, you are simply a pauper. As regards family, it is highly to your credit that your grandfather was only a small grocer, and your great-grandmother most probably a housemaid. Your principles are hardly so firmly fixed as your best friends could wish; and as respects the problem paper, perhaps the most modest estimate might be the least disappointing in the result.'

Poor Lascelles winced, and looked for a time really put out of sorts. 'For all these defects,' I thought to myself, but did not think necessary to impart the consolation to my friend, 'some discerning lady may overlook these numerous defects in consideration of that kindly heart and that magnificent intellect. Anyhow, when he gets his living of twelve hundred a-year, as matters go, I suppose he may pretty well choose for himself.' In due time Lascelles really got Foot-in-Clover. There was a splendid dinner in college, I assure you, on the day when his presentation was made out. Alas! however, for theorising; the examination scheme did not work, practically speaking. Lascelles fell in with a designing minx in his new parish, who could not bear a comparison with the Lorimers, either the one plucked or the one gulfed, who married him off-hand, and did not allow him to discuss her substantial merits. He consoles himself as he best can with his mathematics and telescopes, and confesses that his quantitative estimate was a comparative failure.

I have just spent a minute in recalling the names of some whom I have known in their youth of grace and beauty. Many are happily married, but many—it is astonishing how many—are either old maids, or have passed away where 'they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are even as the angels.' A large proportion of the very nicest girls became old maids. It is very remarkable. I am afraid that the reason is this, that there are not really enough good

men in the world to mate with them. Like seeks like, and a possible suitor is repelled when he has a dark suspicion that the young lady is in every possible point of view superior to himself. Little Isaac, in Sheridan's *Duenna*, says, 'Nothing keeps me in such awe as perfect beauty: now there is something consoling and encouraging in ugliness.' Perfect beauty has its attendant awe. The inferior creature cannot withstand the clear, steadfast gaze of the higher being. We know that there is a beauty in holiness. We may also reverently say that there is a holiness in beauty. But then this holy beauty is that where the countenance reflects the mind, and is refulgent with pure, holy, and lofty thought. Excessive prettiness always draws an adoring crowd; but to mean and unholy natures this saintly and intellectual beauty, that highest beauty where the face reflects the soul, is something repellant. And thus a really beautiful face is often allowed to grow marred and faded, while the one that wears it attains to a diviner beauty even than that of the human countenance when most glorious. Perhaps such a one has cashiered an unworthy lover. She had exalted an idol of clay, and fallen down and worshipped. The eyes of the understanding became enlightened; the idol was shivered, and the idolatry was over. Some wayward man marred the happiness of two lives, because to him that was little less than a whim, and was not made a matter of honour, trust, and conscience, which to the other was more than life itself. How much of the unhappiness of life is caused by these fatal

mistakes, which are as much errors against conscience as mistakes! Things would be different, if we were not so absurdly shy or wickedly selfish, and would be content to make our love-affairs one of the most serious matters of reason, conscience, and religion.

Perhaps it is as well that the disillusioning process should take place thus early, instead of that later period when it would be too late. There is always some amount of disillusion. A man thinks he has married an angel, and subsequently discovers that he has only married a woman. Unquestionably marriage, which has sometimes the highest human happiness, has often also the keenest human agony. What a doleful account is that which honest Izaak Walton gives of the nuptials of the illustrious Hooker, the author of the *Ecclesiastical Polity!* He tells us how very injudiciously the judicious Hooker had hooked himself. He asked his landlady to choose for him; and she selected her own daughter, who had neither beauty nor fortune. What an evil repute has Izaak Walton given to this ill-favoured woman for all time! I dare say she was not so bad as he has painted her. It is a melancholy story, how the great author's friends sought him at his vicarage, and found that Richard was wanted to rock the cradle. Nevertheless, I should like to be in possession of Mrs. Hooker's version of that transaction. I am afraid her husband had not the best of tempers, and that he was too much absorbed in his books to give her that moderate amount of attention which even a plain woman unaccountably expects. She

thought, however, that she must utilise him, and the cradle seemed the best means of utilising him. But old Walton has some very wise and gentle remarks upon this ill-starred match. Affliction, he tells us, is a 'divine diet;' and perhaps this kind of affliction was the best for this kind of man. You remember that remarkable poem of Charles Kingsley's, of which the concluding lines point to the true consolation of the unhappy wife or maid:

> 'O, thou hadst been a wife to Shakespeare's self!
> No head, save some world-genius, ought to rest
> Above the treasures of that perfect breast;
> Or nightly draw fresh light from those keen stars
> Through which the soul awes ours; yet thou art bound—
> O, waste of nature!—to a craven hound;
> To shameless lust and childish greed of pelf;
> Athené to a Satyr: was that link
> Forged by the Father's hand? Men's reason bars
> The banns which God allowed. Ay, so we think;
> Forgetting, thou hadst weaker been, full blest,
> Than thus made strong by suffering; and more great
> In martyrdom than throned as Cæsar's mate.'

FLIRTATIONS.

Flirtation is one of those subjects which no one professes to treat seriously, but which has certainly another than its comic side. Although the matter cannot be treated seriously, yet it is not doubted that it sometimes has serious issues. We all know that 'at lovers' perjuries Jove laughs;' and we laugh as Jove laughs, without considering that, after all, this laughing philosophy is essentially heathenish. The general impression is, that flirtation is pleasant, but wrong. Good mothers tell their girls not to flirt, and the good girls flirt just as their mothers flirted before them. The fact is, that flirtation is a wide term; and the social casuist has to arbitrate and discriminate in its use. The poverty of language makes the word bear more than one meaning. In the largest sense it covers all the time that intervenes between the first introduction and the marriage ceremony. Very uxorious people occasionally flirt after marriage, but the case is not common. The drawback is, that flirtation by no means necessarily terminates in matrimony; and even when matrimony is attained, a life of antecedent flirtation often stamps a character of its own upon married life. It may be worth while to make some remarks on the subject, both in its unfavourable and favourable aspect.

It is generally said that matrimony is a woman's great object in life. This may be roughly accepted, but it is only as true as such universal propositions ordinarily are. Marriage is not the first, second, and third thing necessary for a woman. It is only in a metaphorical way that marriage is said to be a necessity at all. Intellectual culture, a calm mind, purity of heart, and gentleness and refinement of nature, are still more absorbing necessities. For, though marriage is not an absolute necessity, it *is* an absolute necessity in the estimation of every right-thinking person that a woman should be educated, thoughtful, and gentle, rather than ignorant, unreflecting, and with a mind coarse in grain, though veneered in surface manners. A generation of foolish mothers sets marriage before their daughters as the great goal and object of life. Through the gates of that fancied Paradise there gleams a fictitious Eden, of which material prosperity is the leading condition, with visions of social superiority, freedom from constraint, and the gratification of whims and desires. Experienced people know much to the contrary of all this. Even when these conditions are satisfied, there are undercurrents of alloys in the cares, anxieties, and sicknesses of life. A woman thinks that she is going into Paradise, whereas she is only going into a house of her own, with its rates and taxes. The chief idea associated with marriage is that of material prosperity, than which nothing can be more debasing and unnatural for the constant contemplation of young minds. It is astonishing what distinct views young

ladies soon acquire on the subject of jointure, and how acutely they can distinguish between ante-nuptial and post-nuptial settlements. Their ductile thoughts are easily led into a particular direction, and it is melancholy to think how multitudes of them have only one idea, and that idea a totally wrong one. The limited horizon of their minds is completely filled with one overpowering notion. They must marry, and they must marry wealthy men. They think much more of the wealth than of the man; and the more they think of marriage as a social arrangement of this sort, the less likely are they to make any reasonable individual happy. While such a will-o'-the-wisp haunts the stagnant and waste places of the mind there is little room for spiritual or intellectual culture, or for the elements that really make happiness, so far as it is attainable in this life. There is, indeed, a crowd of accomplishments; but these are regarded merely as the hunting apparatus for the catching of the prey; and the possession of them is something diametrically opposed to the happiness of a genuine lover of knowledge and art, and the consciousness of the gradual growth of natural powers. Marriage is the one idea, the monomania of this kind of life. Young women are married with cheerful assent, both from themselves and their parents, to men whom other women would rather die than marry; and other parents would more readily see their children buried than matched with such mates. The truth of it is, that the victims of the system are unconscious of their degradation. At the negro auctions the pride of the

darky used to rise at every successive offer; and at the marriage-mart the London victims are proud of the attractions they have to offer, and the costly price they fetch. These remarks, happily, only apply to a certain section of society, who in looseness of mind and feeling approach the abnegation of decency and self-respect common to the degraded of all classes. We still cling to the belief, despite of the unfavourable view taken by some who aspire to be held as authorities, that the core and body of our countrywomen are free, at least, from the extreme contamination of such taints. But with those who will marry any one or anyhow, if only they can marry an establishment, flirtation is the main instrument by which this end is sought to be attained. But such flirtation very often reminds us of the words of the wise man, that surely the net is spread in vain in the sight of any bird. All kinds of chaff are tried in order to entice the bird into the net; but the particular kind of bird we are discussing prides himself upon not being easily caught. Knowing that men of this kind find themselves more at home in the society of the *demi-monde*, the flirt permits herself the utmost license of dress, and manner, and language, in order to compete with her unknown rival on her own field. This is flirtation in its worst aspect, and such is a common aspect of fashionable flirtations. We will not say that there is any individual sin, for this is a line of argument which might not be appreciated; but—worse than a sin—it is a mistake. The poet truly says that 'corruption wins not more than honesty;' and even in the

matrimonial market good sense and simplicity frequently win the day over the most elaborate coquetry of the amateur Laïs.

These remarks point to a great social blot in modern society; but we are so far optimists that we would fain lean to the belief that the evil, though it undoubtedly exists, has been unduly exaggerated. We regret to see so many public writers on modern society approximating to the style in which Juvenal wrote his sixth satire. Whatever may be the extent of the mischief in London society, we loyally believe in our country cousins. We avowedly believe, also, that there is a kind of flirtation which is useful, necessary, and innocent. We think little of the man who does not care for female society, and little of the woman who is totally indifferent to pleasing men. So to speak, this is the constitution under which we live—the normal condition of life; and much that is interesting and amusing in society is vaguely described as flirtation, though it is a different sort of thing, and deserves a better name. There is a natural efflorescence of health and spirits in young people, which, unhappily, does not last long, and does not recur again, but which is extremely fascinating while it endures. Intellectually this is not so good as wit and natural abilities, but it is much more interesting in a human point of view. Yet it is very curious to see how it wears off, and how young people who were full of grace, tenderness, and *espièglerie*, when just out of their teens, fade into dull sobriety when they attain to maturer years. This period is the period of innocent

flirtation; and those whose years tremble on the eighth lustrum ought to regard it under the influence of sympathy and reminiscence. In such flirtations there is a certain amount of educating influence. Now, if ever, is the time when the art of conversation should be acquired. Young people then take heed both to the manner and matter of their speech, and acquire, if they are ever to do so, a simple natural eloquence of grace and expression. Such flirtation is to society what its effervescing property is to champagne. Experienced people may prefer still wines; but champagne and flirtation will always possess a deserved popularity. In fact, we may as well avow our belief that flirtation might advantageously receive considerable extension. In some continental countries considerably more latitude is allowed in ordinary intercourse between the sexes, — Switzerland, for instance, — and morality is rather a gainer than a loser by the practice. In the present day etiquette is a revolving *chevaux-de-frise* that checks a great many people who require rather encouragement than check. Theoretically we are great sticklers for etiquette. The rules of etiquette are simply the result of long experience, and the provisions which society in the long-run has found to be salutary and wise, especially for the protection of its weaker members. Still, we lean to the opinion that etiquette was made for mankind, and that mankind were not created for the sake of etiquette. The days are gone by when Englishmen would cut each other on the Simplon or on the Pyramids, or a caricaturist could re-

present one Oxonian as allowing another to be drowned, while he expresses his regret that he could not draw him out of the water because he had not been introduced to him. The rules of etiquette should be construed freely, and not literally. It may be questioned whether, in the ordinary middle-class society of England, etiquette might not be a trifle relaxed from its present rigidity of military drill. In that society etiquette often mimics exclusiveness without the reasons which in some circles make exclusiveness perfectly intelligible. We believe that it would be as well if young people saw a great deal more of each other, and consequently, if there was a great deal more flirtation. The girl who lives a secluded life often makes a marriage marked by all the unwisdom of inexperience. A moderate aptitude at flirtation would save her from concentrating her affections in some unfortunate direction, or from particularly engaging herself to the first wooer with whom she forms some familiarity of acquaintance. The advantages of flirtation might be still more signally illustrated in the case of young men. The evils of London life do not exist only in the imaginations of grandmothers. There is no better preservation for young men against such evils than the abundant society of pleasant and pretty women. The British matron makes a great mistake when she persistently discourages the attentions of young men whose prospects in life are dull or unsettled. Female society is to many a necessity; and if it cannot be obtained in one direction, it is attainable in others. The cadet generally makes his

way; but by the time the prudent mother is ready to welcome him, he is involved in some 'entanglement.'

In this point of view, therefore, flirtation is an institution to which we cannot but wish well. Still, the word is often used in an unfavourable sense, and there are, certainly, reasons why the institution should be discredited. People can flirt wickedly, and innocent flirtations are blamed because wicked people call their wicked flirtations innocent. The word, in fact, has a double sense, but, after the old sophistic fashion, the favourable and unfavourable senses become mixed up and wrongly applied for sophistical purposes. The old man, or the married man, who takes a pleasure in intelligent female society, is denounced with as much severity as a flirt. But because a man is old, or married, is no reason why he should not find an æsthetic pleasure in a fair face, and an intellectual pleasure in clever conversation. Such things have a positive value in their way. Dr. Brown of Edinburgh was a celebrated physician in his day, and a prescription of his is extant in which he prescribed, *inter alia*, for a hypochondriacal patient, 'the society of amiable, handsome, and delightful young women.' The young lady who makes herself amiable and delightful to an ineligible or impossible *parti* is an innocent flirt. The wicked flirt would not do anything of the kind; under such conditions she would not think it worth her while to talk with the most celebrated traveller, lawyer, or wit, unless indeed the fact of her acquaintance with a lion would add to her stock of social capital. The worst of

all flirts is the one who flirts for flirting's sake. Neither sex can claim a monopoly here. Lady Clara Vere de Vere breaks a country heart for pastime ere she goes to town; but the male scions of the house of De Vere have also a taste for the same elegant amusement. It does not much signify when flirt meets flirt; and if in a mock duel a sharp sword is unconsciously exchanged for a blunt one, the best result is that the sense of practical justice is satisfied. Rabid is the cruel instinct of the trained practised flirt to seek for a duke or a victim. The flirtation is then carried on with the view of possessing power over the mind and affections of another, with the simple selfish object of gratifying whim, or pride, or passion, with the certain knowledge of inflicting acute pain on the victim. Unfortunately there is never a scarcity of this sort of people, who make excellent dupes and victims. Such human moths gather to the glare, and their wings are early singed—the carelessness, gaiety, and elasticity of their fluttering lives destroyed. But it is questionable whether in the long-run the victims are much worse off than the victimisers. The latter plays with emotions, and has a game at love, but the conviction gradually grows up that emotions have a reality, and that love is perhaps something more than a means of social amusement. A man in a good position may reckon, if he lives, on some twenty years of pleasant flirtation; but there is a Nemesis of a very unpleasant description which generally lags in after that time. The marrying man who, nevertheless, will not marry after his probation has

been prolonged to an intolerable length, is pursued by the relentless vengeance of the dowagers. He has, perhaps, a surer punishment in the sense of isolation, in his knowledge that he has wasted the powers of his moral nature, so as to become incapable of anything higher than sensuous helplessness; and there comes that 'abbreviation of time and failure of hope,' as Gibbon remarks, 'which tinges with a brown shade the evening of life.' Neither are things much better if the confirmed flirt marries. The ingrained habit of flirtation is a deeper taint than even matrimony can solve, and frequently manifests itself in unpleasant results. Marriage is not the great moral cure for all defects of character, which it is sometimes considered to be by very hopeful people. The flirt before marriage is the flirt after marriage. Sometimes the flirtation darkens into the disgraceful arena of the divorce-court. Even when this is not the case, the result is too often a reckless, dissatisfied, frustrated life, and the habit of flirtation, which only ceases to be reprehensible by becoming ridiculous. Flirtation in the bad sense is most diminished where flirtation in the good sense is most increased. At the risk of being thought didactic, we assert—really good training, a due development of heart and mind, a love of art and knowledge for their own sake, and an abhorrence of what is false and selfish, would make young women much happier in themselves, and much pleasanter companions, either for the afternoon on the croquet-ground, or for the term of one's natural life. Then love and matrimony would be relegated into their

true position as a most important part of existence, but still not the whole of it. Society would gain in freshness and naturalness; and there would not always be the *arrière pensée*, which is the unpleasant background to the pleasant intercourse of society: first, whether a man will marry; and secondly, whether he is pecuniarily worth the marrying. Reformed rakes of both sexes will denounce the excessive freedom of social intercourse as flirtation; but if their own antecedents have obscured the good sense of the term by the bad sense, there will not be much difficulty in finding newer and pleasanter words to express the correct and better meaning.

PROPOSALS.

Out of all the probable marriages, actual marriages, and breaches of promise of marriage talked of, it is curious how seldom any accurate information respecting offers of marriage reaches the ears of society. Is it that, in such a delicate matter, each one is afraid to pass the story on to his neighbour, lest he should be supposed, however innocent, to be personally implicated? Selden tells us that of all the actions of a man's life, his marriage least concerns other people; yet, of all actions of our life, it is most meddled with by other people; perhaps mankind tacitly covenants not to meddle with the proposal, by way of compensation for the eagerness with which they canvass the marriage. At any rate it is a merciful condescension on their part. We will accept it gratefully, for it is an insult to society to suppose that it is not well informed on proposals as a general rule, and could make things very uncomfortable for lovers, if it chose. A proposal, on this view, is to the engagement what the honeymoon is to wedded life; the halting but necessary prelude, which, by general consent, nobody listens to, before the full notes of the performer challenge attention.

It may be doubted, however, whether the fact that

men are not so talkative on this as on other subjects may not arise from an uneasy consciousness that in their own case they rather made fools of themselves. We do not for a moment mean that they repent of their choice; if we did, it is to be hoped that no indignant wife would read a word further. But, speaking generally, proposals come suddenly. Most men have arranged their proposal long before, in their own minds, and rehearsed it often, till there shall be no chance of any blunder at the critical moment. It shall be done, they determine, at such and such a time, in this manner rather than in that, *en grand tenue* or in a shooting-coat; there shall be no dropping on one or both knees, as was usual in the last century, when our grandmothers were expected to faint as soon as their languishing 'swain' (such was the term then in vogue) took out his pocket-handkerchief as a preliminary. The playwrights have effectually ruined this expedient; therefore a more natural occasion must be sought, which shall be, when the lady comes in from walking, say, or when she is riding. Some men even settle with themselves whether they shall take one of her hands, or whether it is better to seize both, in the transports of their declaration, and other little niceties of this kind, which those who have been in such a situation may be left to imagine for themselves. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred this little scheme most egregiously fails. Chloris does not go out, as we expected, or bashfulness overpowered her Strephon, and the irrevocable moment slipped by. On the other hand, Ianthe sings one morning with such

exquisite taste, all bystanders being out of the way, that her enraptured hearer proposes on the spot. A tear, an accident, a family affliction, in the same way, often precipitates the proposal, and the luckless planner is afterwards so disgusted at his own simplicity in devising such complicated means for so easy an end, that he is certain not to mention his experiences even to his dearest friend. Ungallant, too, though the suggestion be, there may be added to this, in his thoughts, a spice of the feeling hinted at in the proverbs, 'A burnt child dreads the fire,' '*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.*' These considerations will somewhat lessen our wonder that the world knows so little of its proposals. We trust that in divulging them we are not vexing any of our sex, or rashly giving the other one new arms to use against our unhappy selves. It may be taken as an axiom, therefore, that just as the experience of all the deepest thinkers, from Plato onwards, confirms the old notion of love being involuntary, 'at first sight' as we say, so a proposal generally comes on both parties to it unexpectedly. Some might suppose that the nobler sex herein were in evil case, that a dread domestic power impelled them onwards to their fate, independently of their volition. And this seems true to a certain extent; but the bachelor has safeguards at hand, if he has also enemies. Thus, the first step towards his foes, the 'overtures' as they are euphemistically termed, is always in his own power. The initiative is his. He need not wade into the fair-flowing river unless he chooses; but if he does, let him not

complain if all at once he finds himself out of his depth. Again, he can write his proposal, if it seems good to him. This saves a world of trouble to bashful or faint-hearted men, but it has many drawbacks. A story is told of a senior wrangler who dropped in to a lonely parsonage, during a walking tour, fell in love with the host's daughter, and wrote his proposal to her. He wished her 'good-bye,' like an ordinary mortal, and when her father bade him farewell at the little station to which they had driven, he handed him the note, and requested him to deliver it on his return. The father consented, and put it in his pocket. For a year the mathematician heard nothing from his bride-elect. Then, judging that this passed even the ordinary habit of women to procrastinate, he made a point, on his tour during the vacation, once more to call at the parsonage. He was received as before, and not quite so warmly by the young lady as he had anticipated. Her father, on being asked, did not know that the note was of much importance, and had forgotten to deliver it. The driving-coat was examined. There was the letter still in its pocket. Then, again, servants and post-mistresses have an ugly trick of reading letters. Secrecy, too, is often rendered difficult even during the necessary deliberation of the lady, if the letter arrives at breakfast-time in a family circle. Except in extreme cases, proposals in writing are not to be recommended. They savour of cowardice. Better far stand up and meet your fate like a man. If we were empowered by the Court of Love to ascertain the feelings of the ladies

on this point, there is no doubt that, to a woman, they would prefer the rough-and-ready wooer who dashes straight into the proposal at once, flounders about a little, but finally passes the rubicon successfully, and on the other side awaits the decision of lips that ever smile on the brave. A man who proposes by letter deserves to lose his suit. It is far better to ask by word of mouth:

'Excipiet blandas comita illa preces.'

Another golden rule for those about to make a proposal is, Keep your own counsel; but if you must have an adviser, never consult a woman, unless your oracle sit on a tripod far removed from every mundane influence. The mortification of a refusal has an additional sting lent it, if it has to be afterwards communicated to the Mentor. Men who feel most, take their loss in silence. The brow may be smooth while the heart is a heap of ashes (Lesbia laughs, but it *is* so sometimes)—and the stricken affections love to suffer and writhe in unseen agony, as an animal seeks to die in the thickest covert. Viduus (to tell a case in point, which is so business-like, it could only have happened to a widower) called at Florinda's house, and was shown into the drawing-room. An aged aunt alone was at home, and to her he revealed the object of his coming—to make an offer of marriage to her niece. Soon Florinda entered, looking more charming than usual, and Viduus made his proposal. 'I am very sorry,' said the lady, 'but Velox has been beforehand, and has just

asked me the same question. You are half an hour too late.' Knowing what aunts generally are, this one would have been more than mortal had she been reticent. Within a week the discomfiture of Viduus was known through the county.

Some grave lovers are for making the proposal, in the first instance, to the parents—parent we should say, for Paterfamilias is always too glad to pass these things over to his wife. Doubtless it is a pleasing course for her self-importance when this procedure is observed; but in a case of such delicacy, premising that we speak with diffidence, it seems to us more important first to secure the consent of the principal. And this plan is more to the taste of the young lady in question, for then she has the pleasant task of enlightening her mother on the mystery when and how she likes, and can approach her with Agag-like gait, should such, unhappily, be needed. Our plan, we must confess, has invariably been on this principle, and we have seen no reason to regret it hitherto. Win the consent of the daughter, and she may safely be left to secure that of her parents. At all events (pardon such domestic Fenianism!) marriage is feasible as a *dernier ressort* without the mother's consent, but manifestly impossible if you have not the daughter's. This consideration appears to settle the vexed question of priority of proposals.

As was hinted above, society at large is very soon as well acquainted with the fact of the proposal having been made, as if the marriage-broker of Bokhara, or his

western relative, the Bazvalan of Brittany,* had been intrusted with the negotiation: but for all that, a reasonable reticence should be observed by the lovers as to the manner in which it is made. That is their secret. It is generally the gentleman's fault if this be divulged; which may ensue from his choosing a wrong time and place for the ceremony; from the natural impulsiveness of his kind, as distinguished from the ready tact of women; or simply from the trifling fact that he speaks too loud. Thus a friend who was leaving the drawing-room one day, in great glee as being an engaged man, was met by the servant in the passage with the remark, 'I suppose, sir, you will not have to ring at the bell any more now.' It may be, however, that she was innocent of listening at the door, as men in such a situation are apt to show their joy. Mercator, a portly Manchester man, having secured the hand of Sophia, rushed wildly into the dining-room, where her two married sisters were discreetly sitting, and having seized and embraced them both, exclaiming, 'My dear sisters, Sophy is mine!' then, and then only, perceived that he had seriously alarmed Buttons, who was putting coal on the fire.

Amongst proposals are the matter-of-fact proposal; as when an honest agriculturist says, 'I doesn't like beating about the bush; Nancy, will 'ee be my owld dumman?—do 'ee now!' Or as actually happened in the case of a man who taught at a girls' school, and had had all the romance taken out of him by hard work,

* See Vambery, and Tom Taylor's *Ballads of Brittany*, p. 165.

'You stitch very nicely; would you like to darn my stockings?' Readers will be glad to hear that he was accepted, and, after marriage, went back quietly from church to finish his lesson! Then there is the business-like proposal, often too familiarly exemplified in royal alliances, or noble marriages, where a title is balanced against wealth. We remember an amusing instance of it in a Cumberland clergyman, who made his proposal, and then slowly added, by way of clenching it, 'I would have you consider, before you say no, first, whether you ever had a proposal made to you before; secondly, whether it is likely you will ever again have one made to you.' The lady appreciated the argument, and married him. It is a precedent, however, only to be recommended for general adoption in the case of ladies 'of a certain age.' We may exemplify the jocular proposal by the story of the man who, when dancing 'Pop goes the weasel,' at the time when that tune was so popular, asked his partner, 'Will you pop through life with me?' Indeed, a ball-room would furnish many stories of proposals, for in no place are they more commonly made; contrary to the received notion, that hollow lanes or secluded groves are the places best suited to asking the all-important question. Those who choose such localities as these to propose in, are the persons who fancy that marriage means love in a cottage; and the honeymoon, to sit like babes in the wood, or Mr. Millais's damsels, hand-in-hand in an apple-orchard. A jocular proposal often serves to feel the way for a real one, or to cover the discomfiture of

a refusal. Occasionally it only ministers to the vanity of the proposer, as when a man who simply means flirting purposes, and, on being tremblingly accepted, says, 'Ah, you saucy puss, you would not have said yes if I had been in earnest!' Such fellows, however, are generally careful that their victim has no brother. It is as well to answer their overtures in a similar strain, or to give an evasive reply—such, for instance, as has actually been said, 'I can't make tea!'

As for the sentimental proposal, we must beg to be excused entering upon it: that is the business of the novel-writer rather than the essayist. Take up the next three-volume novel you find with some such title as *Hearts and Loves*, or *The Maid of Rosemount*, and at least two instances of it will be discovered in each volume. So little is known, as a general rule, about proposals, and sensible people are so diffident in the matter, that they gladly fly to novels to see how the thing is done, just as silly people have recourse to a letter-writer to get ideas for love-letters. In a novel, as on the stage, no proposal is taking which is not dramatic; thereby showing how untrustworthy novels are, as a rule, in depicting the events of ordinary life. In real life, nothing is so uncommon as a romantic proposal. Even those who, with the most high-flown notions of courtship, intend their proposal to be a marvel of romance, are generally egregiously disappointed at the result. The most enterprising cavalier of this kind we have known, found himself compelled, by the force of circumstances, to turn carpet-knight, and pro-

pose to his ladye-love on the hearth-rug; so close at all times is the prosaic to the sentimental. A man of this turn of mind may be well matched with a fashionable young lady's idea of a lover.

*Miss Racket.**—'I want somebody that will sit by one at an opera, and dance with one at a ball, and call for one's carriage, and hand one out, and—'

Sir Dudley Dorimant.—'Lord, child, how much you expect of a lover! Where could you get such antiquated ideas? I trust you are less *exigeant* upon the subject of husbands!'

Perhaps, after a ball-room, the hunting-field might be termed the most usual place for proposals. In both cases there is a whirl and an *abandon* apt to carry away the sternest resolves of bachelors. A man who has made up his mind to 'crane' at no fences, finds his nerves in fitting order to face even a proposal. No time is more dangerous for lovers than the evening ride home through the quiet woodland ways, after a day when they have been witched with noble horsemanship. What more tempting to a Die Vernon than to be promised a regular stud and three days' hunting a week! With a fine appreciation of a state of bliss being a life of hunting, did our Northern forefathers relate that the daily occupation of the blest in their Walhalla was to hunt the gigantic wild boar, Sarhimner, who was served up afterwards for the feast, and obligingly came to life again next morning for another day's sport.

* From Miss Berry's *Fashionable Friends.*

The Basques have a sarcastic proverb, 'The marriage-day is the morrow of good times;' it is the day of proposal which admits the 'palmer in Love's eye' to the full enjoyment of the engaged man's rights. They have a ludicrous side (which luckily the neophyte never sees for himself), as in the room which must be given up to the happy pair to do their love-making in; the cares bestowed that the usual worries of a household do not disturb them; the atmosphere of roses and zephyrs which is so assiduously created for their delectation. Perhaps to the over-sensitive lover engaged life has also something that at its best estate is jarring and ominous. Thus, one of our most amusing novelists speaks of him as being a victim, with an uneasy consciousness that all the *petits soins* showered so thickly upon him during this period are but the fillets and ribbons necessary for his graceful decoration preliminary to the marriage-day—the day of the great sacrifice. The cynic or the jester may decry the pleasures of an engagement; but we should ill repay the confidence of our readers, did we not hasten to assure them, from the plenitude of our experience, that engaged life is a very blissful period. It is the May of life, all flowers and sunshine, far removed from the winter of bachelordom, but with many an intimation of the long even days of wedlock's summer. We will conclude with a last rule for those who are anxious on the subject of our paper. Doubtless a stray sentence in it may have offended the finer tastes of the fair sex; in this, our last advice to their admirers, there is no fear but what once more we

shall win their smiles: all who are thinking of proposing cannot do better than propose at once! Remember the noble motto of the gallant Montrose:

> 'He either fears his fate too much,
> Or his deserts are small,
> That dares not put it to the touch,
> To gain or lose it all!'

What a mercy that the privileges of an incognito surround us! Were it not for these, we should be crowned by a grateful country, carried in a triumphal procession by the daughters of England. There are so many adverse influences at work at present,—clubs, rifle-corps, walking tours, pipes, and metaphysics; so much to divert the sterner sex from their duty to women,—that it becomes our bounden task to stem the torrent. Now we shall sleep with an honest heart. Having opened the stores of our experience, we have effectually gladdened womankind; and, in the face of the obstinate resistance the youth of this nineteenth century make against engagements, avowed our unhesitating conviction, for the benefit of all whom it may concern, that nothing demands so much promptness as a proposal, and no state is more happy than engaged life—except A MARRIED ONE. After this philanthropic declaration, when the halo of an immortality far brighter than that which adorns the names of Jenner and Howard might be ours, it requires much self-denial to stand in the way of the thanks the many damsels, soon to be wives, would gladly accord us. When we spoke, however, of

a sacrifice being demanded from the married man, far be it from us to shrink from it. Literature is a hard stepmother. Future devotees must twine their garlands merely round the initials,

M. G. W.

ENGAGEMENTS.

The term 'Engagements' is a generic name belonging to the great subject of contracts, on which the labours of so many legal minds have been concentrated, and in a milder form signifying the same thing. The gentleman has his engagements in the East-end, and the lady has hers in the West-end, by which the latter probably means her balls, and the former his bills. The word, however, has a tendency to assume a special meaning; and all readers of light literature, which include the whole of one sex and a very large proportion of another, understand by an engagement a compact between a man and woman to get married. There is, of course, a spasmodically funny school who see in such arrangements a subject of exquisite merriment; but without denying that it has its amusing side, we lean to the more serious view, that an engagement is no joke. The subject has been treated very seriously by very serious people. It was held worth while to lay it down as a principle in Roman law, that an engagement to marry

ought not to embrace a period longer than two years. It is rather surprising to find so definite a view on so difficult a subject; but it is as hard to appeal against the Romans on a question of law as against the Greeks on a question of beauty. The subject of engagements has certainly its associations both with law and beauty; but without taking any special notice of them, it will be worth while to examine some of the phases of a very important social and domestic subject.

Mr. Trollope, in his last novel, which is an epilogue to his tetralogy of Barsetshire stories, has solved his difficulties about Miss Lily Dale by the simple expedient of virtually owning that they are insoluble. We have heard complaints that the novel-reading public will hardly be satisfied with the *dénouement* that leaves Mr. Eames an old bachelor and Lily Dale an old maid. In real life they do things in a less ethereal and transcendental way than in the novel. In real life Mr. Johnny Eames's devotion, and Miss Dale's steady affection and esteem for him, would probably end in a happy match. On the other hand, Mr. Crosbie's persistent regard and the heroine's remembrance of old times might lead a generous girl to forgive and marry Mr. Crosbie, although he was growing bald and fat, and was reduced to the expedient of borrowing money. In real life men and women are less *exigeant* than in novels, and are more inclined to make allowances and to take things as they are. People may be as *exigeant* as they like in the case of the grand sentiment; but the authoress of *John Halifax*, who ought to be a great autho-

rity on the subject, states that this extreme grandeur only occurs in one match out of a thousand. We do not object to Mr. Trollope's ruling in the matter; but we may say that he has not settled a question which in real life would have received a settlement. Mr. Trollope also argues, in the same story, that the game of flirtation must be played with perfect coolness and self-possession; that you may import as much head-work into it as you can; but that it would prove fatal to have the heart involved. Now, if a man makes up his mind that it is good for him to marry, and for him to bring about an engagement, it would follow, according to Mr. Trollope's showing, that the sincere and ardent man would have much more difficulty in effecting the desired result than the clever man of the world, who, with skilful calculation, was looking after his own material interests. This is probably, to a considerable extent, a true statement of the facts; but it is also true that women have a genuine instinct in testing the worth of a professed affection; and, even according to Miss Muloch's theory, there is occasionally a genuine love-affair. If, indeed, this were not the case, the occupation of those ladies and gentlemen who are professed novelists would be altogether gone. It must be said that it is the astute, worldly man who, as a rule, makes the best match in a worldly sense; and the curious, imprudent, and romantic engagements of which we hear at times, appertain to people who have not had much experience in the world, and are frequently found among parsons and poetasters. It is very interesting, and the

subject has occupied one of the thoughtful essays by the author of *Philip von Arteveldt*, how young men, in making engagements, deliberately throw away great advantages, the winning one tithe of which is often the prolonged struggle of after-life. Mr. Taylor arrived at the pleasant conclusion, that things are just as they should be, and adjust themselves very much as, on *à priori* principles, they ought to be arranged. Yet it is remarkable to what an extent engagements to marry are mere accidents of accidents, depending on locality, contiguity, and caprice; and while men of the world, with easy morality and definite convictions of what is best for their material interests, make very judicious ventures in the matrimonial market, countless men and women involve themselves, from blind impulse, in engagements to marry, without importing into the matter a tittle of the prudence and consideration with which they would embark on any matter of secular and transitory interest. It would be hardly too rash if we adopted the Epicurean maxim, and said that our social world was the result of a fortuitous combination of individual atoms.

We are not certain that in some respects they do not manage these things better in France; at all events the French error of making marriage so much a matter of barter and convenience is not a greater mistake than entirely ignoring all sublunary considerations. In no country more than England do men so often marry in haste and spend the rest of their lives in leisurely repenting. Moreover, the alleged selfishness of lovers is

nowhere more visible than throughout the progress of an engagement. It is quite a mistake to suppose that a father is always anxious to have his daughter married off his hands. He has probably trained her to become a delightful companion and his right-hand in a variety of matters; and it is not without pain that he finds himself thoroughly distanced in her thoughts by some young fellow with a voluble tongue and demonstrative whiskers. Perhaps from a natural reaction, in the present day fathers have quite laid aside their flinty hearts; and as soon as an engagement is completed, a knife and fork is provided for the interloper, and he takes his place as a son of the house. In these days the paternal blessing is not primarily invoked; frequently the British father hears nothing about the matter until the suitor has made it all right with the young lady. The younger brother, whose acquaintance was fulsomely cultivated during the early courting-days, and who was placed on the free-list as regards cigars and opera-stalls, now finds himself positively cut. It must be said for the credit of the ordinary lover that he is generally in a great hurry to have the settlements completed; and unless his lawyer interferes very decisively, he does not much care what settlement he makes. We are sufficiently old-fashioned and prosaic enough to think that even love-affairs and engagements are not entirely banished from the province of good sense and good feeling. It is natural that a young man in love should be impetuous, and impetuosity is a gift which we trust we shall always highly value. But there are other faculties of

our nature, such as reflection, judgment, and conscientiousness, which, so far from being out of season, are peculiarly valuable in those transactions which give tone and colour to the whole of life. It is an old saying, that the relation of parents to children is never fully understood until the children become parents themselves. It will, perhaps, be found worth while not to discard the notion of duty in the season of romance, nor the courtesies of life during the incubation of an engagement. The domestic happiness of a home and the approval of conscience and reason are, after all, real facts in human life ; and in the long-run it will not be regretted that they had not been altogether overlooked in comparison with the claims of fancy or passion.

It must be admitted that engaged people are of a somewhat amphibious kind. They occupy the debateable border-land which lies between single and married blessedness. Every one feels paternal towards such interesting young persons, and is ready to bless them. At the same time we get tired of shaking a man by the hand and calling him a lucky dog, and after the first glance we do not greatly care to look at a young lady's photograph. It is observable that the *fiancée* often affects a kind of nun-like seclusion. She declines to accept invitations, or if she accepts them, like a stricken deer she retires to some obscure glade in the drawing-room. It might, at times, be usefully suggested to such a one that she might converse with other gentlemen without danger to herself or disloyalty to her lover, and even without awakening in the minds of these

gentlemen aspirations which she knows can never be satisfied. The season of engagement is frequently the time for the manifestation of literary tastes. The gentle snow-storm of love-letters descends. Love-letters, to quote Mr. Pickwick's language to Count Smorltork in reference to politics, 'comprises in itself a study of no inconsiderable magnitude and importance.' In cases of breach of promise the love-letters are generally looked forward to as furnishing a subject of legitimate merriment to the bar and bench; and, certainly, edifying letters are hardly to be expected from those who seek balm for their wounded feelings from an impartial jury of their civilised countrymen. Still, the letters of sensible and educated people do not always degenerate into ignorant excesses from the mere fact that they are engaged to be married. John Foster is an instance in point, his *Essays* being originally the letters which he wrote to the lady to whom he was engaged. Other remarkable instances might also be cited; but after all, it is hardly likely that much severe reasoning is lost to the world through the privacy in which such letters are generally enshrouded. What we have been admitted, as outsiders, to behold of such correspondence has at least filled us with awe of the quantity, although the quality is unknown. We see another reason to admire the admirable arrangement in the great order of things whereby love-making has ordinarily to be transacted by those who have a superfluity of leisure rather than money. This is the young man's best opportunity to become the polite letter-writer, and to bring the art to

fetch and carry to canine perfection. What would a busy man, the vicar, or leading barrister, or doctor in full practice, be able to do in the way of love-letters, without signal injustice to himself and with the neglect of the interests of his *clientèle?* To the busy lawyer the lady will be very much like an additional brief to study, or to the doctor simply a complicated case of unusual interest. We cannot place the alternative too strongly before our fair readers. If they require an established name and position, and the maximum of human respectability, they cannot do better than take the man whose business in this life is in a highly active and prosperous state. But if they want poetic dalliance and the enjoyment of the fresh spring of life, this must be obtained through lovers almost as youthful as themselves, and with nearly all their way in the world still before them. Only it must be remembered that the man who has won his spurs has no secret of rejuvenescence, while our young friend, to whom we confess a kind of partiality, may yet achieve greatness or have greatness forced upon him. The young man who has gone devotedly through the processes of love-making and being engaged, has given securities to the novel-reading public that he will marry, have some sweet children, and be happy and prosperous ever afterwards. There is, we are credibly informed, a whole network of circumstances about the engaged man, in which he has numberless opportunities of manifesting a sincere devotion. There is every possible occasion for the development of contrivance and ingenuity, more especially if

there are hostile influences at work against him. He must manage to be at the Botanical Gardens or the Royal Academy at particular hours, to secure invitations for this dinner or that ball, to find himself at the opera on certain nights, to go down into the country by particular trains, to turn up promiscuously at Scarborough or in Switzerland; in fact, to develop an extraordinary system of coincidences. Now the working barrister or the M.P. will have very little chance of carrying out this sort of thing with the completeness and adroitness of the unoccupied man, and it is unquestionable that ladies exceedingly like this sort of thing. And something of this kind is absolutely necessary if the love-affair is to blossom into the engagement, and the engagement be protected from the malign influences which sometimes hurt its early days.

Another consideration remains, which we feel regret in suggesting, but which the vicissitudes of human life do not allow us to exclude from the category of possibilities. For some cause or other the engagement terminates, or it may be clear that one of the parties likes the engagement very much, but evidently intends that the engagement should never be anything else but an engagement; not a means, but an end in itself: and in that case, it is to be hoped, that some friends will bring the matter to an issue. It is the less necessary for us to discuss the tragic side of this serio-comedy, as the great authority, Mr. Trollope, has treated it under every variety of aspect. A whole system of the ethics of courtship might be elaborated from the numerous col-

lection of amatory cases with which Mr. Trollope has filled the circulating libraries. The system would look, in the eyes of our lady readers, almost perfect on paper; but just as in dynamics, the practical must always fall below the mathematical calculation, human exigencies would give us something a little different and inferior to the conception of poetic or novelistic justice. We once observed in the newspapers a case of breach of promise, in which the defendant urged that his feelings had changed, that circumstances had altered, and that he was quite satisfied that the marriage would not tend to the ultimate happiness of either. He was of course a brute for breaking faith with the lady; but what can be expected from those wretched people who bring their amatory difficulties into courts of justice? We observed, however, that the judge, a sensible and hard-headed man, looked with manifest approval at the defence set up, and his remarks had the effect of materially modifying the damages. Probably the sagacious magistrate had his own experience and theories in such matters. We will trust that the gist of these unvarnished remarks will not be mistaken. An engagement is, or ought to be, a very delightful and exceptional phase of life. A man acts far more wisely in getting engaged than in wasting time and feelings in desultory love-making; and he acts far more wisely in getting married, even if he wavers on the perilous limits of three hundred a year, than in forming connections fraught with misery and shame. But in arriving at the engagement itself, a man has need of forethought and

principle to be both wise and wary, and while he considers himself supremely blest, he will best avoid the fool's-paradise, if he knows that he is not necessarily obliged by his engagement to become ridiculous or offensive in the sight of others.

BRIDESMAIDS, WEDDING-BREAKFASTS, AND WEDDING-SPEECHES.

It was a well-known opinion of the late Lord Macaulay, that a breakfast was a much more social and enjoyable kind of meal than any other. You invite a man to dinner, argued Lord Macaulay, because you knew his grandfather; because he has brought you a letter of introduction; because, in some respects, you are in the same boat with him; in short, because you *must;* whereas you ask a man to breakfast because you really like him, and will be glad of his company. For our own part we confess to a weakness for suppers, of which we used to partake in the days when Plancus was consul; but in these degenerate days there is a crusade against suppers, and therefore we also deposit our pebble on the side of breakfasts. The breakfast has a special and crowning distinction;—it is the single meal which is susceptible of being glorified beyond all that other eating and drinking which absorb so large a share of human life. Even bachelors have their social reminiscences, that are not unkind, of these festive feeds; but to the man of well-regulated marital mind the wedding-breakfast should always stand out in memory as the glorious and supernal occasion on which he drank ichor and fed on ambrosial food. To put our theories

with transatlantic force and point, the wedding-breakfast is a great fact. Lovers' quarrels and perplexities, the flinty hearts of parents, the discussions of lawyers, the criticisms and witticisms of friends, are all difficulties overcome, and the dream of courtship fades away amid apparitions of fairies and halls of dazzling delight. By persons of coarse and prosaic mind, indeed, something is sometimes urged against the theory of the wedding-breakfast. We have heard a lunch defined as an insult to one's breakfast, and an outrage on one's dinner. The wedding-breakfast incurs this opprobrium to an exaggerated extent; only people who keep very late hours really break their fast at the breakfast, and to the ordinary run of people the luncheon-dinner at a premature hour is fraught with peril of dyspepsia. We need hardly say that we simply mention this objection with the intention of holding it up to proper scorn, and that we exclusively address ourselves to those of our readers who are endowed with the finer feelings.

The domestic phenomena presented by a wedding-breakfast to a regular household must be of a very startling and abnormal character. On this occasion alone prodigality and profusion change their very nature and become cardinal virtues. If we remember our Ethics aright, Aristotle insists on the duty of extravagance at such a season. For our own parts, we always like to see a few dislocated champagne glasses, as a rough evidence that justice has been done to that wholesome and most refreshing beverage. But the breakfast is, of course, sometimes much more than a breakfast, although

it includes all delicacies in or out of season, and the wine has the brand of Madame Clicquot, that most estimable of widows. Just now the run of weddings is in the country; and, in a picturesque point of view, the country wedding is certainly more interesting than the town wedding. The arrival of guests is rapid during the few preceding days; they generally overflow the country mansion into neighbouring lodgings and the hotels of the nearest post-town. The 'day after the wedding' is a well-known expression, but the 'evening before the bridal' might also put in its claim to a share of comedy. The bridesmaids are getting-up a rehearsal of their engaging parts; there is a grand display of the wedding presents in the drawing-room; the breakfast-tables are being set forth in their resplendency; there is an evening party all the more joyous because it is informal; and ladies with a clear strategical understanding are beginning to perceive obvious openings for flirtations. The only obscure and uncomprehended individual is the expectant bridegroom. It is allowed, indeed, that he is a necessary adjunct to the ceremony of next morning, but in the interim he is rather in the way than otherwise. He probably wanders disconsolately about the grounds, trying to get-up the inevitable speech; and if he wishes to hold sweet converse with his future bride, he is execrated by the bridesmaids as interfering with the more serious business of the toilette. The subject of the wedding-breakfast involves with it an important subsidiary inquiry respecting bridesmaids. The charming versatility of the female mind is much

occupied at the present time with the duties and responsibilities of bridesmaids. We are happy to believe that the custom of having very small children as bridesmaids is falling into abeyance. If these very small children act as bridesmaids, they are entitled to seats at the breakfast-table; and if this is allowed, there is a high probability of their becoming very poorly. We look with greater favour on the theory of having a bridesmaid-in-chief to correspond with the bridegroom's best man, while the rest of the lovely bevy, as attendant nymphs, cluster around their Choregus. A wedding is nearly always a pretty sight—of course we are speaking of weddings where there is no obvious falsehood or disparity—and in our rural districts they are capable of being made very pretty indeed. Mr. Tennyson writes of the 'maidens of the place, that pelt us in the porch with flowers;' and his fine poem at the conclusion of *In Memoriam*, in which he does full justice to the wedding-breakfast and 'the foaming grape of eastern France,' gives the poetical side of the subject, which we are treating practically. We need hardly say that a bridegroom of cautious mind will have trained himself practically in the details of ring, gloves, responses, and taking hands, as, in reality, the ecclesiastical part of the morning's work is one of some complexity, and, before now, has given occasion to some confusion and irreverence. At the present day young ladies almost generally insist that at least a portion of the service shall be choral, and profess to consider themselves only half married if any of the service is omitted. In old

times a great deal of osculation used to go on in the vestry, but at the present day this is much diminished, through the increase of maiden coyness or the lack of manly intrepidity. In the old times it was thought a highly correct thing for the bride to faint; but this rule is not now *de rigueur*, and brides may now be divided into the two classes of those who give way to their emotions, and those who make an extremely satisfactory breakfast.

The wedding, also, teaches the female mind a great moral lesson on a subject where it is certainly open to improvement. It teaches, at least for once in a lifetime, the absolute necessity of punctuality. The law of the land is inexorable. The ceremony is bound to come off by noon. No excuse, however eloquent or valid, touching the unpunctuality of coachmen or the incompetence of ladies'-maids, can soften the Rhadamanthine regulation. It has occasionally happened that the service has not commenced till the first stroke of the hour of noon is being hammered out over the heads of the congregation. The necessity for punctuality being made patent to the feminine understanding, it is right to add that, as a rule, the bride and her party are exceedingly punctual. At certain churches there are sometimes several weddings in the course of a morning, and the earliest of these comes off very early indeed. The point arises, whether brides, having sufficiently shown the possibility of being punctual by their prompt attendance on this very interesting occasion, might not be called upon as wives to extend the applica-

tion of the principle to the subsequent minor arrangements of life. It might be thought quite superfluous to add an exhortation that all legal formalities should be duly complied with. A year or two ago there was a most extraordinary scene at a wedding-breakfast. It should be said that the officiating clergyman was an intimate friend of all the parties, which may, perhaps, extenuate his want of caution and compliance with the law, although the oversight committed by several persons at the same time was most singular. The incident was sufficiently remarkable, and we freely make it over to the use of Miss Braddon, and that great unknown, Mr. Babington White. At the breakfast, one of the bridesmaids asked the clergyman if he happened to have with him the marriage license, as she had a great desire to behold, with her bodily eyes, that sacred and mystic document. All at once the thought flashed across the mind of the unhappy man that he had performed the marriage without a license. He at once explained the unaccountable oversight which he and the bridegroom had committed. A scene of terror and confusion ensued. The parents caught up the young lady from the embrace of the pseudo-groom, and carried her off to a place of safety. A license was promptly procured, and the parties were married afresh next morning; but the unhappy clergyman was made miserable by the threat of a criminal prosecution on the part of the Dissenting interest in the parish.

The oratory of the breakfast-table is of a unique kind. People who go to a very large number of wed-

ding-breakfasts, and to whom a wedding-breakfast is nothing more than any other morning party, of course speak decorously and conventionally enough. Even with this abatement, such gives us one of our very best opportunities for genuine humour or natural pathos. Towards the end of a large breakfast, speechifying is abundant enough, and the individual guest must be obscure indeed who escapes having his health proposed. But the beginning of the speechifying is rather awkward, and no speeches ought to be allowed until there has been a brisk and continuous fire of corks. We always pity the moment of misery in which the bridegroom has to speak of the happiest moment of his life. We think that the rules of the wedding-breakfast press rather hardly on the bridegroom. He is not permitted to escape by the simple process of simply returning thanks. And often, with an incapacity, or contempt for oratory, it is expected that he should be eloquent at a moment when even practised orators would fail. The best thing is for the groom to be fully conscious that he is in for a scrape, and get over it, as he has got over other scrapes, trusting to pluck and luck. For a wedding-breakfast speech, a failure is the next best thing to success; and it does not greatly signify which of the two it really is. The bridegroom knows that, having obtained the kind of success he wanted, he may be careless about mere words, and that he may be sure of an indulgent listener in the lady who has now begun permanently to take her place by his side. It should be noticed that the

earliest specimens of conjugal dialogue which are obtained at the breakfast-table are by the initiated regarded as full of interest, as probably giving adumbration of the future. If the bridegroom is oratorically inclined, and determined that he will not pass over this legitimate opportunity for the exhibition of his powers in the eyes of his fair lady and the company, a treat of peculiar raciness may probably be anticipated. It is a curious fact, that very few wedding-breakfasts pass off without one or two lugubrious speeches. The father and mother, and that sort of people, have got over their illusions, and the scene is to them more chequered than to the youthful imagination. They have natural regrets for the loss of a daughter, which are, at least, equally reciprocated. Moreover, as they know that life is not all beer and skittles for the community at large, neither will it be all champagne and lobster-salad for the young people. Perhaps, speaking both physically and metaphysically, it is quite as well that such should be the case. Still there is a touch of the lugubrious in some of these orations; but, for the sake of the bride, the finer feelings are not allowed to prevail to such an extent as to render a man overpowered by his emotions. If emotion is shown in any unnecessary quarter, where it is quite uncalled-for, it will be attributed to a more prosaic cause than sympathy. Perhaps the champagne has something to do with it. There is one man, however, whose duty it is to make a rattling good speech, and who is nothing if not funny. This is, of course, the gentleman who returns thanks

on behalf of the bridesmaids. The man who proposes their health should be of a cheerful frame of mind; but he who responds ought to be master of a hidden mine of wit. He should be either an engaged man or one who will speedily qualify for that honourable position. His remarks, we need hardly say, ought to do equal honour to his heart and head. They ought to be something more than merely neat and appropriate; for pretty girls consider that their health is a theme to which eloquent justice ought to be done; and the young gentleman who can do it justice obtains among them a popularity which, though fugitive, is enviable while it lasts.

It draws towards the afternoon, and the 'white-favoured' horses champ impatiently. In the simply-dressed lady it is difficult to recognise the lovely and accomplished bride, who was lately smothered in lace like Juno in her cloud. It is to be observed, that 'lovely and accomplished' are epithets which belong to the position of a bride, as 'very reverend' to a dean, or 'right honourable' to a privy-councillor. The local railway station is in a state of temporary insanity. The porters who take charge of the innumerable packages receive incredible tips; and if the business of the company has left a spark of romance in the bosom of the station-master, he endeavours to procure a coupé carriage for the happy couple. In a few minutes the whistle is heard, and the couple are off. As that whistle sounds, they become absorbed as mere drops in the infinite human ocean. No one would suppose

that the drowsy gentleman and the tired lady were a few hours ago the hero and heroine of a brilliant scene. We mentally send good luck's old shoe after them, and return to the wedding-breakfast party. The bridesmaids, having loyally stood by the bride, and witnessed her sacrifice with heroic fortitude, have earned a right to attend to their own amatory or matrimonial affairs. To make a wedding-breakfast truly successful, some couple or other ought to become engaged in the course of the day; or, at all events, ought to be able to trace the origin of courtship to this auspicious occasion. There is, of course, some little fatigue and reaction after breakfast, and a man is glad to take a quiet weed, or have a little soda-water. But after that things brighten again. We go in for croquet, and croquet is sometimes prolonged not only till dusk, but even until lights are brought out on the lawn. The bridesmaids have their legitimate chances. Then the indoor amusements set in; and in the country the rest of the week is frequently a carnival. Of course, the household is utterly demoralised for a time; and if butlers look preternaturally grave, it is a suspicious sign of incipient intoxication. On an occasion like a wedding-breakfast, people come out with great spontaneity; an amount of sentiment and effusion is permitted which does not ordinarily prevail; there are random sighs among the young people for a congenial spirit. The wedding-breakfast that is becoming extinct fires the train for some other wedding-breakfast that is to go off by and by.

On the whole, therefore, we are strongly in favour of the institution of wedding-breakfast, both in theory and practice. There is a class of enlightened critics who consider that family ties mean organised selfishness, and that patriotism itself is only an enlarged kind of local prejudice. Such persons may acutely argue that, if two persons make up their minds to live together, it is quite unnecessary to summon an entire clan to witness this rather absurd proceeding, which may involve an error, according to the doctrines of Mill and Malthus. To such persons roses are only vegetables, and the human heart a bit of muscle. Nevertheless, human nature being what it is, we are glad of all the outward and visible signs of something that is better than the joyous signs themselves. We do not know that, in the present day, people score-up happy days much faster than the Caliph did of old. Few days bring such extensive happiness as a happy wedding-day, which is itself a consideration. Again, in the present age we all live more or less scattered and disunited lives, and such an event as a wedding-breakfast welds together yielding links, and joins friend to friend, and relative to relative. Of the feelings of those principally concerned we say nothing; but even the chance guest of the day, unless utterly callous with a selfish cynicism, will mark it in his memory with white chalk.

ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE MARKET MATRIMONIAL.

'There is nothing new under the sun,' says the Wise Man, explaining that if perchance anything appears to be new, it is only that 'there is no remembrance of former things that were before us.' So the cry, 'There never were such times,' is not true. Good seasons and bad seasons (even as to seasons matrimonial) have their cycle. The very complaint of the present day as to a great accumulation of single men and a long arrears of single women—yes, and even the very same popular reason for it—was the identical cry of one hundred years ago. Witness the following from Sir Charles Grandison:

'I believe there are more bachelors now in England by many thousands than there were a few years ago; and probably the numbers of them, and of single women of course, will every year increase. *The luxury of this age will account for a great deal of this, and the turn our sex take to undomesticate themselves for a good deal more.*'

What is the reason that the ladies are in as great a hurry as ever to get husbands, but the gentlemen are by no means in as great a hurry to get wives?

To solve this question, we must consider that this dearth of husbands is only partial: it is not the com-

plaint of all classes, but only of one. Among our labourers and mechanics—and, indeed, among our industrial population generally, rich or poor, as in Liverpool or Manchester—times matrimonial are not so bad. The John Hobsons and the Mary Snookeses put up their banns as fast as ever. Manufacturers' sons and daughters also marry after their kind much as usual. So we can trace the evil to its source. It is the silks and the satins, not the corduroys and the calicoes, that raise the cry; they are the men of leisure, not the men of labour; the listless consumers, not the active producers—who are so backward in coming forward to the anxious mothers' content.

The simple reason is, men can't have what they can't afford; and there is a time when the ancestral estate, or the fortune realised some generations back, has been divided and subdivided till little but the pride of the thing remains. Yes, it is Gentility that is at a dead lock. Professions do not pay; money out of trade gives securely only about three per cent, and land pays less still; so the rent of a hundred acres may often go for my lady's dress alone, and with 30,000*l.* in the funds a young couple can barely afford even three maids and Connaught-square. The consequence is, that now, as in Sir Charles Grandison's time, we have one large section of society holding on most frantically to the pride and position to which they were born, and reduced to a choice of evils simply to decide what luxury they shall give up first.

Now the very last thing to be risked is loss of caste.

In England, as in India, caste reigns supreme. Here, as in ancient Rome, to be poor may be tolerable; but to look poor is the smart. The hardest part of poverty, said Juvenal, is *quòd ridiculos facit homines;* that is, it literally takes a peg out of your consequence, and makes you sing small. No; anything but that. The pleasant smiles of those you meet is as sunshine on your path; the hearty tone of sympathy is as marrow to your bones. There is an atmosphere social as well as material, which must be balmy and genial, or it is a burthen to your spirits and blighting to your whole economy. The young fashionable knows that if once reduced to a shabby coat, with a shabby spouse, in a shabby street, it is, in one sense, false to say, 'A man's a man for a' that;' for he isn't half the man he was, in pluck or feeling either. What man can show a bold front with a seedy waistcoat? What lady can hold up her head in a dowdy bonnet?

Little wisdom is required to see that in a life-struggle for caste, man single has a twofold advantage. Society does not ask where he lives, or how he lives, and society expects but little of him. He may be the invitee, not the inviter, for many a long year, and by good luck for a long life. His card need only name his club, and say nothing of his garret. But man married is taken to strict account at once. All must be open and above-board; while that one-sided hospitality turns to an affair of give and take—a modern dinner-party being called 'a return'—not so much a gathering of friends as a meeting of creditors. Fashionable people

do not want to pay visits in back streets, still less to have shabby-genteels meet upon their staircase; and as to out-of-door greetings, 'carriage-people' hate a bow from a mere 'job;' and we have heard of a lady mortally offended in a dashing barouche at receiving a friendly recognition, as she said, from a sorry creature who was jogging along at three-and-sixpence the first hour and half-a-crown every hour after.

It is silly to say that the luxuries of club-life indispose and spoil men for the purer and quiet home. We know a little of club-life. Our friend E— would marry if he could. We have dined with him at the Rag-and-famish, and stepped across with him to dress in a mere garret yclept his bedroom in Berners-street. We have known him confined to his room—that is, boxed up in this garret—with only a dirty maid-of-all-work to ring up, when he can, as his ministering angel, for three and four days together. We have seen him lounging at his club many a weary hour with society without friendship, an aggregation of atoms without affinity, ever coming, ever going, shifting and fluctuating as a human stream. We have watched him killing time, but not enjoying it, the very picture of unrest, yearning for quiet and repose—a life of smoke and billiards, sherry and bitters, *Punch* and the *Pall Mall*. And yet this is the life 'with none to bless us, none whom we can bless,' supposed to be deliberately preferred to the homes to which such men are but too pleased that their married friends should invite them!

No; it is not married life, it is the mere apology of

married life, from which we shrink. Robert South, the last man to be sentimental, speaks of a fond couple in poverty having just love enough to torture each other. That is what men fear. They have always seen that the cost is nothing, the comfort and elegance everything, and money no object, where ladies are in the case. They dread the thought of taking the stylish daughter from Hyde-park-square to broil through September in Oxford-terrace, where all around is dust, dry leaves, ladders, whitewash, and closed shutters, because they cannot afford to follow the stream out of town.

You may say men's fears are unreasonable, or that many a girl values affection beyond all price, and with the object of her love will share the humblest abode: this may be true of some ladies, but, if so, their style betrays the contrary. Their dress and 'fast' ways in every variety of absurdity proclaim that appearance, vanity, fashion, and to be 'first-rate' is the very soul of their existence. Not a sentiment do you hear akin to Love in a cottage, still less to Contentment on a little, or to Inward resources above the whims and follies of the day.

These traits are not lost upon men; for even the many who find thinking a fatigue receive impressions, they know not how, from what swims before their eyes. Dresses trailing in the dust, head-straps and chignons worthy of Bedlam, faces bared of all those tresses by which Nature would screen ladies from the rude blasts of heaven and the rude gaze of men—these things men feel, if they do not think, have little enough to do with

'the richer and the poorer,' 'the better and the worse,' of rugged life. Thus women seem to teach that life is a jest; but men have an idea of life in earnest.

The same staring, impudent style has one weaning element more. In a wife, man dreams of having amidst all the shocks of fate one heart and one soul devoted to himself; but to mar this vision we have an affectation of giddiness and effrontery, as if the fair one would be the creature of any man who pleased her most.

The present 'fast' style, believe me, ladies, is the most suicidal style you could adopt. It virtually proclaims, 'extravagance is our line; pace is everything;' and all men are aware 'it is the pace that kills.'

We are now speaking chiefly of London life, as also of Bath, Cheltenham, Brighton, and those few towns of England in which alone the strata next above the trade series naturally crop up. But these smaller towns claim little notice: the sons are soon drawn away to professions and to London; and, save a sprinkling of rich countrymen, it is in London that nearly all the eligibles can live or earn a livelihood. This congregating of men in London diminishes the chances of the ladies most alarmingly. In other places men could marry as the clergy marry, and be quite easy and comfortable on 500*l*. or 600*l*. a-year; but double that sum would be required for the same relative position in town.

In London, to live near the parks, and sufficiently near your office, is expensive. To economise your income you risk your health. As suburb is added to suburb, you cannot even drive into the country, much

less walk; and the atmosphere of London, added to its noise and excitement, renders change and out-of-towning actually among the necessaries of life.

Such would be the pecuniary obstacles to marriage, even if the value of money were the same as twenty years since. But the scale of expenses is higher far. For the mild aristocracy of those days we have a rampant snobocracy now. Mrs. World still holds her court, but one all of glitter and blazes, and the feathers and diamonds expected are more costly than ever. The mines of Northumberland, the forges of Birmingham, or the mills of Manchester, as also the sheep-farms of Australia and the diggings of California, all pour their lucky adventurers into Hyde-park-gardens or Lancaster-gate. County dignity and London style fade and pale before the luxury of their conservatories or the gorgeousness of their mansions; while by libraries ordered by the yard, and by pictures painted 'to be the correct thing,' the hope is by high art to hide low descent.

Competition rules society as well as trade. No doubt some few persons of family and respectability will say, 'Let these people bid high for their standing, since they cannot have even the semblance of it without: we are safe in our position on cheaper terms.' But the majority are not so philosophical. When the foolish go so fast, even the wisest feel slow. The old carriage of the older families now looks so tub-like, and the old horses so agricultural, that the very sight of these equipages acts on 'carriage-people' as an income-tax of thirty per cent, while finery of all other kinds

soon runs up in the same proportion. In this race of fashion what is a mere canter to the one class is a break-neck gallop to the other; and though the field is daily growing more select as the overweighted fall out distanced and are 'nowhere,' still a constant succession of donkeys fall in, doomed, after a short burst and fitful effort, to the same jeers and disappointment.

All this makes the exactions of caste daily more severe, especially for married people, on whom Mrs. World aforesaid has no mercy. She virtually says to every young couple, 'You are now some of us, and must live up to the mark, as we are obliged to do;' the gentlemen know how high that mark is, and see that modern young ladies seem born and bred to keep the standard as high as possible.

If ladies were habitually quiet and inexpensive in their style, and domesticated in their habits—if men felt that in married life, each, happy with the other alone, would take leave of Vanity Fair, and be comparatively indifferent to its whims and ways—if the wife would be a housewife—if household duties were to employ the lady within, instead of the visiting, the gossiping, and the showing-off without—then there would be more marriages, no doubt. Now don't despise our suggestions, ladies. The home we are describing, however humble it may seem, is a far better one than will fall to the lot of many of you when the sad time arrives that the parent's home is broken up, and the executor drily informs you of the small dividends in the Three per Cents on which you must cut and contrive to the

end of your maiden days. We only remind you to be wise in time. The question is not simply a question of the single or the married state, but a question of a richer or poorer state some few years to come. For where is your provision? The men inherit the estates; the men alone earn money by professions. Single women now-a-days are doubly poor—poor because safe dividends never were so low, and poorer still because the cost of living and the demands of society never were so high.

At present the ladies will not meet the times, they will not see the future as it must be. 'Fast' with a vengeance, they 'go in' for all or nothing. It is plain to the meanest understanding that any home for their later years in which their butterfly style and trifling ways will not prove ridiculously out of place, is a lot that neither by patrimony nor by matrimony one in twenty can expect to realise. Still, ladies shut their eyes, commit themselves to the whirling stream, and in the brilliancy of the possible prize forget the extreme probability of the blanks.

But if ladies will not, as we say, meet the times, let us be fair. Have we any right to wonder? Do not the men do precisely the same? Their own professional earnings are quite on the lottery principle. All the prizes in the church, equally divided, would hardly pay for the education to compete for them. All the fees at the bar would scarcely pay for the circuits and the wigs. Yet men hope against hope, and prefer the mere chance of a higher reward, to compounding for a more certain position in a less enviable line of life.

The anxious mother only does the same. What though by the cold calculations of prudence her income and expectations require that she should draw off with her daughters to train the honeysuckles and help the parson in some Devonshire cottage, and so make sure of a plain gown and plain pudding to the end of their days, with a far more probable match with the land-agent or the parish doctor? This is as unreasonable as to expect the failing merchant to realise and retire into poverty, when a lucky venture—daily talked of for others, so why not for him?—would keep the carriage and mansion in the family still.

And there is this to be said for the ladies, that the prize matrimonial is at once so dazzling and so rich a prize. Not a few mothers are feelingly aware that when all they have to leave their girls is divided into fractions, and these fractions by safe investments are reduced to their lowest terms, a life of dependence awaits them, from which marriage offers the only escape. Besides, what mother ever forgets the rank and precedence of the married woman, or the triumph of proclaiming that her child is chosen before all?

Yet, strange to say, the marriage desired lies between the narrowest parallels; the gentleman must have the qualifications the least likely to meet together. With the family connections, the profession and the refinement, which are all more or less an earnest of poverty and extravagance, he must combine the income of the plain and plodding sons of busy life. In other wants, if people cannot afford one thing, they put up

with another—the second best, they say—it must serve. But not so with ladies in respect of their suitors. We rather pity than blame them; but not a jot will their feelings allow them to abate; otherwise, just as the rich manufacturer's daughter is caught by a spendthrift lord, so many a thriving man from debateable ground would be ambitious of the daughter of a needy officer or country gentleman.

But considering how limited is this range in point of standing, ladies look ridiculously high in point of money. At the present day ladies are in a state of strike. The money-market is against them. They have too few offers on their own terms, and all others they discourage. They lay themselves out for prizes almost hopeless, till men of practicable income are afraid to offer. Their whole style, dress, and education proclaim them only ambitious to be rich men's wives, and rather bitters than blessings to any one less.

Consequently we are assured by those who mix much with young men, that marriage now enters fearfully little into their plans of life. Time was when the hope of a happy marriage was a stimulus to exertion and a motive to prudence; but now-a-days it is set aside as too generally impracticable, and its place supplied by discreditable arrangements. If the ladies are too refined to put up with the habits of a class below them, not so the other sex. Men arrange with some shopwoman to keep house and make some sort of home for them in lonely evenings, pleading it is the nearest approach to married life that they can afford.

Why, then, do ladies allow their places to be filled by those of whose existence, till these 'fast' days, they were not supposed to know? They well may answer, 'O, thou art the cause of this anguish, my mother!'— and father too. Their whole rearing is often a mistake. They are rather accomplished than educated, rather ornamental than useful, born rather for waste than for thrift, started with the ideas and expectations of a peeress, to subside into the hard economics of village or small-town life. Their paternal establishment is one of false appearance. They carry on the ideas and habits of their family, forgetting that the estate to support it has well-nigh dwindled away. So the style, taste, and expenses of ladies are altogether out of proportion to the future that awaits them; just as the modern schoolboy's pocket-money is more than he will be able to fritter so lightly as a man.

If parents would only coolly calculate the fortunes they can leave their daughters, and give them ideas in unison, things would soon find their level. Many a chignon would remain on some poor beggar's head; many a flowing robe would be saved from the dirt; and Rotten-row—properly called Rotten—would be thin indeed, when deserted by all whose display is an imposition, the mere flickering of an income fast drawing to its close. But men without a farthing to give, and the merest pittance to bequeath, expect a settlement utterly incompatible with the average means of that class of men to which their daughters aspire.

No wonder the gentlemen cry off. No, they say; to

take a penniless girl is one thing; but to take one with all the ideas of the most affluent is another. If they would marry contented with a home only very much better than that which one day awaits them if single, we then could venture; but the greatest of all misery must be a restless and discontented wife. Remember, we are no advocates for marrying into poverty. Let Belgravians marry with Belgravians still: but pity 'tis that any should be reared to 'tread the velvet lawns and marble terraces,' when nothing awaits them but the rugged paths and wintry chill of later life.

When things are at their worst they are on the eve of improvement: a bad trade will soon be given up when once men see it does not pay; and though speculators are very persevering, there is a point in the lottery matrimonial, as in all others, where the hopelessness of prizes, and the flood of blanks, puts an end to the game. Already there are symptoms of a change. First, the foreign market long gave relief; and though to go to India on spec does not answer, still, marriages to settle abroad are less and less in disfavour. Again, if not so particular about clime, if the ladies are not so particular about the age or the charms of the gentleman who is in a position to offer—May and December meet together, and once more the prudential reasoning of Sir Charles Grandison's day applies again:

'Love-matches, my dear,' says the worldly wise, 'are foolish things. Mild, sedate convenience is better than a stark staring mad passion. Who ever hears of

darts, flames, Cupids, Adonises, and suchlike nonsense in matrimony? No: passion is transitory; but discretion, which never boils over, gives durable happiness.'

So we lately heard a lady exclaim: 'A capital match—a capital match, as to the man, certainly; not at all the sort Miss A. ever wished to marry; but not one woman in twenty does get that.'

The Roman sage of old said, that for his daughter he preferred the man without the money to the money without the man. But in the spirit of Horace, 'the money—by all means, the money—with a decent marriage, if you can; but the money;' so says Rotten-row, from the top to the bottom.

As to age, if the ladies marry the old, or if they wait till they are themselves no longer young, they well may plead that, not affording the feast of love, they simply put up with a cold collation; they begin married life in the middle, and quaff the champagne without the effervescence. In short, with due regard to the table of caste, anything counts as a marriage, and anything counts as a husband. Matrimony is simply a matter of money; Cupid yields to Cocker, and Venus is quite a woman of business. From the scarcity of able-bodied volunteers, she deals in bounties, and presses into her service such veterans and incapables as you would summon from Greenwich or from Chelsea. A clergyman lately said it was to him quite a heartache to couple such fine young women as presented themselves to such unlovable louts or wrinkled roués as now enact the part of bridegroom.

But though all the second-rate material has been used up, the difficulty still continues, the arrears are on the increase, and still the cry is raised, 'They come! they come!' There is a point at which the numbers of malcontents make common cause, and countenance each other in doing something; and will it not be so in the matter in question? Yes; nature will prove stronger than etiquette, or prudence either. To many a woman life without a husband is life without an object, a profession, a sphere for her energies, or the element in which she is intended to live and breathe. We say to many—not to all. Some are strong-minded females, more head than heart, rather masculine than feminine; and they find a vent ritualistic, radical, or what not. Some also, though proper women, are devoted to aged parents; while others subside into good aunts, ready for all family emergencies, take the rising generation in charge, and are very mothers to children not their own.

But a large majority of women, having no such sphere, or no such notions, are evidently, by the very yearnings of their nature, rather adjective than substantive, and useless and meaningless while they stand by themselves. They cannot live happily as single women. Every year tries them hard: they grow rather sour than mellow. The once affectionate sisters diverge and grow crabbed, till the same house won't hold them, and they—part.

In many ways Nature asserts her laws. There is with families, as with flowers, a time when certain sorts must be planted out, otherwise the stunted develop-

ment, and the matted tangle of the pot-bound root, does but express the violence done to the distorted natures, and the thwarted, nipped buddings of ill-managed flowers of another kind.

Ladies have two alternatives: the one is to marry from a rank beneath their own; and this they will be slow indeed in doing, to the honour of our fair sisters be it said. For, in spite of their slang and their fast style, which are affected vulgarity, and little else, nothing can prove their innate refinement and the real delicacy of nature more than this, that, however little they disguise their eagerness for husbands, those husbands must be gentlemen and nothing else. Their imputed forwardness is limited to their own order, and, however much they may abate in the age or the looks of their suitor, it is wonderful how rarely an English lady will look on any man from a rank beneath her own.

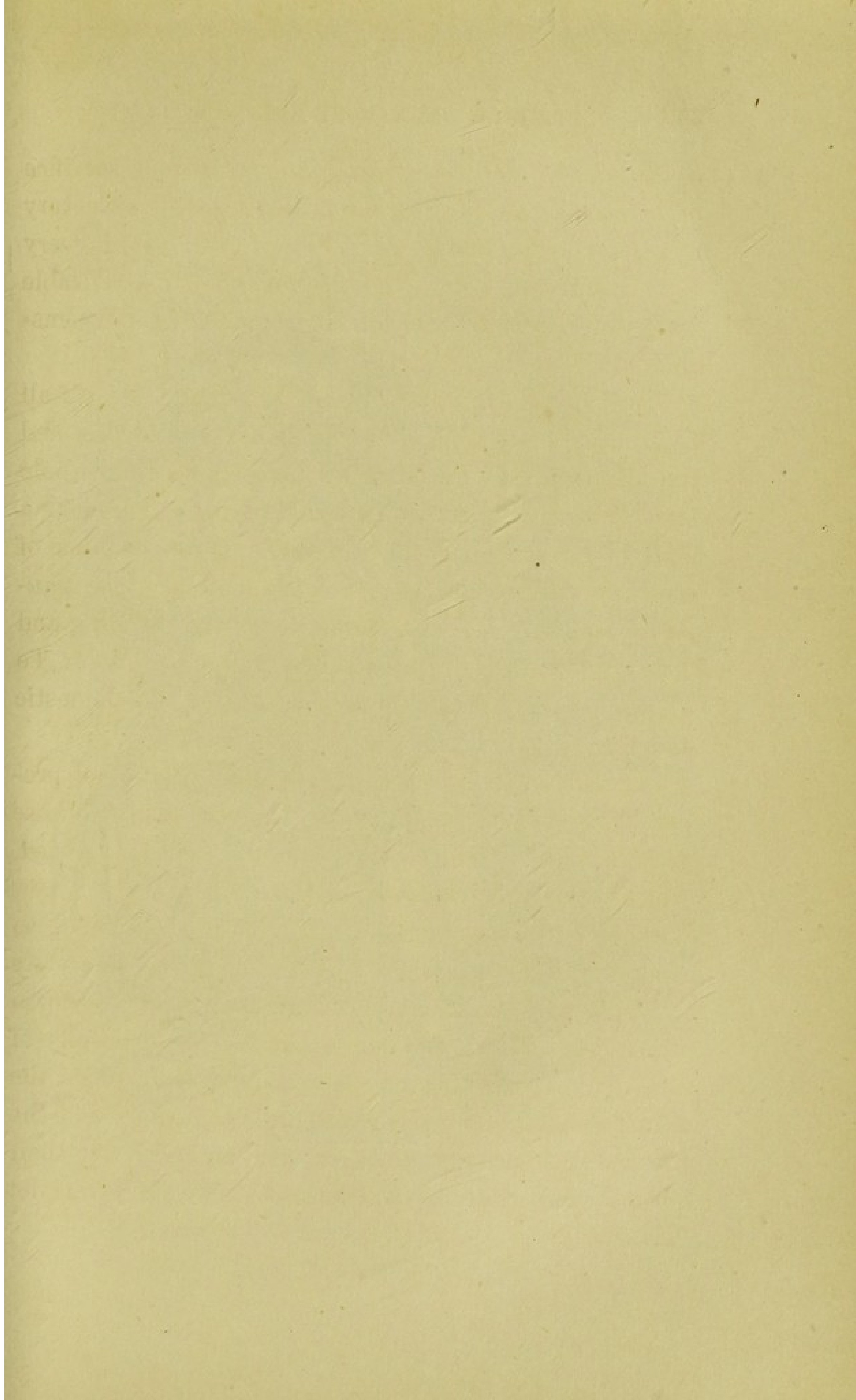
The other alternative is, to marry on little and live on little. The smart of this alternative is in the opinion of their friends; but when numbers do the same, they will keep each other in countenance, and the smart will cease.

We are no advisers of marrying into poverty, either positive or comparative; we have seen its miseries too often; that is, poverty properly so called, and swarming with brats one cannot keep. We once heard a youth, when told he must work, argue with his father and mother, that it was very hard: he never wanted to be born; and to bring a fellow into an expensive world like this, with nothing to maintain him, was a great

deal too bad. Still, as to marrying with some sacrifice of externals, and being satisfied to begin with very much less than older people enjoy, we regard every such instance as helping to break-up that impracticable scale which is now unfortunately regarded as indispensable for the wedded state.

But for this alternative the ladies must first of all induce the gentlemen to do the same; and to this end the first step must be taken by themselves—their whole style must be altered. Whereas at present they make a show of extravagance, they must change to the guise of economy. They must sue and be sued *in forma pauperis;* and the 'neat and industrious,' the 'striving and deserving character' will be the best they can adopt. To use their own phrase, they must 'go in for' the domestic and economical 'line.'

In this advice we are not addressing ladies of property, but only the many—alas, the very many—whose present style is a deception, and who, if not married, will have one day to exercise the prudence which now perhaps provokes a smile. At the present time, so complete a deception is nine-tenths of the finery we see, that one sex seems born and bred to impose upon the other. Not a few ladies remind one painfully of the little fairies in the pantomime, who, when the transformation scene is over, are doomed to doff the crowns and spangles not their own, and return to their pinnies and skull-caps—all the toggery their real lot can afford.



'HONEYDEW.'

THOUGHTS OVER A PICTURE AND A PIPE,

Thrown into Verse.

'Dulci meditatur avenâ.'

WELL have you limnèd, Mr. Lawless,
This young disciple of Raleigh's.
Sure 'tis The Cock where he sits,
Listening the jests of the wits,
With that half-smile on his face,
Seated apart in the place,—
Head on one side, eyes askance,
Noting with curious glance
Johnson the burly and big,
Wearing that seedy old wig,
Jesting at little Piozzi,
Tilting at coxcombly Bozzy.
Or is it Goldsmith he spies,
Laughing—with tears in his eyes,
And in vest-pocket the guinea
He'll give you for asking, the ninny ?
How on poor Noll they all doat,
Drest in that plum-coloured coat !
Or is he thinking on Savage,
How want has worked its wild ravage ?
Or how to Garrick's keen face
Genius lends fire blent with grace ?

Or by a casement flung ope
Sits he, to smoke and to tope,
Lazily casting an eye
Over the stream flowing by—
Merchant, thief, beggar, and beau,
Passing—one ne'er-ending show?
He rests, contented in soul,
While the blue smoke from the bowl,
Wavering up through the air,
Perfume diffuses so rare!

Shall I to tell you pretend
What are the thoughts of our friend,
Taking his pipe and his dram,
Water-dilute, of Schiedam?
These are his fancies, I'm thinking,
As he sits smoking and drinking:

Old Ralph Ransome sailed the sea—
Sailed the whole vast ocean through—
And returning brought to me
These rare cakes of honeydew.
Blessings on old Raleigh's head—
Though upon the block it fell—
For the knowledge he first spread
Of the herb I love so well!

'Tis a talisman defies
All that care and want can do.
There are few things that I prize
Like Ralph Ransome's honeydew!

Tell me not of lotos-plants—
How the lotos-eaters lay
Lazily in shady haunts,
Dreaming all their time away!
There's a drowsier charm in this
Than in lotos—if indeed
That same plant aught other is
Than the soothing Indian weed:
Were it not, in truth then if
I were of Ulysses' crew,
I'd far rather have a whiff
Of Ralph Ransome's honeydew!

Peace to old Ralph Ransome's bones,
Wheresoever they are lain,
In some island of the zones,
In the distant Spanish main!
This nepenthe, which he brought,
Only careful memories ends—
Does not drown one kindly thought
Of my rarest of old friends.
As I muse thus, lapt in bliss,
Upward floats the vapour blue—
The apotheosis this
Of Ralph Ransome's honeydew.

FURNISHED HOUSES.

It has so happened that a considerable part of my mundane existence has been passed in the somewhat unique way of a series of occupations of furnished houses. My list of them would considerably surpass even *il catalogo* of Leporello. My maiden aunt was prescribed, or rather upon due consideration she thought fit to prescribe to herself, a constant change of scene and climate. There were only two limitations to our choice of residence; first, that the scenery should be pretty; and next, that it should be in the South of England. It was accordingly my duty to superintend three maids, a man-servant, fourteen boxes, nine portmanteaus, a quantity of heavy luggage, a parrot and a poodle, and the old lady herself, who gave as much trouble as all the rest put together. I was called her nephew, but I myself keenly felt that I was nothing better than a major-domo. My chains were, however, gilded; and I had always that consideration which is generally given to the solitary gentleman of a large party. My aunt did not much care whether we resided at the top of a mountain or underneath a cliff, if only the air was good and the situation picturesque. If there was any association of it with poet or painter of renown, she was quite ready to consider the circum-

stance when she came to the consideration of the question of rent. In these years existence was to me a kaleidoscope of revolving pleasing scenes. Many curious incidents happened to us on our travels, and I moreover accumulated a large amount of business experience, which, if that precious quality of experience were susceptible of being imparted, would be of the greatest possible importance to the British public in their annual exodus to the coast.

Some of these houses, in the watering-places at least, were hired from agents, who had frequently built, furnished, and were letting them, as a matter of speculation. Others we hired from gentry who were willing to let their houses while they went away themselves on visits or tours. We experienced in our time both very liberal and very illiberal treatment; but we found that no particular kind of treatment was identified with either class. There was one pretty watering-place to which we used to resort a great deal, partly because it suited the health of my literary aunt, and partly because she discovered that a celebrated poet had an allusion to it in one of his sonnets. I need hardly warn the public too much that we should endeavour to learn something of the character of the person whose furnished house one may be occupying. There is a sentiment in the human breast which may be called a taste for 'extras.' We see this passion strongly developed in lawyers' bills, school bills, and most official accounts. If you hire a house at a stipulated amount, it might be thought that there would be little scope for this original faculty of

human nature. But *naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret.* There is a little document called an inventory, which is frequently slurred over very rapidly when you enter, and dwelt on with minute particularity when you depart. The ordinary furniture of a furnished house is often scanty to the point of indecency, hard to the touch, and angular to the eye. I know a fellow who in a very clever way makes an addition of one-half to his rent by claims of this sort, and thus gratifies his thirst for extras. I have watched the rise and progress of this man with considerable interest. He had a shop next to one of his houses, over which in gilded letters we read the humble, unassuming name of 'Rag.' In the course of a few years an additional letter humbly crept in to join the others, and we now read 'Ragg.' As time went on, the bold idea occurred to the owner of the name that a single letter more might, without altering the euphony, considerably add to the respectability of his appellation. Accordingly the outside world dwelt admiringly on the name of 'Wragg.' But even this did not exhaust the series of improvements; for on my last visit I saw that the name had been prolonged to 'Wragge.' He proceeded in other things as systematically as in his nomenclature. From the plunder of successive tenants he gradually renovated each item of furniture, and his house was always getting gayer and gayer, of course with increasing prices. Mr. Wragge (Wragg, Ragg, Rag) certainly put his business on a sound commercial basis. There was another house in the same place where we used to go,

whose 'extras' were to those of the other house as shillings to pounds. I am afraid, though his friends are numerous, that his place is getting shabby; but I know that my aunt has him down in her will for a comfortable legacy.

It used to be dreary work at first, the taking of a furnished house at a watering-place, before you knew anything of the place or the people. Constant campaigning, however, has brought us even in this difficult matter to a considerable degree of perfection. As a rule the local gentry will not call unless they clearly understand that you are going to be a permanent resident. Even then they will sniff about you for an immense time before they make your acquaintance. The parson will call; but then the parson has the notion, generally speaking, that you ought to ask him to dinner rather than he you. My aunt's notions of religion are not inconsistent with a rubber of whist and a carpet dance; and with many divines it requires a great expenditure on schools and charities before this defect can be obviated. The gentry, though too grand to call, were not too grand to watch our expenditure, or even our letters, and to make inquiries from the tradespeople. The tradesmen seem to have carefully studied a single text in reference to their duties to strangers, for we were strangers, and they 'took us in.' The plan should be to get a few good introductions to country families—a box-ticket takes you all over the house—and, until you have time to cement these acquaintanceships, to fill your own house with agreeable visitants. On two occasions

we had suddenly to decamp; once when a lively brigade of insects crowded us out, and once when we made the startling discovery that scarlatina had been raging among the last inmates of the place.

But it is very different if you take a country-house, hire for a season a manor-house or rectory. The hospitable country people soon come around you. You suddenly become admitted into very agreeable intimacies. You go to lunch with people, or they come to you, and the lunch ends in a long afternoon stroll or a drive; and you part at twilight with a sincere feeling that the hours have been pleasant, and that you soon hope to meet again. Nice people perhaps pronounce you nice, and even the countess's low pony-carriage will pass up the avenue, and you will get an invitation to the Castle. My dear aunt had never been at a castle before, and she was a little confused at being thrown among the lords and ladies. The owner of Downton Lodge was a man of ancient pedigree and an immense favourite in the neighbourhood; and when, on account of the health of one of his children, he took all his family to Nice and let the Lodge, all the neighbourhood, who liked him so very much, showed their respect by coming to call upon his temporary successors. My aunt came out very well, and her return party was long the theme of admiration. She spared no expense, getting down waiters and everything she wanted from the best houses in London. The winters were most brilliant, although we had to go sometimes twenty miles to a dinner-party; and on one occasion were

snowed-up for three days at a remote place. This was rather too much for my aunt. I believe there was something in her constitution that could not stand too much of this sort of thing; and so there is, I suppose, in most persons. When the owner of Downton Lodge returned, we resolved that we would certainly maintain more quiet for the future; but we have still good friends, and make frequent visits into that most pleasant and hospitable of English shires.

Generally speaking, the plan was that we looked out in the *Times* or the *Field* for some sort of place which took my aunt's fancy. Originally she used to insist that there should be a right of shooting over a thousand acres. I represented to the Matertera, which I classically used to call her, being the aunt on the mother's side, that I was not in the habit of shooting; and she certainly was not. She allowed the argument, but asserted that there was something seignorial and respectable in having land to shoot over; and it was with great difficulty that I broke her of the practice. My aunt was also particular, if possible, in procuring a house that had a ghost belonging to it. She conceived that there was something feudal and baronial in the quasi-possession of a ghost. I remember being in one where a deceased owner with nearly all his family had been drowned in his carriage while attempting to ford a brook that had been swollen by recent rains. Every night at eight o'clock the servants said they heard the rapid drive of the wheels as they neared the fatal brook. My aunt heard the narrative with great complacency;

but that was an hour of dread to the maidens. Our man-servant possessed a considerable gift in the fabrication of ghost-stories, and he gained an absolute dominion over their feelings in the way of shocking or soothing them. Once, however, she was thoroughly frightened, which I did not regret, perhaps, so deeply as I ought to have done. I was away one day, when a set of sturdy vagrants entered the place. They were a set of rough, able-bodied fellows, with bludgeons, a scythe, and a reaping-hook. They asked for alms; and the cook, trembling in her shoes, put a bold face on it and ordered them to be gone. The men evidently did not dare to commit a felony; but they determined to try the effect of moral force. They swore and muttered; declared that it was too bad that there should be plenty in the house and eight Christians starving, and even made a slight physical demonstration. My aunt, hearing a hubbub, came down, and nearly fainted when she saw a troop of strong fellows downstairs. She told me, however, that she soon recovered her composure, and determined on being deadly polite. She formally invited them all into the dining-room, and told the cook to put wine and beer on the table, and whatever she had fit to eat. She actually gave them half-a-crown a-piece; and when one of the ruffians, with a threatening motion of his bludgeon, asked her what time it was, she begged him to accept her watch as a present. They made so merry over their meal, that I came back with the man before they had finished, and succeeded in clearing, pistol in hand, the premises

of them, and also in getting back that old family chronometer.

When we had settled, after a correspondence, that there was a likelihood of our taking the house, I was sent down to survey the ground and make all necessary inquiries. Once, and once only, did we take a place and actually go down to it without having given it any inspection beforehand. The proprietor was in a great hurry, and had another offer; we might take his proposal or leave it. We considered that the circumstances of the matter were quite satisfactory, and took the place. We got down at a remote railway-station on the loop-line, and through the fast-waning twilight into night we drove through those unknown paths and that strange landscape until we reached the place which we had taken—called the Grange. There was nobody about; and I dismounted from the box where I had been seated, nominally for the air and prospect, but, in reality, to get rid of my aunt. It was a long low range of buildings, apparently of the Elizabethan era, with porch, gables, and mullioned windows. We knocked gently, rang gently, and, there being no answer, went on *crescendo* until we thundered against the oak. The maid-servants began to be alarmed; my aunt's maid actually screamed. To add to our difficulties, the driver put out our luggage and drove off, saying that he had another job. We waited for half an hour in the cold of the autumn night. Then I went steadily round the house, and climbed over a wall that separated the offices. I then found several

doors in a sort of court-yard; and I tried all, and one of them yielded. I obtained a light from a fusee, and went along a long passage, burning up a 'Bradshaw' as I proceeded. When I got into the kitchen I found a candle on the dresser, and, going into the hall, unbarred and unlocked the door. We got into the empty house and lighted up a fire in the kitchen. Then we set out on our researches to try and explore the mystery. There were helmets, armour, and huge antlers in the halls, that looked absolutely portentous amid the flickering shadows overhead. We got into the dining-room. It looked as if it had only been quitted a few hours ago. A lamp was still burning low, though the embers had burnt out in the grate. There was a decanter half full on the table, a plate of biscuits, and the major part of a cold fowl. Does the reader remember the feelings of Robinson Crusoe when he got on board the wreck and found it full of all sorts of jolly things, which he forthwith stowed away in his cave? I made treasure trove of the bird and wine, and stowed them away in my cave. A book was lying opened, a letter unopened on the table. Then we went into the drawing-room. There was a quantity of silver in a plate-basket, collected but not put away. Proceeding upstairs we found the front bedroom in a state of extraordinary confusion. Drawers were lying loose, and a portion of the contents, evidently the worse portion, were lying about the room. There were abundance of blankets about, but no linen. We called and shouted, but there was no answer; only mysterious echoes from

dim queer corners. With some difficulty we contrived to bivouac for the night, double-locking the doors; and I am given to understand that my aunt and the maids refused to take off their clothes. In the middle of the night the poodle created the deepest consternation by barking most ferociously; and we were ready to believe that villains who had begun to plunder the house, perhaps disturbed by our knocking, were returning to complete their nefarious operations.

I am sorry to be obliged to give a prosaic explanation of these picturesque and thrilling circumstances. The unopened letter was from myself, announcing the day of our intended arrival. Owing to a misdirection, the letter had been long upon its travels. We found out that the people of the house were very careless, and had departed in a great hurry, having deferred their preparations till very late. They had left one servant, the cook, to make things tidy and prepare for our reception. The cook got nervous at being left alone in a big house, and went off to her mother in the town. This cook afterwards gave us a good deal of trouble. It is usual to have an inventory of furniture; but if you only take a house for a short time, and a servant is left in charge, the inventory is frequently omitted. I found, however, that our careless friends had left so many places unlocked, so many valuables lying about, and the servant seemed so careless and indifferent, that I insisted on sending for the parish schoolmaster, and on his making out in my company a complete inventory. The cook was on board

wages—generally a bad arrangement in such cases—and of course subsisted upon us. This we did not mind, the circumstance being usual; but, upon penetrating to the kitchen one night, after our own servants had gone to rest, I found the cook with three or four followers carousing on our sirloin, and a variety of bottled claret and Bass. I was at a loss what measures it was best to take. I had occasionally noticed that at times the cook unaccountably disappeared; and, if she heard the bell, would utter strange noises from a subterranean region. One day, when she was exceedingly long in reappearing, I took a light and proceeded in search of these abysmal utterances. We discovered that they proceeded from the wine - cellar, which we understood had been securely fastened-up by the outgoing people. The cook, however, evidently possessed a key—the real key, or a counterfeit—for we found her in a hopeless state of intoxication, and nearly drowned in the contents of a cask of sherry, which she had set running, but was unable to stop.

While staying in one of these furnished houses I heard one of the most remarkable stories which ever came to my ears, and which I would not venture to put down if it had not come to me with great particularity of detail. We had taken for the summer a vicarage house in a remote sea-bound parish. There are various clergymen in pretty localities who look on letting their houses as a regular source of income—occasionally the best part of their income. Let me also say that, as a rule, we found these houses exceedingly

comfortable, modest, and without any pretence, yet full of elegancies and conveniences. Even in summer the house was very lonely. The population did not exceed fifty, although the parish was five miles long. The sea, as a boundary, practically robs you of half of your neighbourhood. It divides everything. The land-side was peculiarly bare, uncultivated, rough, and remote; but the great scenic beauty of the position reconciled us to our loneliness and obscurity. Many years ago two clergymen, brothers, used to live there; by all accounts very singular beings. The one was the rector, and the other brother officiated as curate. As a matter of fact, however, both together did exceedingly little duty, and created much scandal even in those easy days and in that limited neighbourhood. It frequently happened that nobody came to church, and the service was left unperformed. On one occasion he found, to his great amazement, a stranger in the church. He politely offered to go through the service, if the stranger wished; but if not, he suggested that they should adjourn to the public. That was very much the style of things among the mountain clergy once. The rector died, one hard frosty winter, of a chronic illness. The snow was lying deep on the ground; no caller had been near the house, and the church had been tenantless for many Sundays past. The curate was put in a great fix by the loss of his brother. The location at the rectory was very pleasant for him; and that location would, for him, soon be a thing of the past. There would be a new rector appointed, and

the rectory must be vacated. The value of the living was not great—only some two hundred a-year—but the house was pretty and good, and there was a very desirable glebe attached to it. Poor curate William's mouth watered as he thought of his brother's enviable possession coming to him; and he wondered whether it was possible by any means to contrive that the rectory should come to him as his successor.

No one knew that his brother had departed this life. It was wild weather in a wild country. The brothers, in their wild outlandish sort of life, used to do pretty well for each other, with the occasional help of an old woman. Within the last few days the old woman had taken to bed with the rheumatics, and was not likely to show for some time. William locked-up the room in which his dead brother lay; found his way, despite the inclemency of the season, to the country-town, and went up to London. He called upon the Lord Chancellor, and found means of obtaining an audience. He told the Lord Chancellor that his brother the rector was dead, that he had been curate for many years, and trusted that he would receive the vacant appointment. He added that the living was of such small value and in such a remote district that he greatly questioned whether any one would think it worth while to apply for the appointment. The Chancellor told him that he might apply again in a week or ten days, and he would see in the meanwhile what applications were made for the appointment. The brother lingered about town for the specified period, and

then renewed his call. His lordship said that things had happened as he had foretold; and that, as no one had thought it worth while to ask for the vacant benefice, he had no objection to appoint him. William took care to get the appointment duly made out by the secretary of presentations, and then started homewards rejoicing. He proceeded publicly to announce the news of his lamented brother's decease, and gave him quite a grand funeral. Applications then came upon the Lord Chancellor in shoals; but it was too late, for the living had been given away.

There were still numerous traditions lingering in the neighbourhood of this curious parson's very questionable eccentricity. I can give one of his sermons, which has long been quoted as a masterpiece of oratory along the country side. It happened on a fine summer day, when there were some friends and neighbours in church, and also two or three tailors. 'My brethren,' said Parson William, 'I will divide my discourse into three parts. I will, in the first place, tell you something that I know and you do not know. I will, in the second place, tell you something that you know and I do not know. I will, in the third place, tell you something that none of us know. In the first place, then, to tell you something that I know and you don't, the fact is that I have got no breeches on. In the second place, to tell you what you know and I don't know, how much will you contribute towards buying me a pair? And in the third place, what neither you nor I know is, how much the thief of a tailor will charge for making

them.' I have heard very quaint anecdotes of the mountain clergy; Mr. Conybeare has given many such; but this is one of the quaintest.

I hardly know any other incidents worthy of commemoration; for the most part it is a prosaic, business-like matter, attended by the inevitable disagreeables of packing and unpacking. I remember our going into a house, and in the middle of the night there was a tremendous storm, the same storm in which the London was lost. We heard deep moans from the aunt, and found that the rain was penetrating through the roof, turning the four-poster into the resemblance of the Knaresborough dripping well. It appeared that the short-sighted landlord, who had only a life-interest in his property, had cut-down some fine trees which had hitherto broken the force of the Atlantic breeze in its most prevalent quarter, and the wind now blows his roof away twice or three times every winter, and people say that it serves him right. In taking a furnished house it is not enough that everything should look well within, but you should carefully examine the exterior or fixtures, or engage some astute person to do so for you. We had a very pretty house once in a famous part of a lovely county—a house that has been painted, photographed, idealised by a crowd of artists. Our rockery and our waterfalls were known all over the kingdom. My aunt took the place less for its attractions than on the high principle that we were getting the place a great bargain. The terms in the season were twelve or fourteen guineas a week, but the rent

was only a hundred and fifty a-year. The scenery was really of a romantic kind, the true sub-alpine sort, which is the best one gets in this country. In the summer a crowd of tourists came about us. We kept a visiting-book on purpose for them, which mightily pleased the aunt, who read out the names aloud every evening. The man-servant certainly made a good deal of money in the way of tips, and withdrew his account from the post-office because it would not receive all that he was willing to contribute, but we merely had the expense of putting on an additional gardener. In the winter we were quite able to comprehend the lowness of the rent—the place became simply inaccessible. The ground rooms were damp, and we had to betake ourselves to the upper rooms, which were fortunately sufficiently numerous and spacious. Some of the shops in the village shut up altogether. The butcher killed once in the week, and would send to tell us that we might have a leg or a loin if we liked, and if we didn't like we might go without anything. The postman only came on alternate days, and we had exactly thirteen minutes for the return post. By way of set-off to such desolations and privations we once or twice had houses in London or the suburbs. We found that the servants left in charge levied a kind of black-mail on all our dealings with the tradespeople. We charitably take it for granted, however, that this was rather our special misfortune than a general fault of the class.

One fine day, however, my aunt suddenly took it into her head to recollect that all this time she had a

very good house of her own by no means less agreeable in its concomitants than many of the dwellings which she had inhabited. For many years past she had been allowing a man and his wife eight shillings a-week, with coals and gas, to look after her property, as she was much too grand to sublet it to any temporary tenant. We found this house in an infinitely worse condition than if she had let it satisfactorily, and the man and his wife, by their constant quarrels and their blackguard acquaintance, had rendered my aunt's highly respectable abode perfectly disreputable in the eyes of the public and the police. They not unnaturally objected to go, considering that they had established a kind of freehold; and when they were shoved out, I had a most laborious work to inaugurate of moral and material renovation. And thus I linger on, the major-domo of a furnished house, in a delightful state of uncertainty whether my aunt will leave me all her fortune, or turn me adrift upon the world without a shilling.

A PIPE OF TOBACCO.

THE wind is loud this bleak December night,
And moans, like one forlorn, at door and pane;
But here within my chamber warm and bright
All household blessings reign.

And as I sit and smoke, my eager soul
Somewhat at times from out the Past will win,
Whilst the light cloud wreathes upwards from the bowl,
That glows so red within:

And of the Protean shapes that curling rise,
Fancy, godlike, so moulds and fashions each,
That dead hands live again, and kindly eyes,
And even dear human speech.

Often in this dim world two boys I see,
Of ruddy cheek and open careless brow;
And one am I, my fond heart whispers me,
And one, dear Tom, art thou:

With many a rosy tint the picture glows,—
Wild sport avenging school's hard tyranny,—
Bright holidays, with games and fairy shows,
And shouts of frolic glee:

Till all melts into air. Upon my ears
Sweet bells sound softly through the summer hours,
And Oxford, fairest city, slow uprears
Her glittering spires and towers:

And here by Isis' banks and Cherwell's stream,
 And haunted Cumnor, and the hundred ways
Where thou and I, dear friend, were wont to dream,
 My yearning spirit strays.

And now 'neath chestnut avenues we tread,
 Now by gray arch and lichen-cover'd wall;
Or on tranc'd ear, in pillar'd fanes, the dread
 Deep organ-thunderings fall.

And as the witching incense round me climbs,
 I feel those wealthy summer eves once more,
When from full hearts we read our venturous rhymes,
 Or favourite poet-lore,

And, pausing, saw the still night drawing on,
 And o'er the turret-roofs, serene and clear
Within their order'd spaces, one by one
 The solemn stars appear.

So in this odorous cloud full oft I see
 Sweet forms of tender beauty; and a tone
Steals through the echoing halls of Memory,
 That these are all my own.

Yea,—though, dear Tom, Death's passionless cold hand
 Hath thrust her sable cloud 'tween thee and me,
And thou art lying in an alien land,
 Beyond the Atlantic sea.

MY LONG VACATIONS.

I can remember them so well now, my Long Vacations, the most adventurous of my days that soon ceased to have much adventure about them; vacations that are certainly the picture part of my life; large, long pictures in many compartments; dissolving views, with glories, mysteries, infinite changes about them. I had gone up to the University with a rich scholastic halo about my Athenian brow. I had been the head-boy of a big school in the provinces. Multitudes of various-sized boys there were in this school, but I knew them not; only the boys of the Upper Sixth, of whom I was *facile princeps*. Don't I remember the last half-year at our college—the half-years are now broken up into the more fashionable terms—when all the beauty and fashion of our city were gathered together, and I, happily or unhappily, altogether ignorant of beauty and fashion, was the hero of the occasion. The head-master pronounced, amid tremendous cheering, that I, Harry Bobus, had obtained First Prizes for Greek, Latin, Logic, Mathematics, and, save the mark! Theology; that I had been awarded the one college exhibition to the University; that my moral powers were as remarkable as my intellectual gifts; and from that University I was infallibly destined to carry away im-

mortal honours. I have no doubt but all kind and admiring glances were levelled at me, poor unappreciating dog! and even then my happiness was somewhat marred by hearing some of my beaten competitors call me a 'beastly swot,' whatever that truly disgusting expression may denote. As it was resolved by my father that my commanding intellect and much-vaunted acquirements should be developed to the highest possible pitch, I was not allowed to enjoy the sweet and well-earned summer holidays, like the vulgar mob of boys, but was promptly dispatched into the country to a clerical grinder, who had instructions to turn me out in the brightest-brushed state of intellectual brilliancy for the ensuing October term. He was resolved from my earliest days that I was to accomplish the traditional feat of setting the Thames on fire.

The clerical grinder did not need much objurgation in order to push me on as far as possible. He used to publish periodically, for private circulation, a 'List of Honours obtained by Pupils;' and he explained to me that to figure on that list was, in truth, the sublimest of earthly distinctions. So absorbed was he in that list, and so anxious to elongate it, that his whole mind was wrapped-up in the subject. Punctually every morning, at a quarter to seven, did he rap at my door; and he would insist that the whole day was clouded and blighted unless I got an hour and a half's work before breakfast. The ablutions might suffer, but in no case must the paper-work. He was a bachelor, in his pretty vicarage, patiently waiting for some intellectual

woman to marry him, who could understand the differential calculus. A chop and an egg always adorned the breakfast-table with mathematical regularity. A little dialogue would then recur, like a recurring decimal. 'Now, Mr. Bobus, will you take the chop, and I'll take the egg?—or suppose you take the egg, and I'll take the chop?' In my modesty I uniformly preferred the egg; but my worthy tutor would insist on 'fighting fair,' and constantly endowed me with that most familiar mutton-bone. But I have never seen a man more moved than when he caught me one morning, just after breakfast, lolling back in a chair and looking at the *Times*. Tears started into his eyes, and I thought one was going to roll down his rectangular nose. He took me into his study, and gave me one of the severest lectures which I had ever received. If he had detected me in gambling, he could not have been more impressive. He told me that this was a kind of intellectual dissipation that must most infallibly blight all my University prospects; and he laid it down as a general rule, that no young man who read the *Times* at breakfast ever attained a first class. He assured me that a man with care and diligence might be able to manage ten hours' a-day reading; and that if I did so, I should obtain a conspicuous place on his glorious roll of successful pupils. He recommended me, if I should ever feel giddy, to run three times round the garden, and afterwards wash my hands and face. Eventually my name figured in his list, which by this time must be as long as Leporello's; and I think my college

scholarship gave him as pure a draught of pleasure as might be.

I believe that no undergrad worked harder than I did my freshman's year. I only gave one wine-party all that time, and that was at the request of my father, lest I should appear singular. There is a story told of an undergraduate who invited a lot of men to wine with him, and produced a single bottle of sherry. He locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and declared that 'not a man should leave the room until that bottle was floored.' I do not say that I was the original of that wild youngster; but I was not very remote from that type. I boiled my egg every morning, took my run afterwards, never missed chapel, lecture, or hall; had my constitutional, and consumed a pretty fair amount of the midnight oil. I met with a few cronies with whom I sympathised; and our favourite subjects of conversation were anecdotes of examinations, the chances of the class-list, and the value of fellowships.

My first year ended, not indeed in a blaze of triumph, but still very creditably. There were lots of provincial youths, the ornaments of their respective circles, who, like myself, had intended to paralyse the University with admiration. The number of senior wranglers and first-class men who come up every October term is incalculable. Still I did very well—so well, indeed, that my name was mentioned very freely in the halls as being the coming man of some sort or other. Before I went down, my private tutor told me that he was going to form a reading-party to the Lakes, and asked

me to join it; and my father gave me a ready assent, and also, what was equally necessary, the ready money.

Shall I ever forget my first knowledge of the English lakes? I had never seen a lake before, if you don't admit duck-ponds into the calculation. Indubitably flat was the country about mine University; flat the paternal acres and the region round about; and flat the country that was spread out in the midland shires between the two. We had arrived in the dusk of evening, and I could hardly believe my eyes the first sweet morning, when I saw a vast huge terrene cloud before me, and instinctively understood that, for the first time, I beheld a veritable mountain. Something spread large and silvery at its base—and this, methought, must be a lake. I rushed towards it—how inviting was that cool, translucent, mirroring wave!—and took my first impetuous bath in those refreshing waters. For the first time I began to understand that there were things in Nature as beautiful and wonderful as in the most learned of books. The lake and the mountain had touched chords in my nature whose existence I had previously never suspected. That mountain was a great possessing thought, and I had no peace till I had scaled the very topmost ridge; and thence I beheld other mountains and other lakes far outspread. Then I took to boating. Boating on the river at the University had never attracted me; but boating on Derwentwater, whether with sail or oar, now pleased me greatly. One day some audacious spirit among us proposed that we should fling our books to limbo, and walk about over the hills

for a week. I remember the time when such a proposal would have blanched my face and kindled all my languid powers of indignation. But I hurled my Colenso, whose trigonometry now appeared to me as the most heretical of all his writings, into a corner, and uproariously voted for the proposal. The coach thought himself in duty bound to put-in a protest; but he did not appear to me to be very sorry that his protesting voice was suffocated at once. We made the week ten days; and what a glorious Decameron that was! I ripened more in mental stature and in bodily health than in the ten months past. What grand walks we took, five-and-thirty miles one day, over mountain and fell! I think we did the whole of the Lake-country pretty thoroughly; and how we enjoyed the dales and the dalesmen, the mountains which we climbed, and on the loftiest of which, one divine summer night, we bivouacked; the mountain tarns on which we would suddenly come; the waterfalls, or 'forces;' the delicious, delicate surprises in the effects of shadow and sunbright spaces; then the chance homely fare, for which the keen mountain air furnished us with so good an appetite! We, the team, quite took the reins into our teeth and ran away from coachy. And the reverend coach said it was quite as well that we did; for he knew we should never settle into harness until we had had a scamper across country.

But we settled into our work again, at least I did, or thought I did. But it was a trial to me—I admit it, though I kept the trial a deep secret in my profoundest

nature—to see the sunlight aslant the green leaves, to hear the wind gently move amid the foliage of the casement or amid the trees in the lane, to see the gleams of that silver lake, the shadows of that soaring mountain, and to drill and drone beneath that grinding coach. To some of the men reading became utterly repulsive, and a weariness to flesh and spirit. Jones openly declared this; but then Jones was not a man of much repute—Jones, a fellow who smoked a cutty-pipe, and would go into a public-house to get shandy-gaff. The coach, a fellow of a vigorous sort, threatened if Jones wouldn't work to return his father his cheque, and ask him to take his son away. The coach had a conscientious notion that he oughtn't to take money for which he couldn't show value. Jones professed that he would work hard, and promised many promises. But I heard him mutter, *sotto voce*, that he would have a different kind of coach next Long; and I am afraid my yielding heart echoed the treacherous suggestion.

There were some pretty villas in the immediate neighbourhood of our 'location,' and one or two hotels, which were quite full at this season of the year. There was an elegantly-attired and very young lady, who, I presumed, belonged to one of these abodes of civilisation, who, about this time, began to pervade the neighbourhood. She was only a child, hardly more than fourteen or fifteen at the utmost, rather pretty and elegant; and I used to call her the Happy Child. She seemed happy because she was free while I was tugging at the oar. She seemed to me so cool and nice in her

fresh muslin, going about as she listed, sometimes sitting in my favourite nook, beneath a projecting rock of the mountain by the lake-side; while I, according to my stern traditions of hard work, pegged away alternately on Thicksides (*vulgo* Thucydides) and Colenso, for I was aspiring to double honours. One morning, I was left reading, in the position of the last rose of summer, for all my lovely companions were faded and gone —out smoking, and then I sallied down to the waterside and got into a boat which I had hired unto myself. I had not been boating about more than half an hour, when I came to the rock shadowing the lake, and there, sitting on the grass with a book in her hand, was the Happy Child.

I do not know what the impulse was, but I spoke to her as I should speak to a younger sister; or as I, when a big boy, would speak to a little boy; or as I, a scholar of my college, would speak to an insignificant outsider, like Jones.

'Would you like, little girl,' I said, 'to have a row in my boat?'

I think there never was a proposition made in a more kindly and innocent spirit.

Her eyes sparkled and she coloured up, and then she said, very simply:

'I should like to do so very much; but I do not know if I may.'

'O, ask your governess, or your uncle, or your aunt —or some of that sort of people, whom I suppose you have got about you.'

'Miss Simcox said I might stay out till two.'

'And it's only just twelve,' I said.

The breeze was cool, the water bright, and, without much more persuasion, the Happy Child entered my little skiff.

Then I rowed her down against the wind, which dishevelled her lovely locks; and she sat, the very picture of childish enjoyment, giving very little of her attention to me, but much to the clouds and the waters, and the rocks and the woods. Presently I asked her if she would let me put a sail up. The wind seemed very favourable; but I told her, sometimes, on a lake like that, we were liable to catch a sudden gust.

'That's what used to be on the Sea of Galilee,' she said, opening her wide solemn eyes.

'I shouldn't wonder, my child,' I said grandly. 'Being a lake, most likely it's got big hills about it.'

'Of course it has,' she said.

'And if we get a sudden gust, you won't be frightened?'

'O no; I am never frightened.'

'And why not?' I asked.

'Because there's an angel who looks after me.'

'How do you make that out, my pretty maid?'

'We are told in the good book that people should not offend the little ones, on account of their angels.'

'O, you mean a guardian angel,' I said. 'But you forget that the angels have to look after the little ones. Now you are hardly a little girl now; you are getting on to be quite a big girl.'

'But it doesn't say,' she replied argumentatively, 'that when the little one becomes a big one, the angel doesn't look after it any more. I should think the bigger the child grows, the more busy the guardian angel will have to be, perhaps: especially if there is any danger on the lake.'

This was putting the doctrine in a new point of view; and I began meditatively to chew the cud of reflection thereon.

Presently I asked her what was the book she had by her, and which I had seen her reading, though I did not tell her so, several times.

'It is Wordsworth. When we came into the Lake country, papa made me a present of the poems of the Lake poets.'

I knew a great deal about the Latin and the Greek poets; but I really did not know whom she meant by the Lake poets, but I was too proud to tell her so.

'Shall I read you a little?' she said.

As I assented, she read to me some little poems, which interested me very much, as I discovered that they had something to do with the very lakes which I was beginning to know so well. A very sweet, clear musical voice it was.

She passed the book on to me to look at.

So the hours passed away, as in a delightful dream, and, alas, it was half-past two P.M., and there was a figure on the shore wildly gesticulating at us.

'O dear! O dear! it's Miss Simcox,' said the Happy Child, evidently hardly regarding that lady as a guar-

dian angel, and, in spite of her theory, looking a little afraid.

I saw Miss Simcox make a clutch at her. I heard the high tone of a shrill voice. I thought also that I witnessed a positive shake. I had not heard of that great modern institution, the 'Birch in the Boudoir;' but the remorseful thought passed my mind, that the Happy Child might be let-in for a severe scolding.

However, from this time I had three new ideas in my mind—the Sea of Galilee, which wouldn't be, perhaps, altogether so unlike Windermere, the guardian angel, the Lake poets. I had to comfort myself with these thoughts, for never more that summer did I see the Happy Child again. She came and went so suddenly, that the curious idea came into my mind whether she might not be the avatar of my own guardian angel, who had visited the earth to give beautiful ideas to a lone stupid boy, who was fast grubbing into a bookworm, and had afterwards melted away into the thin white mist that, dawn and sunset, crept up yonder mountain.

But I had her volume of Wordsworth with me. In the quick parting she had altogether forgotten to reclaim and I to return the book. On the fly-leaf was written, in a large girlish hand, 'Eveline.' I made inquiries everywhere, that I might return the book; but she and her belongings had mysteriously flitted. But, from her introduction, I became a diligent reader of the Lake poets. Eveline was to me even as the Christabel and Geneviève of Coleridge, the Louisa or Lucy of

Wordsworth; and before that Long Vacation terminated I had produced my first sonnet. Not when I had solved the neatest possible quadratic equation respecting x and y; not when I had turned-off the most metrically-correct iambics; not when I had produced a most triumphant Q.E.D.; not when I had neatly turned a crabbedest bit in a speech of Thicksides,—did I have such enjoyment as when I elaborated my primal sonnet. I forget it now; only I remember that it took me back to that day on the Lake of Derwentwater. One line was,

'I am the mountain, child, and thou the lake;'

and the idea was, that I was the mountain—strong, rough, immovable, and she the lake—weak, bright, glancing, inconstant; which were, however, hardly fair epithets for my guardian angel.

I got back to college, no longer a hobbledehoy, but a society-man.

I shaved; I rowed in the Torpids; I made a speech at the Union on the 'Rights of Poland;' I read an essay at the Æsthetic Society on 'Beauty being innate in the Object;' I wrote for the Chancellor's English Poem; I chaffed a proctor and outran his bulldog; I punched a town snob's head; I ran-up a tailor's bill to the tune of a hundred pounds. I may also add that I still studied, but now gave a decided preference to classics, among the Greek poets preferring Anacreon, and among the Latin, Catullus.

The Long Vacation came again, but I was no longer that *ingenui vultus puer ingenuique pudoris* who had

staggered beneath his prizes at the last midsummer half, and had read himself half blind at the clerical grinder's, until he ran three times round the garden and put his head into cold water.

I had gone to my first Derby and had lost money. But still it was something to lose money on the Derby.

I had gone to my first opera and fallen desperately in love with Mademoiselle Patti, towards whom I began to meditate the most honourable intentions.

I had been for the first time to the Star and Garter to dinner, and had had my first 'splitting headache.'

I had gone to Rotten-row for the first time, sucked my cane, and lolled on a cane chair.

But presently I verily believe that the vision of the Happy Child swept past me, tall and beautiful, but still a child in expression.

I was directly beneath the horses' hoofs—much objurgation—and, being collared by a policeman, had no chance of coming up to her.

After that I went down to Scarborough—with a reading party—expressly constructed on the free-and-easy system. The coach thought himself lucky if we turned up every second day on an average.

In that Long Vacation of four months I believe I studied just for four days.

We had made abundance of acquaintances. We boated, we picnicked, we promenaded, we went to concerts, we flirted—we went, generally speaking, to the utmost length of our tether. All the time I had the uneasy consciousness that there would be something

heavy to pay at the end, not alone the hotel bill, though that was heavy; but those final examinations, when one was expected to do so much, but when I shrewdly suspected I should do so little.

What a glorious county is Yorkshire! A European kingdom, and hardly a second-rate one, could be formed out of Yorkshire alone. The men so honest and so hospitable, and, withal, so able and masterly. And for moors and hills, for fresh waters and salt, for castles and abbeys, for haunts of fashion and marts of trade, commend me to Yorkshire—kingly, unequalled Yorkshire. And as for the women—all that subject is comprehended in the single expression that we flirted. It's a way they have in Yorkshire. You couldn't help it, and didn't want to. All the girls came down to Scarborough with that express object in view; and to refuse to promote that little game would be in the highest degree unsociable. I am sure it was very kind of the rosy maidens to flirt with us, unbearded undergraduates as we were, with no chance of settling for any number of years. There was one delicious little thing who coaxed me into being her cavalier all the time she was at Scarborough, and then led me a pretty dance across country, first to Harrogate, and then to some big manufacturing town where she lived; but when I saw her big begrimed home, with huge iron portals before it, and a whirring, dusty, stony, hundred-windowed factory, which I told myself would probably be her dower, beyond sending her some verses vowing undying attachment, I never thought of her any more.

But looking back I declare that Yorkshire is a most wonderful and enjoyable county; and if it were not for those examinations, which I was now fast beginning to regard as the bane of a University career, it might be recommended to all undergraduates as an appropriate arena wherein to exercise their holiday energies. I was sorry when the shortening days and watery sunsets sent me back to the University, to be aroused by the heathen scout, to be 'set upon' by the donnish tutor, and to be hunted down by the remorseless proctor. The next academic year passed by pleasantly, and vacation came as usual at Christmas and Eastertide; and far be it from me to speak disparagingly of any vacations, however brief; but these were brief, and I was now beginning to concentrate my main hopes of enjoyment on the summer months and the Long Vacation. O, why couldn't we make the summer and the vacation last all the year round!

But things were now looking serious. The great University examination was to come-off after the end of this vacation; and a little reflection told me that my reading was in a deplorable condition, and I must put the steam on, if I was in any degree to save myself from utter ignominy. At the vociferous Union or at noisy wine-parties I often used to cast over in my mind how I might best free myself from riotous companions, and secure some quiet nook, whither I might convey a quantity of books and read myself almost blind to recover lost ground. To me, much musing, it seemed that the coach and reading party was a mockery, a delusion,

a snare. A plan occurred to me, characterised, as I humbly thought, by much boldness and originality. I made up my mind to go off to some quiet place in Switzerland, where all the surrounding influences might be supposed to move me to study and reflection. The Long Vacation ought to be a season of holiday, and therefore it shall be spent in Switzerland, the great playground of the world. It ought also to be spent in study, and therefore it should be in some secluded Swiss nook.

Such a nook I thought I had found by the margin of a subalpine lake, which politically might be in Switzerland, but according to all true geography belonged to North Italy. The reason I went there was, because I was told that the great mob of tourists did not cross the passes and come down so far. Here, then, I fixed myself for a couple of months *en pension*. I had a bed-room, which, according to the fashion of the place, I was to use as a sitting-room. It had a lovely aspect, and the outward scene framed in the large window might have been a picture by Salvator. Here I improvised bookshelves, and brought all my books, which had come with considerable cost and botheration. But I hardly settled pleasantly into the idea of making a study of my bed-room, although it possessed the obvious advantage, in hot weather, that I was able to study in my night-dress, the nearest approximation to taking off my skin and sitting in my bones. I roamed about the huge hotel, seeking where I might set-up my tent. In course of time I discovered that the *salon* would suit me

very well. As a rule, the people in the hotel showed very little in the public rooms, being out of doors or in their own rooms; or if they did, the vast palatial *salle à manger* was the favourite resort. Now this *salon*, much used after dinner, was almost deserted through the morning hours. It was a room much shaded, and with painted glass, and there was a recess in it which was almost as snug as a study. Here I used often to come when I did not feel inclined to read in my own room. And for the first three weeks I was there I used to read prodigiously. The love of reading is innate to a fellow; and I hold that if a fellow gets ever so idle, a fellow can at any time settle down into his reading ways again, if he wants to do so. I used to get a plunge in the lake before breakfast, and a run round the grounds, and then read away till six o'clock, when, with sensations of virtuous satisfaction, I used to repair to my well-earned dinner. That *table-d'hôte* meal, with absolute uniformity, lasted exactly for an hour. The guests varied exceedingly in number; sometimes only the upper part of the long table was spread, and now and then we overflowed to every table that could be found. But if I said that the love of reading was innate to a man, I might have also said that the love of enjoyment was also an innate quality of the human mind. At the end of a few weeks I began to think that Virtue ought to be rewarded, and Virtue's notions of reward were exceedingly liberal. I began to make excursions to famous summits in our neighbourhood, join our jovial host when he made a select party to the cool wine-cellars where he

had formed a cave in the mountain, and, worst of all, would sometimes play at cards with some Frenchmen in the twilight, and, I blush to confess it, even till the twilight became the dawn.

But one day I was sitting in the *salon*, reading that blessed Thicksides (*vulgo* Thucydides), which I always had to begin again as often as I finished him; reading him rather lazily too and closing my eyes at times in a half slumber. I must have done so indeed, for suddenly, as if it had been an apparition, there was a young lady sitting at the piano and carolling forth a fresh happy English song, which, even amid that almost Eden beauty of scenery, set me longing for the paternal halls. As I mentioned, I was sitting in my usual recess, where my presence could hardly be observed by one sitting at the piano. I caught a glance at the free delicate hand sweeping the notes, and the perfect face. It was the Happy Child.

Hardly a child now, you will say. Since I saw her last it was two years ago, at that age when two years make all the difference. The tall slender form was rounded with budding womanliness, the eyes sweeter and deeper than before, and on the lips a settled sunny smile. But assuredly she was still the Happy Child. Even then she could not be seventeen—and the expression of child-like happiness and purity was as definitely marked as ever. I have never seen elsewhere such an expression of heavenly goodness, of lilied candour and grace. And I—I thought remorsefully myself—in my zeal for knowledge and in my first love of Nature was

a Happy Child too, in that freshman's year, which seemed eternities away. I think that at that moment I felt thoroughly ashamed of myself. I thought of my wasted time, my frittered energies, all my deteriorated ways. But still I had enough grace left in me to recognise innocence and beauty, and I recognised them now. I closed my eyes, and sank back on the cushions, drinking in beautiful music, which I now recognised, almost with awe, was from an anthem of Mendelssohn's. I was pondering whether a poor hardened worldling like myself might venture to claim her as an old acquaintance, but suddenly the music ceased, and she was gone.

I went to my room, and from the shelf I took down that volume of Wordsworth which had never left me long. When it was dinner-time, my eye ranged eagerly over the long line—that day a very long line—of guests. Far away, among the very last, as new arrivals, I saw her by the side of an elderly, military-looking man, with whom she frequently conversed. I watched what they might do after dinner. They stepped into the garden, and after wandering about the grounds for some little time, they paused by the side of a fountain. I advanced towards them, and, as one tourist might venture to speak to another, I pointed out to the old man the distant peak of Monte Rosa faintly visible in the pure evening air.

As the gentleman went a little farther, to attain a better point of view, I turned towards the young lady.

'Unless I am very greatly mistaken, I have a book

in my possession which belongs to you.' And I held out the Wordsworth.

The snow on Monte Rosa was never more exquisitely flushed by morning hues than for a moment were her cheeks and brow.

'And are you the young gentleman who was so kind and took me out in your boat? But wasn't Miss Simcox angry with me? She shook me, and gave such a scolding! How very kind of you to have taken care of my book all this time! But I daresay we shall see you again.'

And then she hurriedly stepped forward to join her father, and I did not know whether she told him of our youthful escapade on Derwentwater. I did not have much difficulty in ascertaining that they were a Colonel and Miss Johnstone; that they had been wandering about Italy for nearly a year, and would stay for weeks or months together in any locality that they liked.

The next day, with some moral courage, I executed a remarkable strategical operation. I took myself off for two days to the hospice at the top of the pass. This, I thought, might operate beneficially in two ways. If there was any feeling of awkwardness, my absence might smooth this, and perhaps cause them to make arrangements for prolonging their stay. Again, when I got back to the hotel, I should have vacated my odious seat near the head of the table; and by the law of the room I should have to begin again at the bottom of the table, close to the other recent arrivals. To my great satisfaction—there had been no arrivals in the interim

—when I returned, I found myself seated very near to the young lady. Apparently also, by the leisurely way in which they took things, they were purposing some little stay. And now I began to work once more in real earnest. I registered a vow that I would never touch a card again. I almost insulted the Frenchmen, and gave them looks of hatred, until, to my great satisfaction, they went home, where I hope they'll stay.

With Colonel Johnstone I got on exceedingly well. He was, albeit decidedly aristocratic, a simple-minded, simple-mannered old soldier, who was good enough to be pleased with my empty rattling talk, and with the constant attention I paid him—I fear from an interested motive. The few English staying at the hotel made quite a pleasant party. Together we rode, boated, and mountaineered. This gave me many a pleasant chat with my Lady of the Lake, as I called her; and my university career had not so far dulled my finer sense that I could not perceive that her rare culture and fine intellect corresponded with the characteristics I had noticed in the Happy Child. I think she was pleased with my keeping her Wordsworth; and one day I ventured to show her the sonnet I had made, saying that I would now try and do something better. I saw that both the old gentleman and the young lady were very favourably impressed with my apparently most studious habits.

One day I was sitting in the *salon,* about three o'clock in the afternoon, reading. I had been there since the morning, not taking lunch, for I thought that

luncheon spoilt the reading; and I jealously kept the evenings for a stroll or a sail with the Johnstones.

Then there came a tap at the door.

'Come in,' I said. 'Who's there?'

'It's I; it's Eveline,' came back a voice that I knew well, and was beginning to love so dearly.

'Come in, Eveline,' I answered, seizing the advantage thus offered.

To my surprise, she offered me a plate of fruit—grapes and peaches, with some biscuits. I almost smiled, thinking of the childish frankness of that day on the Westmoreland lake.

'Papa sent me,' she added quickly. 'We were having some of this for lunch in the *salle à manger*, and he said to me, "That poor fellow in the next room is so busy with his books, that he forgets to eat. Take him some fruit, Eveline."'

'Ah, Eveline,' I said, 'you and your father are too good. But I am a great impostor.'

She opened her innocent eyes widely.

'You think I am reading hard, but I am only reading hard now because I have been a sad scamp in neglecting all my work for the last year or two. I was beginning to neglect it even here; but when I saw you again, I tried to be good.'

'And why?' she said.

'I do not know, Eveline; but I cannot help thinking that you are my guardian angel. If there is an angel that does good to you, as you once said, I think that you must be an angel that does good to me. When I

am with you, I always seem quiet, and safe, and happy, and try to go on doing what I think is right.'

The rosebud lips gave a sensitive tremulous quiver. O, are not most women angels? The more you confess yourself to be a scamp, the more ready are they to compassionate and forgive; and if they only think they are influencing you for good, they become perfectly happy and half in love with you.

That Swiss summer was a perfect idyl. I hardly know how it came to pass, but before many days were passed Eveline and I were engaged lovers with the good old man's consent.

I gained honours. I will not say what they were. Some will say they were more than I deserved, and others that, after all, they were not much. They did not get me a fellowship; but now I had quite settled on a fellowship of another and a very superior description. I don't think the clerical grinder had made such a happy thing of his swell degree; neither do I think that the popular coach is to be envied, though they say he is fast investing money from the long teams that he takes in hand. Much pleasanter than to take pupils, it was to take Eveline to the lakes once more—where Miss Simcox was married and settled—and to Scarborough, where that flirtation,

> 'In the light of deeper eyes,
> Were matter for a passing smile;'

and to the Swiss-Italian lakes again. My father did not do much for me; for he said he had his younger

children to bring on. So I became one of the masters of a great public school. I whisper to my wife, who is indeed the Angel of the House, those lines:

> 'Love, you and I shall go no longer
> To lands of summer beyond the sea;
> So dear a life your arms enfold,
> Whose crying is a cry for gold.'

One day, I suppose, we shall be quite rich, through the good old soldier; but our greatest desire is, that that day may be very far off. And though I am beginning to take severe views of things, I always look back with infinite indulgence on my own Long Vacations.

SMOKING STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

We had been to Drury-lane to witness the performance of a drama which was at that time creating some sensation in London, and were discussing the merits of the play and the contents of a barrel of oysters at my chambers in Gray's Inn. The 'we' alluded to consisted of myself, Tom Allen, Harry Townsend, and Frank Ellison. We considered ourselves no mean critics of the drama; and not a new piece was placed on the boards of any of the leading theatres without being visited by our quartette. At the conclusion of each performance, our party adjourned to the domicile of one of its number, for the purpose of canvassing the spectacle over a substantial supper. This latter almost invariably presented itself in the form of oysters and stout, whenever that delicious mollusk was in season. These suppers were given in rotation by each of us, the whole expense of each supper being borne by the person at whose house the entertainment was given. On the present occasion I was the victim. We were all four bachelors; but Allen was engaged, and expected to be married before very long. When we had slaughtered as many oysters as we cared to devour, spirit-decanters were placed upon the table, and pipes and cigars produced. Each of us mixed for himself a steaming glass

of whisky-toddy, and Harry Townsend, Frank Ellison, and myself proceeded to light our pipes. As soon as we had got them satisfactorily to work, it was noticed for the first time that Tom Allen had made no preparation for taking his part in the general fumigation. This elicited a good deal of surprise; for Tom Allen had always been known for an inveterate smoker, being generally the first to commence and the last to discontinue smoking in every company of slaves to the fragrant pungent weed.

'Are not you going to light-up, Tom?' I asked.

'No, I think not,' he replied, in a tone quite melancholy to hear.

'Aren't you well?' I continued.

'O yes; I'm well enough,' he said; 'why should you think otherwise? I suppose I needn't smoke unless I choose to do so. I think I am better without it.'

I was inclined to think that this last assertion of his was a pleasant fiction: if it was not, he had certainly undergone a marvellously sudden conversion; for it was fresh in the remembrance of all of us how, on a very recent occasion, Tom Allen had carried on a controversy with an anti-tobacconist, denying that the use of tobacco was detrimental to health, which he proved to his own satisfaction by asserting that, unless he smoked after his dinner, he could not digest what he had eaten. I know, on that occasion, we considered his arguments sound, and entirely shared his views. To hear him say, therefore, that he thought he was better without smoking made us open our eyes with

astonishment to the greatest extent which the clouds of smoke, which were rapidly filling the room, permitted. My rooms were small, and with three or four mouths puffing vigorously away, even the strongest eyes would occasionally smart, especially in cold weather, when ventilation by the window was out of the question.

'Do you mean to say you have really given up smoking?' asked Harry Townsend; 'you, the great champion of nicotine?'

'For the present, at all events,' was Tom's reply.

'Well, after that I should not be surprised to hear that you had become a member of the United Kingdom Alliance.'

'I should hardly be surprised myself,' said Tom Allen, in a most despondent tone.

'Why, Tom, what ever is the matter?' we exclaimed, simultaneously. 'Have you got some heart-disease or other complaint which would be aggravated by smoking?'

'Nothing of the sort,' he replied. 'I believe I'm as strong as a bull; that's the worst of it. If I felt that smoking was injurious to my health, I should reconcile myself to doing without it; but when I really believe that I'm better with it, it does seem rather too bad to have to give it up.'

'Then you're not discontinuing it voluntarily?' I asked with some surprise; 'what can be your reason?'

Before Allen could make any reply, Frank Ellison called out: 'I have it!—it's all as clear as daylight. We all know Tom's going to be married; it's his lady-

love who has stopped his smoking. Tom, my dear friend, be advised in time; think well before you bind yourself hand and foot. With all due respect to the young lady, whom I have never seen, I can't help saying I pity you; for I think a woman who can act in so arbitrary a manner before marriage, will wear the breeches with a vengeance when the nuptial knot is tied.'

Tom Allen heaved a deep sigh. The embargo that had been laid on his favourite habit evidently depressed him. Having, I suppose, in some measure relieved himself by the sigh (or else why was it perpetrated?), he proceeded to speak as follows:

'You are mistaken, Frank; it is not Amy that has put the veto on my smoking; she, dear girl, sympathises with me in my great trial. As, however, the fact of my not smoking has become the subject of your conversation, I will make a clean breast of it, and give you the explanation of my wretched position. I hope my sad story may act as a lesson to you all, and make you very careful in your conduct to strangers; for you never can tell under what circumstances you may meet them at a future time.'

Before he commenced the relation of the episode in his life, which had resulted in his abstinence from tobacco, we replenished our glasses, in order that we might not disturb him in his relation. Tom then drew another deep inspiration, and proceeded:

'The incident which has resulted in my discontinuing the practice of smoking for the present (I say

for the present, because I am in hopes that the embargo may be removed in the future) occurred a few years ago, in my old Oxford days. I was proceeding to Alma Mater at the conclusion of one of the vacations, and had taken my place in the train which was to bear me thither. I was the sole occupant of the compartment, and the train was on the point of starting, when the door of the carriage was suddenly thrown open, and an old gentleman entered the compartment. He was a sour-looking old fellow of about sixty years of age, and was evidently bent upon taking the utmost care of himself. He wore a long greatcoat, which reached almost to his heels, and over this was thrown a short wrapper; moreover, his throat was carefully swathed in the folds of a thick red-woollen comforter. He did not appear to me to be at all the sort of person with whom one could enter into conversation at a moment's notice. I felt that I should have infinitely preferred the solitude of my own ruminations to his society. The result proved that my instinct had not misled me. O that I had changed my seat! I should then have been puffing away at the present moment with the best of you! Frank, just blow a good cloud of smoke into my face, will you? I shall perhaps be able to sniff up some of it; I prefer it second-hand to not at all.—Thanks.

'The train moved slowly out of the station, and the old gentleman began to make his arrangements for the journey. He proceeded to unlock and open a somewhat bulky black travelling-bag, from which he first of all extracted a sealskin cap, which, after having removed

his hat, he placed upon his head, drawing the flops down over his ears, and then tying them under his chin.

'During the performance of this operation, I remarked that his head would have made a fine field for the science of a phrenologist, it being quite bald. He next produced a large fur slipper, into which he inserted one of his huge ungainly feet. It occurred to me, on noticing these, that his bootmaker must be a man of no ordinary genius; for how he had contrived to induce the coverings of the old man's feet to accommodate themselves to the numerous knobs which overspread those feet in the most unusual places has ever remained a mystery to me. Having done all that he could for those two extremities of his person, he dived a third time into the black bag. What next? I thought, for I was watching him with a great deal of curiosity. An air-cushion. This, after unscrewing the mouthpiece, he placed to his mouth and proceeded to inflate; after due hissing, he appeared to be satisfied with the dimensions of it, and placed it behind his shoulder-blades. I never could conceive why this was done, for the back of the carriage was excellently padded. He then drew-on a pair of thick knitted gloves, spread a railway-rug over his knees, and appeared to be made-up for the journey. I thought he was most likely going to sleep out the time that he was destined to pass in the train; but instead of this, he took up a copy of the *Times*, which he had brought with him, in which he seemed to be very soon absorbed.

'I then proceeded to put *my* ideas of comfort in force: you may guess what they were. I drew-out my cigar-case, selected a weed, and had just struck a light, when I heard a slight movement proceeding from my companion. I looked up: his eyes were fixed intently upon me; he was closely observing my actions. This did not trouble me much, so I proceeded to light-up, and in another moment was blowing a splendid cloud.

'Presently I heard a cough—"Ahem!"

'I looked at my fellow-traveller.

"I object to smoking," he said.

'Well now, I thought, this is cool, to say the least of it.

'In order not to infringe the bye-laws of the company, I had been careful to select a carriage on the door of which was hung a board marked "Smoking Compartment." I suppose the old gentleman, in his hurry, had not observed this notice, which placed me in the right and him in the wrong. I did not like his appearance at all; he was a nasty, crusty, old fellow I could see; so I made-up my mind not to enlighten him as to his mistake. I admit my conduct was rude, but I replied,

"H'm, some people do, I believe."

'He had not waited for any response from me after having made his objection, but had returned to the perusal of his paper. Apparently he expected me to put-out my cigar. This, however, I had not the slightest intention of doing. About three minutes elapsed, and he then addressed me a second time:

"I think you cannot have heard me, sir; I in-

formed you just now that I had a great objection to smoking."

"O, I heard your remark distinctly enough, sir," I replied; "and it seems to me hardly necessary for you to repeat it. I am not prepared to engage in a controversy as to the merits and demerits of the habit. On your enlightening me as to your opinion on the subject, I stated that I believed there were others in the world who shared your objections."

'There was a short pause, and then he renewed the attack.

"Do you mean to say, sir, that you are going to continue smoking, in defiance of what I have said?" he asked.

"I didn't mean to say anything of the sort, sir," I replied, "although I proposed to continue my present occupation; but, as you put the question so pointedly, I see no harm in informing you that I shall not put this cigar out until it has become too hot for my lips to hold."

'He appeared to be greatly astonished at my cool audacity.

"Very well, sir," he replied; "we shall see whether this company will allow its bye-laws to be infringed and its passengers annoyed with impunity. Unless you at once extinguish that cigar, I shall, the next time we stop, inform the guard of your conduct."

"As you please, sir," I replied, and continued smoking. Shortly afterwards the train slackened its speed, and my fellow-passenger, who had seated himself

on that side of the carriage farthest from the down platform of the stations along the line removed the railway-rug from his knees, slipped his knobly foot out of the gouty-looking slipper, and moved to the seat in the opposite corner, in order, I supposed, to hail some official for the purpose of requesting him to have me removed. The train had hardly come to a dead stop before down went the window, and out popped the seal-skin cap and its contents.

"Guard, guard!" I heard him exclaim.

'But no guard replied to his summons.

'Evidently fearing that the train would move off before he had accomplished his purpose with regard to me, he bawled out again at the top of his voice,

"Guard, guard, porter!—why don't you come when I call?"

'This last question was addressed to the approaching form of the first-named individual. My companion seeing that he was about to receive attention, drew his head into the carriage again and resumed his seat; I concluded in order that the railway official might obtain a clear view of me. In another moment the head and shoulders of the guard showed themselves at the window. The old gentleman was on the point of speaking when I forestalled him.

"O, guard," I said very quietly, "here's an old gentleman who has an objection to smoking—some mistake in the carriage, I suppose. Would you be so good as to find him a seat in another compartment?"

'The guard smiled, and the old gentleman stared

at me in amazement. He did not understand his mistake.

"What do you mean by this impertinence, sir?" he asked, fiercely. "Guard, I order you to turn this man out of the carriage; he has been annoying me with smoking in spite of my having repeatedly asked him to desist. If you do not do so, and find out his name, so that he may be summoned before the magistrates, I shall report you."

"Can't do it, sir," was the guard's answer. "The gentleman's perfectly right; you have got into a wrong compartment: this is a smoking-carriage."

"Smoking-carriage!" said old crusty; apparently he was not aware of this recent stride in civilisation made by the railway companies.

"Yes, sir. Now, sir, if you're going to change your seat, you must be quick about it; we can't wait here all day."

'Handing his black bag and other traps to the guard, he hobbled out of the carriage, casting a glance full of malignancy on me as he passed. When he had alighted on the platform, I saw him scrutinise slowly the board which notified that the carriage in which I was seated was devoted to the use of those who indulged in the habit of smoking.

'I could not resist saying, "Good day, sir; you'll know a smoking-carriage another time, I think, when you see it." After that, I saw no more of my old friend, though I looked out of the carriage window at every station at which we stopped, for the purpose of

seeing if he alighted. Apparently, however, his journey was a longer one than mine, for I reached my destination without getting another sight of him.

'My college career was closed, and I came up here to read for the bar, as you all know. About six months ago, Amy Harris was stopping with the Ashtons, with whom you are aware that I have always been on terms of great intimacy. Consequently, during the young lady's stay there I saw a great deal of her; the fact is, hardly a day passed without my spending a portion of it at the Ashtons' house. The more I saw of Amy Harris the more I desired to see of her; and as this could not well be without my giving her my name, I made her an offer; you know with what result—she referred me to "papa." Papa, I was informed, resided at Lesborough, a small place about thirty miles beyond Oxford. To Lesborough, therefore, in a few days, I repaired, having been preceded by Amy, and also by a letter from Frank Ashton (who was well acquainted with Mr. Harris), saying that I was well-off, of respectable family, and, in fact, in every way a desirable son-in-law. Mr. Harris was therefore prepared to receive me very graciously. I believe the organ of individuality to be very deficient in my brain; for I have always had the greatest difficulty in recognising faces, and it is only after repeated interviews that I become master of the appearance of my different acquaintances. I believe I make many enemies through this deficiency; for people, I feel sure, often imagine that I am cutting them intentionally, when they are entirely out of my thoughts.

'On being introduced to Mr. Harris, who was a man well past the prime of life, there was something about him, I could not tell what, that told me we had met before; but the how, when, and where of our meeting was gone from me. I tried hard to tax my memory with the circumstances under which we had previously met; for that this was not our first meeting I felt convinced. But it was of no use—the treacherous elf memory refused to render me any assistance. I did not like Mr. Harris's expression; I thought he seemed to scowl at me in a peculiarly unpleasant way. He, however, gave no sign of having seen me before, and our interview proceeded. Everything went smoothly enough, Mr. Harris giving his consent to my engagement with his daughter; and I was congratulating myself that the business had been so satisfactorily transacted, when Amy's father said, with a sour attempt at a smile,

"I must ask you one question, which I have little doubt your answer will prove to be an unnecessary one. It is simply this: Are you a smoker?"

'I can even now see the man's look of fiendish delight as he put the question. I knew him then; he was my fellow-passenger, whom I had so unceremoniously caused to be removed to another railway carriage three years previously, when he had raised an objection to my smoking. He had immediately recognised me, and determined to pay me off for my want of courtesy. I thought it showed the mean, sneaking spirit of the man, asking me whether I smoked, when all the time he was perfectly well aware of the fact

instead of reminding me in a straightforward way of our former meeting, and telling me that he retained his objection to the use of tobacco. I should have respected him in such a case, whereas now I despised him from my inmost soul.

'For the first time in my life I was thankful that I did not possess the ability of easily recognising faces; for had I known that Amy's father and my anti-tobacco fellow-passenger were one and the same person, I am afraid that I should not have had the courage to ask him for his daughter's hand.

'As he had chosen to ignore our former meeting, I followed suit, replying, not without a good deal of anxiety at the result of my answer,

"I certainly am a smoker, though not to a great extent; I hope you have no objection to the habit."

"But I have a most decided objection to the filthy habit. I am sorry, Mr. Allen, that I was not aware of this fact before you started on your journey down here, for you would have been spared the annoyance of a fruitless errand. I so much disapprove of smoking, that I would not for a moment entertain a proposal for my daughter's hand from any one who indulged in it. I presume that there is nothing more to be said, and that our interview may be considered at an end. I am sorry you should have had all this unnecessary trouble. Good—"

"One moment, Mr. Harris," I exclaimed. "Surely this need not be the cause of any difficulty. Rather than be deprived of Amy, I will discontinue smoking.

It will require a great deal of self-denial on my part to break off the habit, I admit; but I am ready to make any sacrifice rather than lose Amy."

"O, that certainly alters the case," he replied. "I was hardly prepared for this. If you will give me your word of honour that, so long as you are engaged to my daughter, and after you have married her, if such marriage should take place, you will abstain from smoking without my permission, I will revoke my refusal of consent to your engagement with Amy."

'I bound myself by word of honour that it should be so, and my engagement dated from that moment. He had certainly paid me off for fumigating him in the railway carriage with a vengeance. I hoped from his saying that I was not to smoke without his consent, that he would occasionally give me permission to do so; but not a whiff, though I did hint to him on several subsequent occasions that I believed my digestive organs were becoming impaired by the want of the weed.

'From that day to this I have never held a pipe or cigar between my lips; and this occurred two months ago. Amy sympathises with me entirely; and when we are married, we intend to set our wits to work to devise some means of circumventing the old man. I intend to make him remove his embargo as soon as I can; but of course no attempt can be made until the wedding is over; that event, by the bye, I expect will take place in about four months from the present time.

'Now what do you think of my father-in-law elect? Is he not an old curmudgeon?'

We were unanimous in crying shame on the old man, who had cherished an old sore, of his own causing, for three years, and then adopted this mean way of being revenged. We assured poor Tom Allen, who sat looking very glum, that he possessed all our sympathy, and told him that we had no doubt some plan could be concocted between us for making old Harris revoke his decision.

By the time that Tom Allen had finished his story, it was getting rather late, so our party broke up, each member of it proceeding to his own abode. I saw Tom Allen frequently after this evening, up to the time of his marriage, and on every occasion inquired whether his future father-in-law's opinion had undergone any change; but the answer was always in the negative; old Harris remained obdurate. Tom always said, 'But never mind; wait till we're married; I'll be even with him then.'

Allen's period of total abstinence from tobacco previous to his marriage continued for about seven months; and then, on taking up the newspaper one day, I saw the announcement of his union with Miss Harris. 'Poor Tom,' I thought, 'I wonder if he's had a pipe yet?' Then I began to wonder whether he would succeed in his endeavour to overcome his father-in-law's scruples. I was inclined to think that he would; for Allen was a man of indomitable energy, and usually succeeded in any matter he took in hand.

I saw no more of Tom Allen during the next three months, for business had detained me out of town;

when one day, as I was passing up Regent-street, whom should I see but Master Tom sauntering quietly down the street, and, wonder of wonders, between his lips he held a hugh havana. He had prevailed with Mr. Harris, then, and was free to smoke when he chose.

'Ah, Howard, old boy,' he said, 'glad to see you; so long since we've met, when we consider we used to see each other two or three times a-week. You see I've beaten the old man—smoke fifty cigars a-day if I like.'

I congratulated him on the fact, and inquired what means he had employed for the purpose of bringing his father-in-law to reason.

'O,' he said, 'I can't tell you out here; and to tell you the truth, I am rather in a hurry at the present moment. I have to meet Amy at a shop in Piccadilly, and I'm afraid I'm rather behind time as it is; but if you have no better engagement for town, and will favour us with your company at dinner at six o'clock, we shall be delighted to see you, and I'll explain how I brought the father-in-law round to my way of thinking.'

I promised to come on the following day, and we parted.

Accordingly, at the appointed time I presented myself at Allen's door. I was much pleased with his wife, a most hospitable, pleasant little body, and I felt myself at home with her at once. I considered Tom had not paid too dearly for the privilege of calling her his wife, especially now that he was at liberty again to smoke as hard as he liked. She gave us an excellent dinner, to

which we did full justice; and as soon as the cloth had been removed, and she had left us to ourselves, I reminded Tom of his promise to inform me of the means he had used for obtaining Mr. Harris's consent to smoke.

He laughed, and rang the bell. A boy in buttons came in answer to it, to whom my host gave some instructions in a tone that was too low to reach my ears. In a few minutes Mr. Buttons returned, bearing in his hand a metal article that seemed to me to be a cross between a pair of bellows and a watering-pot. By his master's instructions, the boy placed this curious-looking machine on the table in front of us, and then left the room.

I regarded it for a few moments steadily, but could not make out what it was; I noticed a handle on one side of it, so that it was evidently a rotatory machine of some description.

'What, in the name of all that's mysterious, is that?' I asked.

'That, my friend,' replied Tom, 'is the instrument of torture by means of which I was enabled to cause my respected father-in-law to regard smoking in a more favourable light than he had hitherto done.' He then proceeded to speak as follows:

'As soon as our honeymoon was over, Amy and I set our wits to work to hit upon a plan for bringing her father to reason; and after a long consultation, decided upon a course which we thought would have the desired effect. Amy thereupon wrote to Mr. Harris to

ask him to spend a few weeks with us (he is a widower, by the bye); to which request he graciously acceded. The day before his arrival I bought that machine which I see you regarding with such wonder. It is a fumigator for the purpose of fumigating plants with tobacco, with a view to destroying little insects which frequently congregate upon them. I also purchased several pounds of the strongest tobacco I could lay my hands upon. I then set the boy to work at the machine in every room in the house; so that the smoke became so dense that it was actually difficult for us to see one another. The consequence was, that on the day of Mr. Harris's arrival there was a most sickening stench of stale tobacco-smoke pervading the house. I had told the boy to give the bed-room intended for Mr. Harris a double dose; which he did. As soon as the old gentleman set foot in the hall he began to sniff vigorously; then he turned upon me a most withering look, as much as to imply that I had broken my word to him. He did not say anything to me however, and shortly afterwards I left him alone with Amy. Directly I had quitted the room, she told me that he had accused me of having broken my word in regard to the smoking. She positively stated that I had never had a pipe or cigar in my mouth since the day of my marriage, and affected not to perceive the unpleasant odour pervading the house.

'I had given the boy his instructions; so, when I rang the bell after dinner, he entered the room with the fumigator ready for action.

"What, on earth, is that thing?" asked my father-in-law.

"A fumigator," I replied. "I must apologise to you, my dear sir, for having to make use of this machine; but the fact is, that finding my digestion much weakened from not smoking after dinner, I have been compelled to adopt this substitute; I am happy to say with the most fortunate results, for I much prefer it to smoking, and find its effects much more efficacious. I hope it will not cause you any annoyance." Without regarding his look of astonishment, I then, with the utmost gravity, set a light to the tobacco, and proceeded to turn the handle of the machine. Volumes of smoke instantly began to issue from the spout.

"That, then, is the cause of the horrible stench which fills the house," he said; "the place smells worse than any taproom in the kingdom."

"Does it indeed, sir?" I asked, with the most innocent expression I could assume. "I suppose that, living so continually in it, we are unable to perceive it."

'He watched the smoke ascending to the ceiling for a few moments, and then began to cough violently. Seeing the effect upon him, I was about to offer to discontinue the operation, when he exclaimed,

"For heaven's sake, Tom, throw that infernal machine out of the window; and if you must have tobacco-smoke, take a cigar."

'I ceased turning the handle. I had hardly anticipated so speedy a conversion. I thought, however, it

would not do to fall into his views too rapidly, lest his suspicion should be aroused, so I replied,

"I wish you had suggested this course to me some time ago, sir, for I have become so accustomed to tobacco taken in this form, that I now prefer it to any other, and it will require a greater effort on my part to dispense with the fumigator than was the case with regard to cigars. However, as you find it so very unpleasant, I will do my utmost to discontinue the practice, and solace myself with a cigar, my taste for which has now died out. I only hope my health will not suffer by the change. I will now therefore, with your permission, take a cigar."

"O, certainly," he answered; "anything rather than that abomination," pointing to the fumigator.

'I had taken care, previous to inviting him, not to be unprepared for the contingency which occurred; so I at once took a cigar from a drawer, and forthwith enjoyed the first smoke I had had for nine months. What do you think of my tactics?'

'I heartily congratulate you on the result of them,' I replied, 'whatever may be my opinion of the means you employed. But we have left Mrs. Allen too long alone; suppose we join her.'

CONCERNING CIGARS:

HOW TO SELECT THEM.

ACCUSTOMED as we are to the luxury of a cigar, it is difficult to realise that its introduction into England is of very recent date. Our grandfathers only knew of cigars as foppish novelties, very well for foreigners, but unworthy the notice of men accustomed to the use of the pipe. Byron's allusion to the luxury first made it popular. He talked of his "segar'—for that was how the name was first written; and soon all the young fellows about town followed his example, and the fashion was duly set. Those early weeds were all foreign; but the form of some differed from that of those now in familiar use. The Trichinopoli 'segar,' then the vogue, was long and clumsy, with a straw down the middle of it—necessitated by the roughness of the make—which the smoker removed when he applied the light, in order to secure a good draught. Very early, however, when there was really a popular demand for the article, choice varieties and various brands were imported; though the spirit of British enterprise was early aroused, and home-manufacture was commenced by way of competition.

It is about fifty years since the first cigars were made in England: those living remember a German

who came over and inducted the tobacco-merchants in the art and mystery, in which they soon became tolerably expert, though they had many difficulties to contend with. The first English cigar was a very odd affair. Our countrymen had not yet mustered courage to bring the tobacco in actual contact with their lips; it seemed filthy, in their idea, that a man should suck at tobacco. To meet this prejudice, therefore, our home-made cigars were on the Trichinopoli model, with a difference. They had a straw through them; but it was a thick one, and projected at one end to nearly the length of the cigar itself. This straw was put into the mouth, and the flavour of the tobacco imbibed through it! In course of time, this straw was abandoned. The form of the name was also changed: about 1830, a little work on smoking was published by Charles Clarke, a well-known writer of that day; and in this he discussed the question of the proper spelling of the word, insisting strongly that it should be written 'cigar.' His view was generally adopted; and we are familiar with the result.

It could hardly have been credited that, within a few years, the use of the cigar would have become so universal as it now is; every one, from the crown prince down to the shop-boy, indulging in the luxury. There are, however, many reasons for this. To many persons the cigar is the most agreeable form in which tobacco can be taken: some, indeed, cannot manage it in a pipe; it makes them ill. Then, fashion was in the outset inexorable on this point, voting a cigar the correct thing,

and pipes of all sorts low and vulgar. The introduction of the short meerschaum and brier-root pipes has done a little to upset this prejudice; but the theory still is, 'that gentlemen smoke cigars.' The greater convenience of the cigar has also been much in its favour: it is portable, ready-made, always handy for lighting, and therefore entails no trouble on the smoker, who never exposes himself to any difficulty like that experienced by 'the pipe-man' in Mr. Robertson's comedy of *Society*. From these and other causes, it has resulted that the present consumption of cigars in England is enormous. There is a difficulty in showing it in figures, because the Board of Trade returns, which would give a sort of basis of calculation, are not altogether explicit on the subject—that is to say, under the head of 'quantities imported,' we have to take tobacco in three forms; and, selecting 'manufactured' as implying foreign cigars, we find them mixed up with snuff, of which an unknown quantity has to be deducted; then, of the unmanufactured falling under the other headings, very much is made into cigars in this country: so that all we can get at is, that somewhere about 3,000,000 pounds of foreign cigars found their way into our markets last year. The English makers probably turned out four times as many. As foreign cigars used to pay a duty of over 9*s*., and still pay 5*s*., per pound, it will be perceived that this article has been, and still is, a fruitful source of revenue to the government; nor is the British cigar-manufacture wholly unprofitable to the Custom-house, seeing that 3*s*. 2*d*. is exacted on every pound of to-

bacco, in its raw state, admitted into this country. By the way, the idea of taxing tobacco originated with the great Richelieu. While the Pope excommunicated smokers, and the use of tobacco was made a capital offence in Persia, the shrewd Cardinal had his eyes open, and saw in the growing propensity for the new luxury a fertile source of revenue. As we go to France for our fiscal regulations as well as our fashions, we soon borrowed the idea, and have found our advantage in so doing.

Heavy as the duty on cigars is, it is less felt as a burden by the general community than many other imposts. Smokers, however, object to it on several grounds: one is, that it stands in the way of their smoking foreign cigars on any but expensive terms, and compels many to put up with an inferior article of British manufacture. This is an objectionable sort of thing; but the evil is, in reality, not wholly due to our heavy duty. The truth is, that the really fine and thoroughly enjoyable havana is a luxury and a rarity, high in price, and not to be obtained without trouble, even in the country which produces it. The price, too, is rapidly increasing. It has gone on to such an extent, that the best houses in Havana now ask fabulous prices for their choice brands from those purchasing wholesale. Such sums as 500, 400, and 300 dols. per thousand (take the dollar at 4*s*. 2*d*.) are enough to make one open one's eyes. Of course, these prices are only asked for the very best sorts—the *crême de la crême;* but an idea of the rise in prices will be formed when we state

that for fine brands, which used to cost 80 dols., 120 dols. are now asked. This will help to explain what must often have struck smokers as a mystery, namely, that, while the duty has come down to *5s.*, the price of the articles on which the duty is paid is higher than ever. In this sense, therefore, the duty is not such a terrible evil.

As a consequence of these high rates, the term 'fine foreign cigar' is a delusion and a snare as applied to the greater part of the manufactured leaf which finds its way into England, and on which duty is paid here. A good authority on the subject has divided the cigars produced in the island of Cuba into three classes: 1. Genuine havanas of various qualities, but all made of tobacco grown, cured, and rolled in the island. 2. Those with an outside leaf of the genuine sort used merely as a wrapper, the insides being made of United-States or European tobacco. 3. Cigars actually imported ready-made into Havana from Europe!—wretched stuff, from Bremen or Switzerland chiefly, destined to be exported to Europe under the colourable pretext that it has been manufactured in the island! A knowledge of these facts tends still further to lessen the regret one is apt to feel at the heavy duty on foreign cigars.

One really annoying result of the heavy duty, however, is, that when, with a knowledge of all this, the smoker desires to invest in a foreign article, he often does not get the chance: in plain English, he often pays for foreign havanas, and gets British. The temptation which the English dealer has to vend an article

that has never paid duty, and to put the amount of that duty into his own pocket, is sometimes too strong to be resisted. Thus it happens that a large manufacture of British 'foreign' cigars is carried on; a carefully-prepared article being sent into the market, wholly unobjectionable except in this respect, that the price asked for it is fabulously in excess of what it is worth, and what it would fetch were its real character avowed. A vast system of ingenious fraud prevails, which invades the sacred precincts of genuineness in the higher class of produce, and makes it difficult for a man to be certain what he is smoking. Let it be understood, that vast quantities of the home-made foreign cigars are manufactured of the very best foreign tobacco that can be imported; and sometimes a really good cigar is produced. Still, the result is an imposition equally great with that of the shameless Jew maker, who not only defrauds in the matter of brands, but actually adulterates the tobacco he uses—if, indeed, he uses any tobacco at all. Of course, whatever the degrees of fraud, the main objection is, that the system should prevail, and should be carried out to such an extent that both manufacturers and petty dealers provide themselves with boxes and labels, and the means of imitating brands, quite as much as a matter of course as the publican's cellarman is expected to be able, at a moment's notice, to produce any variety of port or sherry that may happen to be—not in the cellar, but—in demand.

Another evil result of the duty will be pointed out when we come to speak of English-made cigars.

It is very natural that this statement of facts should prompt the question: Is there no reliable source whence fine and choice foreign cigars may be obtained in London? The answer is, that there are some thirty dealers who may be relied on, whose position is so high that they will not jeopardise it by any tricks of trade. Pay them their price, and you are safe in their hands. And for the rest? Well, they are, more or less, honest, conscientious, or, let us say, cautious; but there is with most of them a reluctance to waste their choicest qualities on the ignorant and unappreciative smoker. Thus, the man who is really a judge will be the one most likely to get a good article at a moderate price. He may not get the best produce of Havana, because only the very highest dealers import this; but there are many dealers on whom he may rely to this extent, that the 'foreign' cigar for which he pays is really imported, and not home-made.

A knowledge of the great Havana houses and their famous brands means an education in cigar-smoking which very few will care to enter into, and which certainly cannot be recommended as of much practical value. Still, it is desirable that the ordinary smoker should have some little idea as to the best makers, and the kinds of cigars most in repute—it being premised that the fashion in this kind of thing is perpetually changing.

We suppose the place of honour among all the Cuban factories must be assigned to that of the H. de Abago Cabañas y Carvajal. This is the house which

enjoys a world-wide reputation, made by Cabaña, long since in his grave, but fully sustained by his living representative, Anselmo de Valle. The very finest product of this factory is beyond price: 'Ambasciadores' are not to be had for money; they are manufactured as presents, and can only be obtained by favour. But, when obtained, what a luxury! how supremely delicious! Highest on the Cabañas' price-list stand their 'Napoleones,' next their 'Excepcionales;' but these are like old gold in value. Their 'Espanioles' and 'Regalias,' of various kinds, are delicious. It may be mentioned, also, that this firm are famous for their cigarettes. Any produce of theirs, be it distinctly remembered, is worth the money. They produce nothing second-class; not an ounce of inferior tobacco finds its way into the articles they issue under their sign-manual.

So it is with makers whom some connoisseurs rank even more highly. We allude to the Partagas. Their 'Celestiales' are, as their name implies, fit for the gods —as, indeed, they should be, from their price. First-rate, also, both in quality and cost, are their 'Napoleones,' 'Imperiales,' 'Regalias Britannia,' 'Regalias Londres,' and 'Regalias de la Reine.' Their last novelty is their 'Rothschilds;' a very choice thing, which the English branch of the wealthy family of that name have brought into fashion, chiefly on account of its costliness. Their 'Brevas' are much esteemed; though, as they are made from the lower and thicker leaves of the plant, they do not present so fine and delicate an appearance as many other brands.

A third firm, that of Caruncho, is held in great estimation by English dealers; but it is not necessary to specify particular brands. Indeed, merely to give a list of the well-known and highly-appreciated foreign makers would be out of the question. Time was when they might have been told off on the fingers of one's hand: Cabaña, Silva, and Woodville were then the names familiar in English mouths. Now a hundred competitors have sprung up to bewilder us; and as if it was not enough to remember individuals, we have those of factories to confuse us. Take 'The Figaro,' for example. Then, again, one gets confused between a maker and a particular size called after him. Such is the case with the Lopez—a short, dumpy cigar, always known by that name, whoever the maker may be. To complete the bewilderment of the uninitiated, there are world-known brands, such as Flor de Cubas and Henry Clays—both delicious when genuine, and in that sense not dear, though the best kinds of Clays commence at a shilling, and run on into all sorts of fancy prices. In truth, in cigars more than in anything else, prices are wholly unregulated: the value of the article, both foreign and English, is what it will fetch; and the greed of the foreign maker is constantly prompting him to fresh demands, which he knows well enough must be complied with. After all, the real difficulty is to get the genuine thing; for the famous names and brands are pirated and imitated in every way, and, as has been said, the dealer's respectability is your sole guarantee.

When this is borne in mind, and also that 'foreign'

cigars do not all, even professedly, come from Havana, but that tobacco is grown and manufactured in a hundred different parts of the globe, it becomes of importance that the smoker, bewildered with 'brands,' mystified through imposition, and victimised from insufficient knowledge, should have some means of knowing a good cigar when he sees it, and selecting from samples with something like satisfaction.

But, it must be confessed, it is exceedingly difficult to lay down rules, or to give practical hints, in this matter. There is not so much difference as would be supposed, in the appearance of the leaf itself, between the finer and inferior kinds of tobacco. He must be a good judge—a very good judge—who, looking at an outside leaf, can say with confidence that it is good or bad. The colour is no test, for it varies exceedingly, running through all shades; and it is almost impossible to rely upon texture. Judges look very much to the make of a cigar. The highest in price, and finest in quality—take, for instance, one of the Cabañas' 'Excepcionales' —are mathematically perfect in form, and are finished off without a flaw, a speck, or disfigurement of any description. The same rule prevails all through; for the best work is given to the most expert workmen, who receive higher wages, and of course turn out a superior article. This is the rule; but when the object is to deceive, and the deception is profitable, no pains will be spared to render it effectual. Thus, of late years extreme ingenuity has been brought to bear in the manufacture of indifferent cigars—genuine in no

sense, but, like the man's razors, made to sell. Moreover, the aid of chemistry has been called in, with the happiest effect, to aid manipulative skill; and the consequence is, that almost every point by which a buyer could judge of a good cigar now often distinguishes the veriest 'duffer.'

In buying cigars, four out of the five senses may be summoned to one's assistance, and every one of those four may be imposed upon. You look at the article, see if it is well-made, and if the leaf has, so far as you can judge, the right appearance, that is, the appearance a genuine cigar of a fine quality presents. Very good; but it is found to answer the manufacturer's purpose to work-up his refuse or indifferent tobacco with the same manipulative attention that would be bestowed on the finest quality; and care is of course taken that the outside leaf should be of a quality to bear the closest inspection. By the way, there is a popular delusion that a spotted appearance in the leaf is a good sign. It certainly is often found in the tobacco-leaf, owing to an insect which infests it, and eats it into holes. These spots show that it has commenced operations. Leaves eaten through are of course not used. Thus the spots *do* indicate tobacco, but are no indication as to quality. 'However, just as you please, gentlemen,' says the manufacturer to the customer looking for this sign; and he secures that appearance for you in the simplest way—by means of sulphuric acid! Any other sign of genuineness would you like? It can be secured at the shortest notice.

Knowing that the eye is cheated, you appeal to the smell. This, in a person of quick scent, is perhaps the most reliable test. But, remember, there is always the fine outside leaf appealing directly to the nostrils; and the fragrance of this overpowers the odour of the inside muck, unless there is rankness. Baffled in this way, you take a sample cigar and light it. You taste tobacco—yes; the outer leaf, which comes in contact with the lips. There is also that pleasant sweetness which a first-rate weed always has. Certainly; and it would be odd if it had not, seeing that the leaves have been saturated in rum or molasses, or both, purposely to secure this result. The ash is of a pure whiteness, and the particles have great tenacity, and cling together in a compact mass till an inch or an inch and a half has been smoked. Capital! A good old well-approved test, which has been duly provided for, seeing that ammonia will secure that effect most satisfactorily!

Thus sight, scent, and taste have been cheated. There is still the touch; and this presents the difficulty most hard to overcome. Good tobacco is very elastic: when compressed, it has always a spring in it, a tendency to expand and assert itself. This will be observed in tobacco used for pipes: the better it is, the greater its tendency to squeeze itself out of a pouch or through the paper in which it may have been wrapped. Now, it should have the same tendency when in the cigar form. When a good cigar is pressed between the thumb and fingers, it should not be hard, or yield in a dead, flat, inert way: it should have an elasticity and

power of recovery about it, springing up the moment pressure is removed. This is one of the best tests.

But this elasticity, again, depends much on the condition of the cigar; and, in fact, it is with cigars as with wines—their quality varies with the manner in which they are kept. The best cigars in the world, if kept in a damp place, will be soft and flabby, and soon grow rank and out of condition. A dry warm room—as dry as you please, but not too hot—is best for cigars. It may be added here, that special care should be taken of one's weeds at the seaside. The saltness of the atmosphere is ruin to them; it insidiously affects their condition, unless they are very carefully protected, and they soon become worthless.

The high price of foreign cigars, and the many tricks and resources of unprincipled foreign manufacturers, sufficient to baffle all but the most experienced—and really *great* experience is required to enable a man to secure a genuine article at a fair price—has led to a greater demand for, and consequent improvement in, the English-made cigar. Certainly Whitechapel can turn out as disreputable a specimen as it is well possible to conceive: as bad as the Italian cheap Cavour; as bad as the French *estaminet* favourite, at ten centimes; as bad as, or at all events running pretty close to, the cheap Belgian abomination, the fume of which is one of the distinct poisons that go to make up the air of Antwerp. But the British cigar is no longer solely the product of clumsy Jewish makers; it has been seized upon as a profitable branch of industry by

respectable men, and an English-made cigar is now to be obtained as good as the conditions under which it is made will permit of its being.

A question naturally asked by the novice in these matters is, Why should not an English-made cigar be as good as one manufactured in the West Indies? The fact would appear to be, that the one would be as good as the other, supposing it possible to get the very best leaf imported into this country. It is that which is simply *impossible*. Otherwise, the matter would present no difficulty. The leaf must go through a certain preparation before it is used; and in the state to which it is reduced, it matters not whether it is worked up in Cuba or sent over to Liverpool for that purpose. Many very fair cigars *are* made in England—many that a smoker would enjoy, and even rejoice in and dilate upon, in the fulness of his enjoyment and the innocence of his heart. That more are not made is due to the most pernicious influence of the duty on tobacco, to which we promised to recur. The thing tells in this way: the manufacturer pays 3*s.* 2*d.* per pound on the raw article, and thereby appears to gain an advantage; but in reality there is no advantage—and certainly the Government means there to be none—owing to the great quantity of refuse matter pertaining to the unmanufactured tobacco. What this amounts to will be clear on a little explanation. Take a single tobacco-leaf, and examine it. You will find that it has a thick stem running through the centre, and ribs starting off from it. Now, all the central part is thick and un-

manageable, while the outer portions of the leaf are soft and pliable, and are, so to speak, without bones. This outer portion ranks as first-class, the rest as second-class tobacco; and it is of the first-class only that cigars should properly be made. But if the English maker used the best part of the leaf only, and wasted the rest, he, though only paying 3*s.* 2*d.* duty, could not compete with the foreign article, though it pays 5*s.*, because the waste would virtually raise his duty quite as high as, if not higher than, that paid on the foreign article, while he could not get the same price for it, supposing it to be fairly and openly offered. What is the consequence? The English-made cigar has usually a fair outside, consisting of first-class, while the inside consists of second-class tobacco, which it is found necessary to use for this purpose. Of course richness and flavour are sacrificed; but what is the maker to do? Government on the one hand, and prejudice on the other, compel him to throw an inferior article into the market; and the public suffer.

Some of the English makers have, as we have intimated, gained a name for the excellence of their goods. The name is rather with the retail dealers than with the public, because there is great jealousy, and no little mystery, mixed up in the cigar-business. The public would rather be deluded and imposed on, would rather give a high price for a sham-foreign article, than a fair sum for a really decent English cigar; and so it is found necessary to humour the said public by means of names and brands and mystical hieroglyphics, which are

in effect nothing, but, like the landlord's politeness, are 'charged for in the bill.' Among the English firms that have striven against this system we may mention Messrs. Lambert and Butler, now beginning to be well known for their cigarettes—those with a coat of the real leaf, set-off with tissue ruffles at either end—of which they manufacture enormous quantities.

Recently we took occasion to visit the manufactory belonging to this firm, in Drury-lane; and as a brief sketch of the method of preparing the cigar may interest, it may be well to state what we saw there. These makers employ about 150 hands in the different departments. On entering the factory, the air of which is pungent with the subtle odours of the weed, and full of ghostly titillating properties, we first inspected the tobacco in its imported state. Well, in that condition it is not inviting, having much the appearance of dozens of soles of worn-out shoes, damped, and pressed together by the hydraulic process. These leaves have to be separated and sorted, the better kinds being reserved as 'outsides,' the rest used for stuffing cigars. The finer kinds are received in a condition nearly ready for use; the coarser samples arrive in a very rough state, with the thick stems in them, which have to be removed, and are subsequently used for making snuff. All the kinds have to be damped some hours before use, otherwise they would be dry, brittle, and unmanageable, so that it would be impossible to roll them into cigars.

The factory in which the cigars are made has the appearance of a large schoolroom; it is lit from above,

and as much as possible is done in the way of ventilation. Still, on entering it, you have a sense of 'closeness,' always prevailing where a number of persons sit together for any time; and this is intensified by the peculiar smell of the material in course of manufacture. But what gives the place the schoolroom aspect is this, that short benches are ranged all down the room, and the workers sit on either side these benches, on low seats, presenting the general effect of lads at their tasks.

Each maker has on the bench before him a square block of wood two inches thick. He is also supplied with a sharp knife, a little pot of paste or gum, and a leathern apron fastened before him so as to catch the refuse that may fall into his lap. He would not appear to require any other appliances; so that a cigar-maker is soon set-up in tools. On the bench, beside the block, lies the tobacco in use. There, on the left, is a little pile of the fine, soft 'outsides;' on the right are what are called 'bunch-wrappers,'—that is, leaves of the second-class quality, already described; and immediately in front there is a pile of short pieces called 'fillers,' these pieces forming the bulk or body of the cigar.

The process of making is very simple, though it requires great manual dexterity, from the rapidity with which it is carried on. While you look on, the expert seizes one of the bunch-wrappers, and, spreading it on his block, cuts it quickly into an oval shape. Then his active fingers scrape together and manipulate a few of the cuttings, which he lays on the leaf ready cut, and

rolls into it. By the time he has rolled it once or twice over the block, it has assumed the shape of a cigar. This done, he cuts the thick end sharp off, thus bringing the cigar to the required length. Lastly, he coils up what may be termed the cigar, so far as it has gone, into a narrow slip of 'outside,' shaped like the bunch-wrapper, and carefully gums the tip-end, so as to prevent the enveloping leaf from loosening and becoming spoiled. The operation, from first to last, only takes a few seconds. When made, the cigars are placed in oblong wooden frames or boxes, perforated with holes in the sides; and these are placed in a drying-closet, in which there are gas-stoves generating a heat of about 95° Fahrenheit. There they are carefully dried, preparatory to being sorted, made into half-pound or pound packets, decorated with a gaudy ribbon, and inserted in boxes prepared for their reception.

From this brief sketch of the method of making cigars, it will be easy to gather an idea both of the reason why it is so difficult to judge of cigars by their appearance, and of the facility with which they can be sophisticated. Being made in three several parts, each of those parts may be of a different quality. You may get Havana outsides, Hungarian bunch-wrappers, and German fillings. There is no limit to the expedients that may be adopted. Messrs. Lambert and Butler will understand that this does not apply to them; but it lies on the surface as an obvious fact.

And so we get back to what is, after all, the main question with the smoker: How is he to secure thor-

oughly good weeds? He must, as we have shown, either go to a first-class house, and pay a high price for the well-accredited and authentic produce of some foreign manufactory, known to do business only in cigars of the best kinds; or he must steadily cultivate his taste, by observing the points indispensable to a good cigar (though often found in indifferent kinds), by comparing flavours, and applying such tests as experience, rather than instruction, will suggest to him; or, yet again, if he is wise and not led away by prejudices, he will go to a good English maker, and frankly obtain from him samples of the best cigars of his own avowed make. They will not be so good as the best foreign produce, were that procurable at a moderate price, such as a man may feel justified in giving; but it is surely more prudent to get a reasonably good thing at a reasonable price, than to pay exorbitantly for a questionable article, upon the genesis of which so little reliance is to be placed.

A WORD ABOUT CLAYS.

And now a word about 'clays.' The meerschaum and the cigar both have their votaries; the brier-root and the violet-root put in their claims; but there are still thousands of smokers who cling with tenacity to the old clay pipe. This they hold to be the most wholesome, as well as the most agreeable, medium through which tobacco can be 'exhibited,' as the doctors phrase it. On the agreeable side of the argument it is needless to comment: that is so wholly a matter of taste. But very grave objections may be urged to the superior wholesomeness of the pipe. At first sight, it would appear that, in smoking a cigar, the noxious empyreumatic oil would discharge itself directly into the mouth, and that this must be exceedingly objectionable. That it discharges itself as described is probable; but chemists tell us, that a process then takes place which it is most essential for us to know about: they say that this dreadfully long-named poison contains a harmless oil and a poisonous alkaline substance, and that, if it is washed in acetic acid, the latter combines with the alkali, and renders it innocuous. Now, the saliva is always more or less acid; and the effect of the cigar coming in contact with it is held to be, that the sting is taken out of the empyreumatic oil; and it is thus rendered quite harmless.

Science is thus on the side of the cigar; but, as popular liking holds its own, the clay pipe is still high in popular estimation—the pure white clay, just of the kind that Raleigh used, and that the gallants of his day rejoiced in. The shape is, certainly, a little changed; for the Elizabethan pipe was moderately short, thick of stem, and thimble-like in capacity of bowl; whereas modern smokers revel in the 'churchwarden,' and the finely-manipulated 'straw pipe,' of equal length; or else smoke a few inches only, with a view to colouring. Having mentioned Elizabeth and her times, let me here, by way of episode, mention a curious fact. Though contemporary writers are full of such allusions, Shakespeare never mentions pipes or tobacco. Why is this? He must have been fully conversant with the use of them. It is supposed that Raleigh's expedition to America in 1585 resulted in the popularising of tobacco. That expedition set out in the year before Shakespeare came up to London. Tobacco became general in its use among the higher classes at once, in spite of a proclamation against it; and it was smoked in the theatres by the gallants, at the price of 6*d*. per pipe. The great dramatist, therefore, must have been quite familiar with the use of the new Indian weed. It must have been a feature of his day, and one that he was hardly likely to pass over. His doing so is a mystery, of which a solution has been attempted in this suggestion, namely, that he refrained out of compliment to James I., whose known abhorrence to the habit of smoking found expression in his pedantic

Counter-blast to Tobacco. That anything in favour of tobacco would have displeased the king, his patron, is clear; while, on the other hand, the gallants were not likely to be conciliated by any satire directed against their new and favourite indulgence. The poet's silence is thus held to be accounted for; and it is cited as an illustration of those practical qualities of his mind which enabled him to amass a fortune. All this, however, is matter of surmise, though the subject is curious enough to warrant this digression.

To return. The clay pipe is of many qualities,—some very much more conducive to enjoyment than others. The Brosely clay is held in most esteem, and deservedly so. The great point is, that the clay should not be too hard. Some of the pipes of old times which have been dug up are like iron. This may be due, in some measure, to the action of time; but it is clear that they would never have coloured, had such an idea ever entered the head of an Elizabethan smoker. That it did not, we may be pretty sure: there are no relics warranting the conclusion that any but clean pipes were smoked. And this prejudice in favour of the clean pipe exists among long-clay smokers to the present day, in spite of modern experience, which shows that a clay must be smoked for a fortnight, at least, before it is seasoned and mellow enough to be enjoyable.

Nothing is more inexplicable to the thorough smoker of the modern school than that notion of our grandfathers, that a pipe, to be agreeable, must be clean! Why, a new clay, like a new meerschaum, is

crude and almost detestable: it has no mellowness. Tobacco smokes in it as in a lime-kiln. And then, of all things, that habit of the old smoker, of burning the clay pipe by way of purification!—thrusting it between the bars of the grate, whence it emerged partly white and partly gray: a horror to the sight, and a caution in the smoking! Thank goodness, *nous avons changé tout cela*. And it may be stated with confidence, that tobacco was never really enjoyed until it was smoked in a 'coloured' pipe.

There are several varieties of clays, continental and English; but few pipes are really better than those manufactured in this country. The soft Neapolitan clay, of a brick colour, is one of the best foreign sorts in use for pipes; and it must not be confounded with an atrocious species of brick of which common pipes are now manufactured. Many attempts have been made to produce a pipe which should absorb the oil, so as to render smoking less injurious than it is conceived to be. The difficulty is, that in all these cases, where facilities are afforded for getting rid of the so-called noxious properties of the tobacco, flavour is sacrificed also. Very porous clays are (next to meerschaum) best suited to this purpose, unless the new experiment, that of pipes cut out of charcoal, should prove a success. The idea is capital; but as it is only just patented by a house in Holborn, where only it is to be obtained, its practical working can scarcely be spoken of with confidence.

There is a little art in managing new clay pipes.

They should be kept in water. Thrust a bundle of them, bowl downwards, into a jug half-filled with water, and keep them so, and you will always have them in pleasant condition, and experience none of the disagreeableness of feeling the roof of the mouth covered with powder,—one of the sensations attending the smoking of a new dry pipe. In Bristol they adopt the plan, at the various inns, of placing a small vessel of water before each smoker; into this he dips his pipe, before or after filling it, keeping it there an instant only; and the effect of thus regulating the heat is very good.

For smoking in clays, there are four kinds of tobacco, of various degrees of strength,—bird's-eye, returns, shag, and cavendish. We admit no others. As the question of colouring does not arise here (except where a short clay is coloured; then all the rules for colouring meerschaums come into operation), the more rational point of the enjoyment to be obtained from a pipe has alone to be regarded. Now, there are smokers who, in their search for what is mild and not injurious, adopt latakia, oronoko, k'naster, and other abominations of the like kind; but these tobaccos only keep the promise of coolness to the eyes, and assuredly break it to the mouth. Latakia and the rest are hot and feverish, and should be avoided. Some mix latakia with bird's-eye; but bird's-eye is in itself too 'hot i' the mouth.' A much better mixture, therefore, is bird's-eye and shag, for those who do not find themselves equal to the last-named tobacco. For stronger stomachs, a mixture of shag and cavendish is very agreeable.

Buying tobacco in London is quite an art. There are particular shops famed for certain articles: one for its cavendish, another for its shag, a third for fancy articles,—say caporal, rather in favour with the French, but not much known in this country. But a great point is, never to buy a very cheap article. Consider a moment: how can a cheap tobacco be good? There are shops which advertise, 'Best Virginia shag, 3*s.*!' 'Good Virginia, 2*s.* 9*d.*!' Well may they add notes of exclamation. Why, the duty alone is 3*s.* 2*d.*, or twopence more than the price charged, even for the shag; and fivepence more than that at which the cheap Virginia is offered! Shaving for nothing, and giving a glass of gin into the bargain, was profitable compared to this; at least, so it would seem; but it is only so in seeming. These dealers know quite well what they are about. The whole secret lies in the capacity of common tobacco to absorb water. The best qualities absorb about five per cent of 'liquor,' but the common kinds absorb twenty-five per cent. Thus it happens, that when you buy a cheap tobacco, you not only get a wretched, flavourless, rank, and repulsive article, but you pay for the water with which it is saturated, and which evaporates as soon as it is put into the pipe, and, with difficulty, ignited. This fact about the varying absorbent qualities of different sorts of tobacco is one which it is important to bear in mind.

Something depends on the manner in which tobacco is preserved. It is best kept in an earthen jar: it should be removed out of the leaden wrappers in which

it is sold as speedily as possible. To tourists, who wish to carry, say, a pound of tobacco with them for their use, but who fear its getting dry in the portmanteau, here is a hint from an old smoker. Wrap the tobacco in a cabbage-leaf, renewing the leaf when opportunity serves. The flavour will not be injured, and a desirable moisture will be effectually preserved.

When the tobacco has been selected, there is a good deal in the way in which it is put into the pipe. The unskilful smoker loses half his pleasure from the simple fact of loading his pipe unskilfully. Either he thrusts in the tobacco too tightly compressed, so that it is a mere plug, and will not burn (or only burn in parts); or he barely half-fills the bowl, and leaves it in such a state that, after a few whiffs, the tobacco is reduced to powder, owing to the fierceness of the heat. Both extremes are avoided by a very simple method. Place what you think a sufficient quantity of the weed in the hollow of the open palm of your left hand; grasp the pipe by the stem, holding its bowl downwards, close to the tobacco; then, pressing the pipe lightly, work the bowl round and round, until it has coiled up a sufficiency of the fragrant preparation to fill itself to a nicety. A pipe filled in this way will light thoroughly, and smoke out to the last few grains with pleasure and satisfaction.

We have now touched on most of the essential points worth the smoker's attention, in whatever form he may woo the nymph Nicotiana. There is, however, one point worth a passing word. Many persons are de-

barred the pleasure of smoking, owing to the unpleasantness of the smell of tobacco to those who do not smoke, and more especially to ladies. The effluvium from pipe or cigar will affect the breath and hang about the clothes, besides lending anything but an agreeable effect to curtained rooms. The question is, therefore, often anxiously put, 'Is there no method of neutralising the smell of tobacco-smoke?' So far as the breath is concerned, that unquestionably may be sweetened. The aromatic silver globules sold for this purpose, called Cachous aromatisés, answer pretty well; but so will various simple expedients. For example, parsley is almost a specific in this respect. It destroys the odour, and the mere chewing of a leaf is sufficient. We have also tried with success ozonised water, which may be had of any chemist; or camphor-water; also orris-root, which may be chewed after smoking. As to the curtains and the clothes, we admit a difficulty. Any strong scent will overcome that of tobacco; but a man cannot go about redolent of patchouli, camphor, or lavender-water: he can neither indulge in 'an ounce of civet, good apothecary,' nor emulate Pip after the tar-water in 'smelling like a strong fence.' The unpleasantness is only to be avoided by care. In fact, it would seem that the smoker is destined to enjoy his luxury only in a furtive and anxious way; and perhaps—bearing in mind that stolen pleasures are the sweetest—that may help to account for his otherwise inexplicable attachment to it.

THE MEERSCHAUM:

HOW TO CHOOSE, SMOKE, AND COLOUR IT.

How do I manage my meerschaum? How do I give it that depth and richness of colour in the bowl,—colour which I can compare to nothing but the tone of pine-apple rum,—and that creamy softness in the stem, which is the admiration of every smoker? Well, to an extent, I believe the colouring of a pipe is not so much an art as a gift. It is like a cook being gifted naturally with 'a hand' for a light crust; like an artist who produces effects with colours that are the despair of imitators—that artist, for example, who, when bothered for his 'secret,' and asked how he dressed his palette, replied, 'With brains.' Still, though your smoker is born, not made, just as much as your poet, there are certain rules, hints, and suggestions, the results of experience, that may be communicated. It is possible, to an extent, to show another what to do, and what to avoid,—just as you may not be able to make a fellow a good yachtsman; but you may give him a chart showing where there is safe and pleasant sailing, where dangerous currents and sunken rocks threatening destruction.

My experience with the pipe dates from the Crimea. That, no doubt, is the case with many others. It was

a great school for rising talent in the smoking way. Had the colouring of pipes been a lost art, I believe the exigencies of that campaign would have been equal to its re-discovery. We were always smoking: our pipes were the comfort, the consolation, of our lives. We coloured everything that came in our way; often converting, by a sort of alchemic process, the commonest fragment—the broken-off bowl of a despised clay, for instance—into a gem of priceless worth. I have one such trophy—a picture. It is quite black—the colour, and with the polish, of ebony; not a flaw or spec upon it; not the faintest cloud or variation of tint. I have it mounted in gold and amber, and prize it as one of the choice features of my collection. But I am not writing here of the clay, but of the meerschaum; and it is not my purpose to enlarge on my own collection or my own smoking exploits, but to threw out a few hints and suggestions that may be practically valuable to others.

One great point—shall I say *the* great point?—is the choice of a meerschaum. The novice in search of a pipe looks in at a shop-window, and sees a number of creamy-looking specimens cosily reposing in their purple-velvet cases; and the natural questions arising in his mind are: Which of these ought I to buy? Is one better than the other? and if so, how am I to test its superiority? Does price alone determine the question? and will that for which I give the most money inevitably give me the most satisfaction? Very natural questions, to which I will endeavour to give practical answers.

And, to begin with, price has nothing to do with the matter. In the choice of a pipe, there are four points to be considered, namely, Form, Colour, Weight, and Mounting. Let us take them in order.

1. *Form.* — The pipe best suited to the novice is the ordinary straight-stemmed billiard pipe, with the upright bowl. It is not handsome, but has this peculiar advantage, that, from the uprightness of the bowl, there is no tendency on the part of the oil to settle otherwise than straight down into the plug; consequently, there is an equal amount of absorption all round, giving a uniform colour. A more popular shape is that with the straight stem, but projecting bowl. The objection to this, so far as the neophyte is concerned, lies in the fact that, unless great caution is used, the oil saturates the lower side of the bowl only; and, in cases of quick smoking and careless lighting, the upper part becomes burnt, and so the beauty of the thing is lost. There is a clumsy pipe,—a cross between the upright and the projecting bowl, — with a thick flattened stem, somewhat in vogue; but this is to be avoided. The bore is generally imperfect; the draught, consequently, irregular; and thus great difficulty attends anything like perfect colouring.

While I recommend a straight pipe to the beginner, the curved pipe is decidedly finer in appearance, and so better repays the trouble of colouring. Greater variety of shape is also attainable. But, undoubtedly, this form of pipe requires more careful smoking; and it is difficult to get the stem properly coloured. There is also

the drawback as to comfort, that in its use the smoke is constantly getting into one's eyes. All fancy pipes—those adorned with figures, or otherwise ornamented—should be avoided by the novice. Not only are they easily broken, or chipped, which is as bad, even from not being laid exactly in their right place when returned to the case, but they rarely colour evenly; and you cannot get the delicate gradations of shade that give a charm to the plain pipe.

2. *As to Colour.*—It is difficult to lay down an invariable rule for the choice of meerschaum by its colour. The true colour is a delicate cream; but there are gradations in tint. The one thing to be avoided is a perfectly dead white: that is bad. Put a white piece of meerschaum out of the question, and you may secure that which is light and soft, even, sometimes, with the faintest possible flush on it, as if caught from the rising Aphrodite by the creamy foam. But the true cream is the only really reliable colour.

3. *Weight.*—New meerschaum is very light: it speedily increases in weight through smoking, from the oil absorbed. Bear this in mind, and do not purchase that which is as heavy as a smoked pipe. Of course, the actual weight will depend on the size and style of mounting; but this can be judged of. The great thing is, that the material itself should be essentially light, like the foam of the sea, from which it is named.

4. *Mounting.*—This is the surest test of a good pipe. Let the inexperienced look to this. Comparatively few people are able to form an accurate opinion

from colour; but the mounting speaks for itself. If a pipe is mounted with a long piece of good amber without a flaw in it, and that amber fits accurately at the join, it is pretty sure to be a good pipe. Those of an indifferent quality are seldom carefully and artistically mounted. Of the two kinds of amber, the clear and the clouded, it is advisable to choose the latter. The clouded is tougher, less brittle, and less liable to break in the mouth.

Now, we will suppose that you have your pipe, one of the very best. Happy possessor of a treasure — a source of delight, or of perpetual worry and weariness of spirit, just as it may happen! For the pipe is little: it is the smoking thereof that is everything. Come, then, let us light up. Stay! for that purpose tobacco is needed; and it is most natural that you should at once propound to me the query: What kind of tobacco is best for colouring? A simple point; yet never was there one with a greater diversity of opinion upon it. 'Tobacco!' shouts my old friend Sabertache, — 'Tobacco! How can there be two views about it? Cavendish will colour a pipe twice as quickly as any other kind of tobacco, and render it blacker than any other possibly can. Besides, it is pleasanter in flavour.' Granted, old boy, provided your internal organisation is of the robust quality which will enable you to emulate the ostrich in digestion. But strong meat is not for all: I could as easily digest a horse's saddle as a saddle of horse; and, in the matter of tobacco, I find shag strong enough for me. It is strong enough, too, I believe, for

all colouring purposes; but it must be admitted that the process is slower, because it contains a less quantity of the essential oil. To those who are impatient, let me recommend a compromise. Mix cavendish and shag in the proportion of one-third of the former to two-thirds of the latter. This mixture is capital, and is more agreeable than cavendish itself, inasmuch as it prevents that copious oozing of oil through the pores of the pipe, often very unpleasant. Moreover, cavendish fouls a pipe very rapidly. What about bird's-eye? Well, it is pleasant to smoke, but too dry for colouring purposes. Blended with shag, it gives a nice light tone to meerschaum; but he must be clever who can extract from the two in combination that deep ebony hue we all so much admire.

Old hands are all agreed that the tobacco itself is not so much a point, as the manner in which it is used: and more especially in respect to that indispensable little contrivance—the plug. I am not prepared to say that a pipe will not colour without a plug, because there are men so gifted in this art—men whose style of smoking is so admirable—that they will colour anything. Put a stem into a pipkin, and they will colour it for you—turn it out a bright mahogany, with nothing stronger than latakia to do it with. But the ordinary smoker must have a plug. It may be formed of meerschaum, of cork, or of tobacco. Meerschaum is the worst material of the three—because, being equally porous with the pipe itself, it absorbs the oil which you want to form your colouring matter. This kind of plug

is, moreover, likely to get fixed in the bowl, and to require force for its removal—force which often results in the splitting of the pipe itself. The worst of cork as a plug is, that it is liable to get charred, and so to impart a disagreeable flavour to the tobacco ; besides, it does not hold the oil long enough for the pipe to absorb it properly. No ; there is only one good material for plugging, and that is tobacco itself. There is but one objection to it ; which is, that in a thoughtless, preoccupied moment, it may be smoked beyond the line fixed on, whereby the symmetry of the colouring is spoiled. Some smokers use tobacco covered with bone or metal ; but there are objections to both plans. The bone chars and injures the flavour ; the metal heats so rapidly, that it often seriously injures the pipe.

Having, then, decided on tobacco in all its simplicity as the material of the plug, we have next to decide how it is to be used. Form the plug, if possible, of one piece, judging the quantity, and carefully manipulating it into its place. If composed of layers, the upper one is apt to come off, unnoticed by the smoker, when he is cleaning his pipe, and then the colouring line is broken. Care should be taken not to press the tobacco down too hard ; for if it is too much compressed, there is no room for the oil between the fibres ; and then one of two things will happen—either the plug will swell and rise above the line, or else the oil will run through and foul the pipe, and in either case a too-frequent change of plug will be necessitated. Remember, by the way, always to fix the

line of colouring a little above what appears to be the correct mark, as indicated by the plug. How often should the plug be changed? Well, the amount of smoking indulged in will in a great measure regulate this. Under any circumstances, one ought to last a week; and, where moderation is exercised, it may be left in for a fortnight, or even for three weeks.

Thus far we have settled three important points: we have chosen our pipe; we have plugged it in the best practical manner; we have secured fitting tobacco. And now, what next? Next, we will begin to smoke. In doing so, lay these rules to heart: 1. Smoke as slowly as possible; and for these two very sufficient reasons, viz. in order that too much of the oil should not be dried up in the process; and also, in order to avoid over-heating the pipe, and thereby causing it to become baked to a degree of hardness that would render it incapable of absorbing the oil from the plug. 2. The pipe should not be smoked in the open air, as any little breeze will cause the tobacco to burn more quickly than is desirable. This only refers to the first stage of colouring; when that is got over, and the colour is well set, careful out-door smoking is permissible. 3. Always load the pipe immediately after having smoked it. By this means, ash and fragments of tobacco are kept out of the case—a very important matter, though it seems trifling; but the slightest thing will scratch, and so destroy the beauty of, a pipe, when it is in first-rate condition. 4. Be careful in lighting up; see that the tobacco is well ignited all round; and watch, during

the smoking, that one side does not burn lower than the other. 5. When you have smoked one pipe of tobacco, allow the pipe to cool before smoking a second. This is most important, as the effect of smoking continuously is as bad on the pipe as many authorities declare it to be on the smoker. 6. When it becomes foul, the pipe should be cleaned with great care. One mode, often adopted, is preferable to the poking of wires down the stem. It is this: remove the plug; half-fill the pipe, light it, put a piece of gauze, or the corner of a thin handkerchief, over the bowl, and, applying your mouth to that end, blow strongly, holding the stem downwards during the operation. By this means, you will be able to liquefy the deposit in the stem, which will slowly ooze out at the amber-pointed extremity. The operation must be conducted with great care. A little gin, or other spirit, may afterwards be poured through the pipe quickly.

These are the main rules for the smoking of meerschaums. Very simple, you see, and guaranteed to be very effectual. One or two practical suggestions may be added. It will often happen that, when the pipe has attained great beauty of tone, the colour will disappear in parts, and it will become spotty in appearance. If this should be the case below the line, no uneasiness need be experienced, though the cause remains a mystery. Steady smoking will set all that right. Some people advise as a remedy the application of oil or white wax. I set my face against this practice, as it gives the pipe an increased tendency to heat rapidly, and

ultimately to burn. Steady smoking is, I am convinced, the best cure. If you have a valuable pipe, and wish to preserve it in perfection,—and if, moreover, you can resist the pleasure of contemplating its budding charms, its slowly developing loveliness,—why, there is nothing so desirable as having it covered with chamois-leather. I say advisedly 'having' it covered: don't try to do it yourself; you will only scratch it with the needle in sewing it on—a feat which only an experienced person can achieve.

What next? Much more might be said, for the theme is inexhaustible; as one may suppose from the lion's share which the colouring of their pipes holds in the conversation of so many men in society. But I think this will do. Like many another art, that of smoking meerschaums, though demanding some study, is soon imparted. The rudiments are simple; the results depend on the genius of the student; but I can promise this with confidence—that, if these suggestions are carried out, no smoker need despair of possessing a pipe that shall be a pleasure by reason of its sweetness, and an ornament by reason of its beauty.

The End.

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