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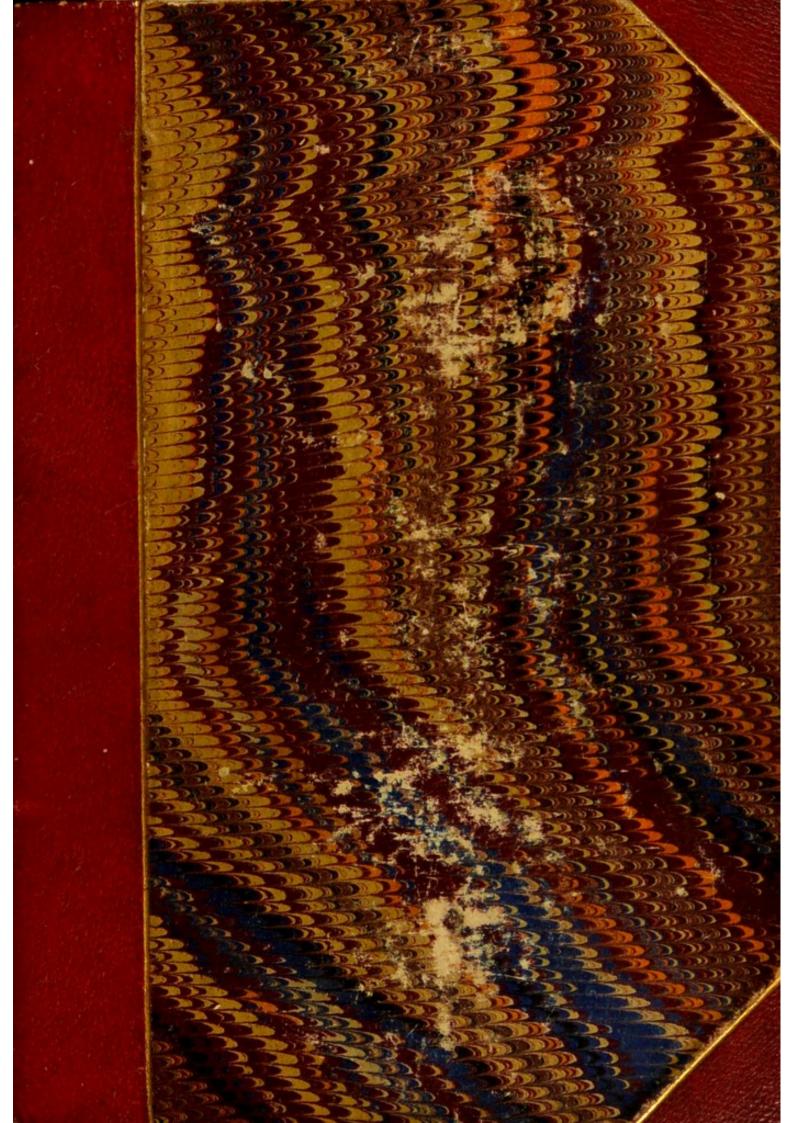
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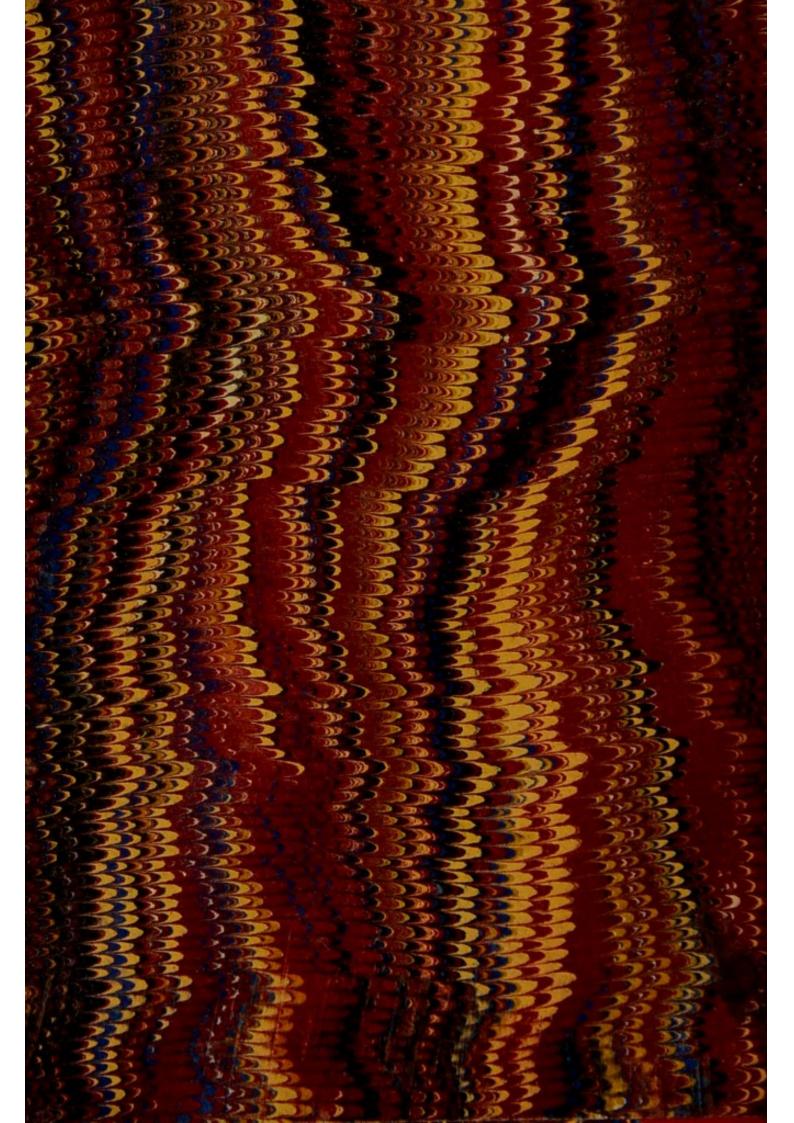
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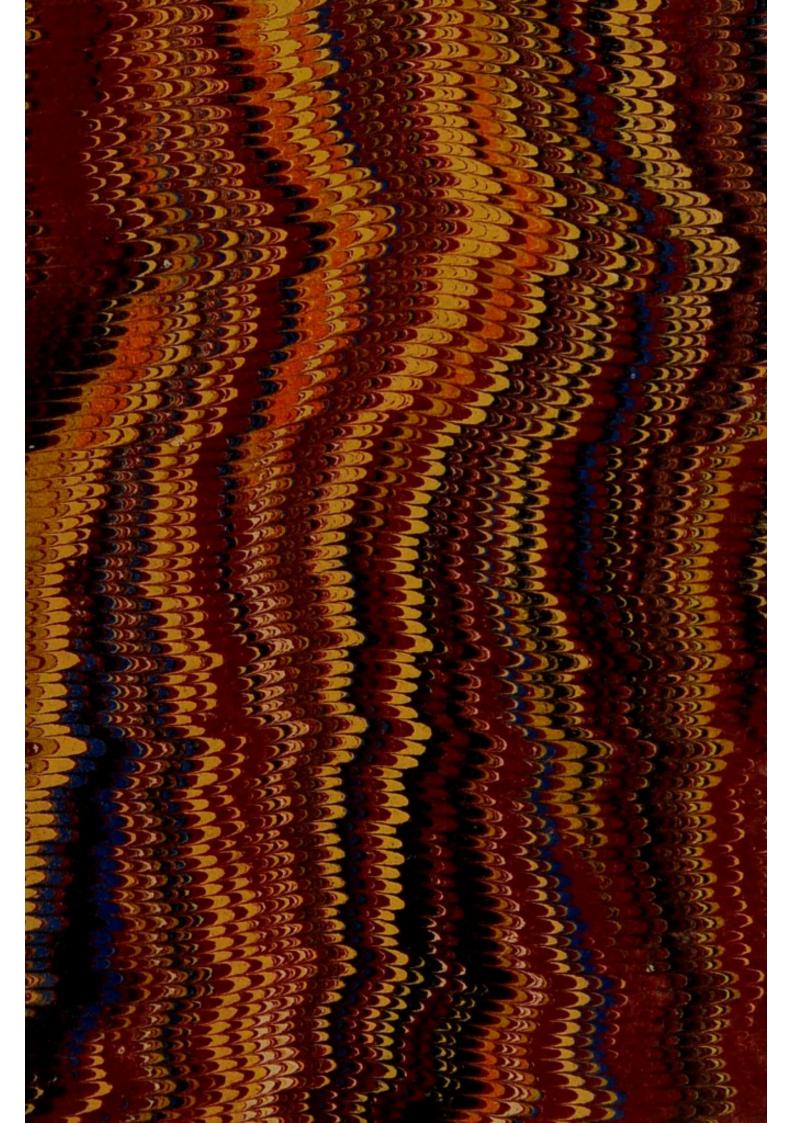
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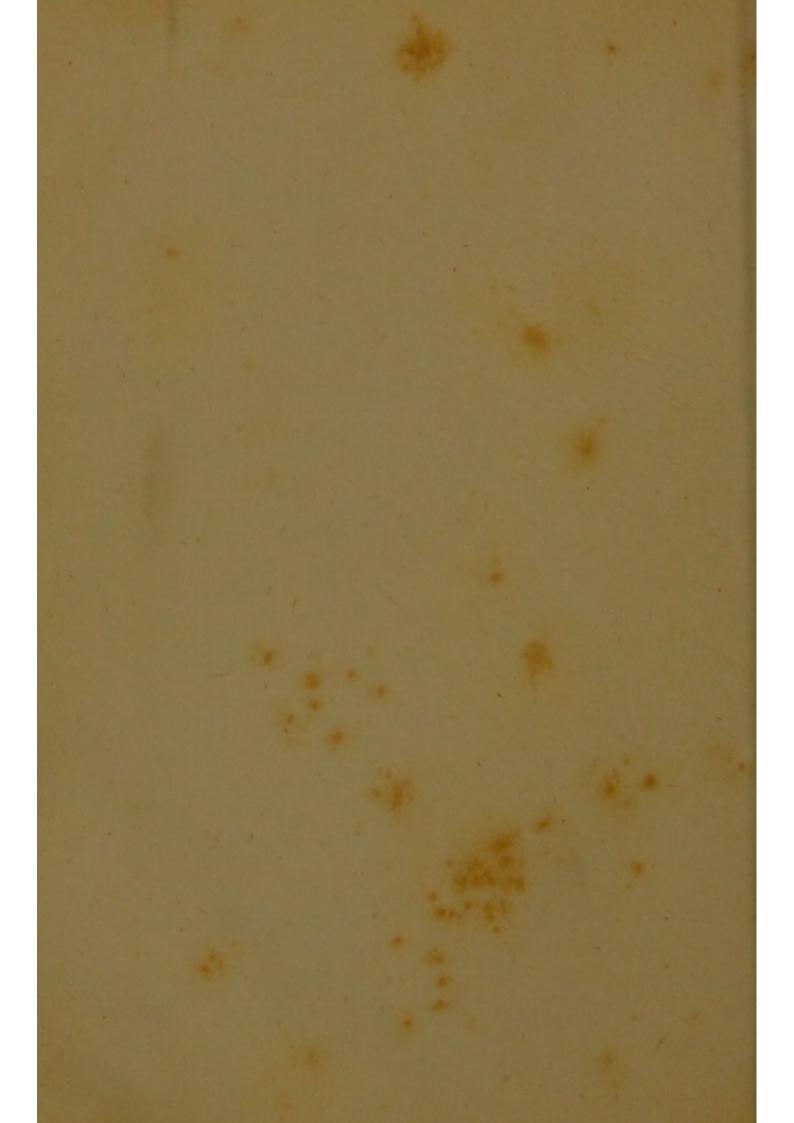






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# ALTON LOCKE

TAILOR AND POET.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

BY

# CHARLES KINGSLEY,

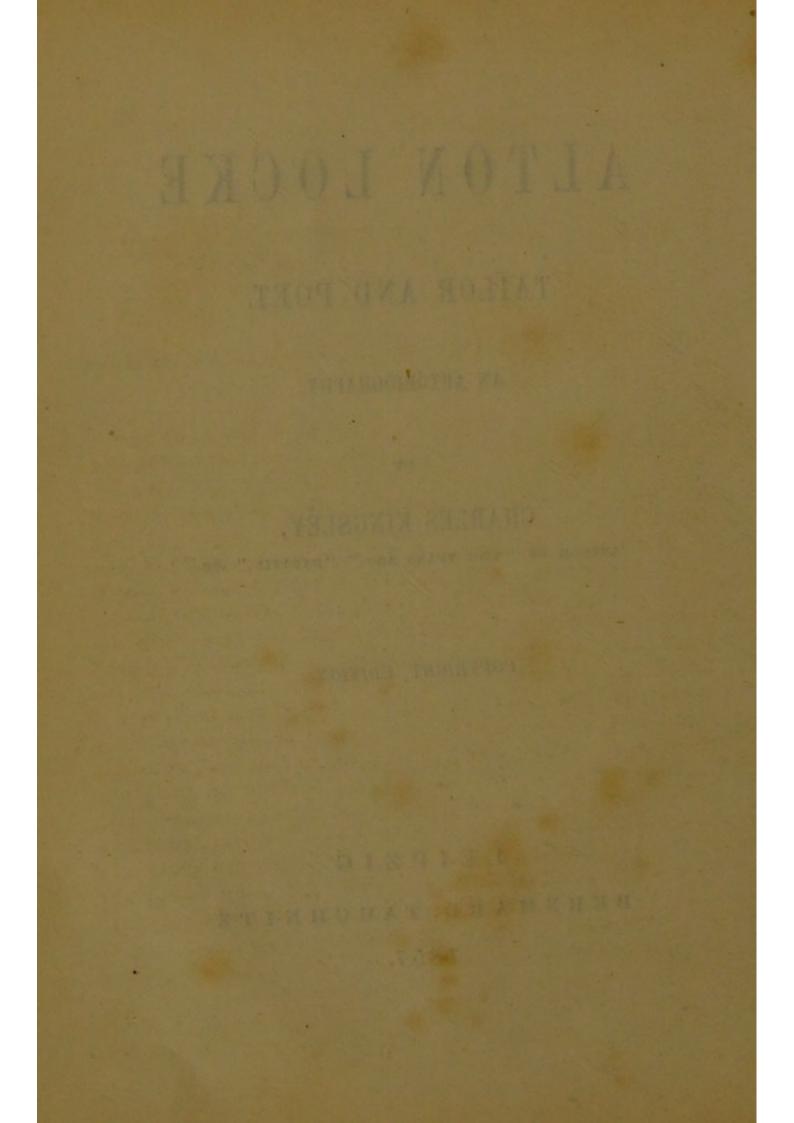
AUTHOR OF "TWO YEARS AGO," "HYPATIA," &C.

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# LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1857.



# PREFACE TO THE CHEAP EDITION.

## ADDRESSED TO THE WORKING MEN OF GREAT BRITAIN.

Mr FRIENDS, — Since I wrote this book five years ago, I have seen a good deal of your class, and of their prospects. Much that I have seen has given me great hope; much has disappointed me: nothing has caused me to alter the opinions here laid down.

Much has given me hope; especially in the North of England. I believe that there, at least, exists a mass of prudence, self-control, genial and sturdy manhood, which will be England's reserve-force for generations yet to come. The last five years, moreover, have certainly been years of progress for the good cause. The great drag upon it, namely, demagogism, has crumbled to pieces of its own accord; and seems now only to exhibit itself in anilities like those of the speakers who inform a mob of boys and thieves that wheat has lately been thrown into the Thames to keep up prices, or advise them to establish, by means hitherto undiscovered, national granaries, only possible under the despotism of a Pharaoh. Since the 10th of April, 1848 (one of the most lucky days which the English workman ever saw), the trade of the mob-orator has dwindled down to such last shifts as these, to which the working man sensibly seems merely to answer, as he goes quietly about his business, "Why will you still keep talking, Signor Benedick? Nobody marks you."

But the 10th of April, 1848, has been a beneficial crisis, not merely in the temper of the working men, so called, but

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in the minds of those who are denominated by them "the aristocracy." There is no doubt that the classes possessing property have been facing, since 1848, all social questions with an average of honesty, earnestness, and good feeling which has no parallel since the days of the Tudors, and that hundreds and thousands of "gentlemen and ladies" in Great Britain now are saying, "Show what we ought to do to be just to the workman, and we will do it, whatsoever it costs." They may not be always correct (though they generally are so) in their conceptions of what ought to be done: but their purpose is good and righteous: and those who hold it are daily increasing in number. The love of justice and mercy toward the handicraftsman is spreading rapidly as it never did before in any nation upon earth; and if any man still represents the holders of property, as a class, as the enemies of those whom they employ, desiring their slavery and their ignorance, I believe that he is a liar and a child of the devil, and that he is at his father's old work, slandering and dividing between man and man. These words may be severe: but they are deliberate; and working men are, I hope, sufficiently accustomed to hear me call a spade a spade, when I am pleading for them, to allow me to do the same when I am pleading to them.

Of the disappointing experiences which I have had I shall say nothing, save in as far as I can, by alluding to them, point out to the working man the causes which still keep him weak: but I am bound to say that those disappointments have strengthened my conviction that this book, in the main, speaks the truth.

I do not allude, of course, to the thoughts and feelings of the hero. They are compounded of right and wrong, and such as I judged (and working men whom I am proud to number among my friends have assured me that I judged rightly) that a working man of genius would feel during the course of his self-education. These thoughts and feelings (often inconsistent and contradictory to each other), stupid, or careless, or ill-willed persons, have represented as my own

opinions, having, as it seems to me, turned the book upside down before they began to read it. I am bound to pay the working men, and their organs in the press, the compliment of saying that no such misrepresentations proceeded from them. However deeply some of them may have disagreed with me, all of them, as far as I have been able to judge, had sense to see what I meant; and so, also, have the organs of the High-Church party, to whom, differing from them on many points, I am equally bound to offer my thanks for their fairness. But, indeed, the way in which this book, in spite of its crudities, has been received by persons of all ranks and opinions, who instead of making me an offender for a word, have taken the book heartily and honestly, in the spirit and not in the letter, has made me most hopeful for the British mind, and given me a strong belief that, in spite of all foppery, luxury, covetousness, and unbelief, the English heart is still strong and genial, able and willing to do and suffer great things, as soon as the rational way of doing and suffering them becomes plain. Had I written this book merely to please my own fancy, this would he a paltry criterion, at once illogical and boastful: but I wrote it, God knows, in the fear of God, that I might speak what seems to me the truth of God. I trusted in Him to justify me, in spite of my own youth, inexperience, hastiness, clumsiness; and He has done it; and, I trust, will do it to the end.

And now, what shall I say to you, my friends, about the future? Your destiny is still in your own hands. For the last seven years you have let it slip through your fingers. If you are better off than you were in 1848, you owe it principally to those laws of political economy (as they are called), which I call the brute natural accidents of supply and demand, or to the exertions which have been made by upright men of the very classes whom demagogues taught you to consider as your natural enemies. Pardon me if I seem severe; but, as old Aristotle has it, "Both parties being my friends, it is a sacred duty to honour truth first." And is this not the truth? How little have the working men done to

carry out that idea of association in which, in 1848-9, they were all willing to confess their salvation lay. Had the money which was wasted in the hapless Preston strike been wisely spent in relieving the labour-market by emigration, or in making wages more valuable by enabling the workman to buy from co-operative stores and mills his necessaries at little above cost price, how much sorrow and heart-burning might have been saved to the iron-trades. Had the real English endurance and courage which was wasted in that strike been employed in the cause of association, the men might have been, ere now, far happier than they are ever likely to be, without the least injury to the masters. What, again, has been done toward developing the organisation of the Trades' Unions into its true form, Association for distribution, from its old, useless, and savage form of Association for the purpose of resistance to masters - a war which is at first sight hopeless, even were it just, because the opposite party holds in his hand the supplies of his foe as well as his own, and therefore can starve him out at his leisure? What has been done, again, toward remedying the evils of the slop system, which this book especially exposed? The true method for the working men, if they wished to save their brothers and their brothers' wives and daughters from degradation, was to withdraw their custom from the slopsellers, and to deal, even at a temporary increase of price, with associate workmen. Have they done so? They can answer for themselves. In London (as in the country towns), the paltry temptation of buying in the cheapest market has still been too strong for the labouring man. In Scotland and in the North of England, thank God, the case has been very different; and to the North I must look still, as I did when I wrote Alton Locke, for the strong men in whose hands lies the destiny of the English handicraftsman.

God grant that the workmen of the South of England may bestir themselves ere it be too late, and discover that the only defence against want is self-restraint; the only defence against slavery, obedience to rule; and that, instead of giving

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themselves up, bound hand and foot, by their own fancy for a "freedom" which is but selfish and conceited licence, to the brute accidents of the competitive system, they may begin to organise among themselves associations for buying and selling the necessaries of life, which may enable them to weather the dark season of high prices and stagnation, which is certain, sooner or later, to follow in the footsteps of war.

On politics I have little to say. My belief remains unchanged that true Christianity and true monarchy also, are not only compatible with, but require as their necessary complement, true freedom for every man of every class; and that the Charter, now defunct, was just as wise and as righteous a "Reform Bill" as any which England had yet had, or was likely to have. But I frankly say that my experience of the last five years gives me little hope of any great development of the true democratic principle in Britain, because it gives me little sign that the many are fit for it. Remember always that Democracy means a government not merely by numbers of isolated individuals, but by a Demos - by men accustomed to live in Demoi, or corporate bodies, and accustomed, therefore, to the self-control, obedience to law, and self-sacrificing public spirit, without which a corporate body cannot exist: but that a "democracy" of mere numbers is no democracy, but a mere brute "arithmocracy," which is certain to degenerate into an "ochlocracy," or government by the mob, in which the numbers have no real share: an oligarchy of the fiercest, the noisiest, the rashest, and the most shameless, which is surely swallowed up either by a despotism, as in France, or as in Athens, by utter national ruin, and helpless slavery to a foreign invader. Let the workmen of Britain train themselves in the corporate spirit, and in the obedience and self-control which it brings, as they easily can in associations, and bear in mind always that only he who can obey is fit to rule; and then, when they are fit for it, the Charter may come, or things, I trust, far better than the Charter; and till they have done so, let them thank the just and merciful Heavens for keeping out of their hands any

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power, and for keeping off their shoulders any responsibility, which they would not be able to use aright. I thank God heartily, this day, that I have no share in the government of Great Britain; and I advise my working friends to do the same, and to believe that, when they are fit to take their share therein, all the powers of earth cannot keep them from taking it; and that, till then, happy is the man who does the duty which lies nearest him, who educates his family, raises his class, performs his daily work as to God and to his country, not merely to his employer and himself; for it is only he that is faithful over a few things who will be made, or will be happy in being made, ruler over many things.

Yours ever,

C. K.

# ALTON LOCKE,

# TAILOR AND POET.

## CHAPTER I.

#### A Poet's Childhood.

I AM a Cockney among Cockneys. Italy and the Tropics, the Highlands and Devonshire, I know only in dreams. Even the Surrey Hills, of whose loveliness I have heard so much, are to me a distant fairy-land, whose gleaming ridges I am worthy only to behold afar. With the exception of two journeys, never to be forgotten, my knowledge of England is bounded by the horizon which encircles Richmond Hill.

My earliest recollections are of a suburban street; of its jumble of little shops and little terraces, each exhibiting some fresh variety of capricious ugliness; the little scraps of garden before the doors, with their dusty, stunted lilacs and balsam poplars, were my only forests; my only wild animals, the dingy, merry sparrows, who quarrelled fearlessly on my window-sill, ignorant of trap or gun. From my earliest childhood, through long nights of sleepless pain, as the midnight brightened into dawn, and the glaring lamps grew pale, I used to listen, with a pleasant awe, to the ceaseless roll of the market-waggons, bringing up to the great city the treasures of the gay green country, the land of fruits and flowers, for which I have yearned all my life in vain. They seemed to my boyish fancy mysterious messengers from another world; the silent, lonely night, in which they were the only moving things, added to the wonder. I used to get out of bed to gaze at them, and envy the coarse men and sluttish women who attended them, their labour among verdant plants and rich brown mould, on breezy slopes, under Alton Locke.

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God's own clear sky. I fancied that they learnt what I knew I should have learnt there; I knew not then that "the eye only sees that which it brings with it the power of seeing." When will their eyes be opened? When will priests go forth into the highways and the hedges, and preach to the ploughman and the gipsy the blessed news, that there too, in every thicket and fallow-field, is the house of God, — there, too, the gate of Heaven?

I do not complain that I am a Cockney. That, too, is God's gift. He made me one, that I might learn to feel for poor wretches who sit stifled in reeking garrets and workrooms, drinking in disease with every breath, - bound in their prison-house of brick and iron, with their own funeral pall hanging over them, in that canopy of fog and poisonous smoke, from their cradle to their grave. I have drunk of the cup of which they drink. And so I have learnt - if, indeed, I have learnt — to be a poet — a poet of the people. That honour, surely, was worth buying with asthma, and rickets, and consumption, and weakness, and - worst of all to me with ugliness. It was God's purpose about me; and, therefore, all circumstances combined to imprison me in London. I used once, when I worshipped circumstance, to fancy it my curse, Fate's injustice to me, which kept me from developing my genius, and asserting my rank among poets. I longed to escape to glorious Italy, or some other southern climate, where natural beauty would have become the very element which I breathed; and yet, what would have come of that? Should I not, as nobler spirits than I have done, have idled away my life in Elysian dreams, singing out like a bird into the air, inarticulately, purposeless, for mere joy and fulness of heart; and taking no share in the terrible questionings, the terrible strugglings of this great, awful, blessed time - feeling no more the pulse of the great heart of England stirring me? I used, as I said, to call it the curse of circumstance that I was a sickly, decrepit Cockney. My mother used to tell me that it was the cross which God had given me to bear. I know now that she was right there. She used to say that my disease was God's will. I do not think, though, that she spoke right there also. I think that it was the will of the world and of the devil, of man's avarice and laziness and ignorance. And so would my readers, perhaps, had they seen the shop in the city where I was born and nursed, with its little garrets reeking with

human breath, its kitchens and areas with noisome sewers. A sanitary reformer would not be long in guessing the cause of my unhealthiness. He would not rebuke me — nor would she, sweet soul! now thas she is at rest in bliss — for my wild longings to escape, for my envying the very flies and sparrows their wings that I might flee miles away into the country, and breathe the air of heaven once, and die. I have had my wish, I have made two journeys far away into the country, and they have been enough for me.

My mother was a widow. My father, whom I cannot recollect, was a small retail tradesman in the City. He was unfortunate; and when he died, my mother came down, and lived penuriously enough, I knew not how till I grew older, down in that same suburban street. She had been brought up an Independent. After my father's death she became a Baptist, from conscientious scruples. She considered the Baptists, as I do, as the only sect who thorougly embody the Calvinistic doctrines. She held it, as I do, an absurd and impious thing for those who believe mankind to be children of the devil till they have been consciously "converted," to baptise unconscious infants and give them the sign of God's mercy on the mere chance of that mercy being intended for them. When God had proved by converting them, that they were not reprobate and doomed to hell by His absolute and eternal will, then, and not till then, dare man baptise them into His name. She dared not palm a presumptuous fiction on herself, and call it "charity." So, though we had both been christened during my father's lifetime, she purposed to have us rebaptised, if ever that happened - which, in her sense of the word, never happened, I am afraid, to me.

She gloried in her dissent; for she was sprung from old Puritan blood, which had flowed again and again beneath the knife of Star-Chamber butchers, and on the battle-fields of Naseby and Sedgemoor. And on winter evenings she used to sit with her Bible on her knee, while I and my little sister Susan stood beside her and listened to the stories of Gideon and Barak, and Samson and Jephthah, till her eye kindled up, and her thoughts passed forth from that old Hebrew time home into those English times which she fancied, and not untruly, like them. And we used to shudder, and yet listen with a strange fascination, as she told us how her ancestor called his seven sons off their small Cambridge farm, and

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horsed and armed them himself to follow behind Cromwell, and smite kings and prelates with "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Whether she were right or wrong, what is it to me? What is it now to her, thank God? But those stories, and the strict, stern Puritan education, learnt from the Independents and not the Baptists, which accompanied them, had their effect on me, for good and ill.

My mother moved by rule and method; by God's law, as she considered, and that only. She seldom smiled. Her word was absolute. She never commanded twice, without punishing. And yet there were abysses of unspoken tenderness in her, as well as clear, sound, womanly sense and insight. But she thought herself as much bound to keep down all tenderness as if she had been some ascetic of the middle ages - so do extremes meet! It was "carnal," she considered. She had as yet no right to have any "spiritual affection" for us. We were still "children of wrath and of the devil," - not yet "convinced of sin," "converted, born again." She had no more spiritual bond with us, she thought, than she had with a heathen or a Papist. She dared not even pray for our conversion, earnestly as she prayed on every other subject. For though the majority of her sect would have done so, her clear logical sense would yield to no such tender inconsistency. Had it not been decided from all eternity? We were elect, or we were reprobate. Could her prayers alter that? If He had chosen us, He would call us in His own good time: and, if not, -. Only, again and again, as I afterwards discovered from a journal of hers, she used to beseech God with agonised tears to set her mind at rest by revealing to her His will towards us. For that comfort she could at least rationally pray. But she received no answer. Poor, beloved mother! If thou couldst not read the answer, written in every flower and every sunbeam, written in the very fact of our existence here at all, what answer would have sufficed thee?

And yet, with all this, she kept the strictest watch over our morality. Fear, of course, was the only motive she employed; for how could our still carnal understandings be affected with love to God? And love to herself was too paltry and temporary to be urged by one who knew that life was uncertain, and who was always trying to go down to the deepest eternal ground and reason of everything, and take her stand upon that. So our god, or gods rather, till we were twelve years old, were hell, the rod, the ten commandments, and public opinion. Yet under them, not they, but something deeper far, both in her and us, preserved us pure. Call it natural character, conformation of the spirit, - conformation of the brain, if you like, if you are a scientific man and a phrenologist. I never yet could dissect and map out my own being, or my neighbour's, as you analysts do. To me, I myself, ay, and each person round me, seem one inexplicable whole; to take away a single faculty whereof, is to destroy the harmony, the meaning, the life of all the rest. That there is a duality in us - a lifelong battle between flesh and spirit - we all, alas! know well enough; but which is flesh and which is spirit, what philosophers in these days can tell us? Still less had we two found out any such duality or discord in ourselves; for we were gentle and obedient children. pleasures of the world did not tempt us. We did not know of their existence; and no foundlings educated in a nunnery ever grew up in more virginal and spotless innocence - if ignorance be such - than did Susan and I.

The narrowness of my sphere of observation only concentrated the faculty into greater strength. The few natural objects which I met — and they, of course, constituted my whole outer world (for art and poetry were tabooed both by my rank and my mother's sectarianism, and the study of human beings only develops itself as the boy grows into the man) these few natural objects, I say, I studied with intense keenness. I knew every leaf and flower in the little front garden; every cabbage and rhubarb-plant in Battersea-fields was wonderful and beautiful to me. Clouds and water I learnt to delight in, from my occasional lingerings on Battersea-bridge, and yearning westward looks toward the sun setting above rich meadows and wooded gardens, to me a forbidden El Dorado.

I brought home wild-flowers and chance beetles and butterflies, and pored over them, not in the spirit of a naturalist, but of a poet. They were to me God's angels, shining in coats of mail and fairy masquerading. I envied them their beauty, their freedom. At last I made up my mind, in the simple tenderness of a child's conscience, that it was wrong to rob them of the liberty for which I pined, — to take them away from the beautiful broad country whither I longed to follow them; and I used to keep them a day or two, and then, regretfully, carry them back, and set them loose on the first opportunity, with many compunctions of heart, when, as generally happened, they had been starved to death in the mean time.

They were my only recreations after the hours of the small day-school at the neighbouring chapel, where I learnt to read, write, and sum; except, now and then, a London walk, with my mother holding my hand tight the whole way. She would have hoodwinked me, stopped my ears with cotton, and led in a string, — kind, careful soul! — if it had been reasonably safe on a crowded pavement, so fearful was she lest I should be polluted by some chance sight or sound of the Babylon which she feared and hated — almost as much as she did the Bishops.

The only books which I knew were the Pilgrim's Progress and the Bible. The former was my Shakspeare, my Dante, my Vedas, by which I explained every fact and phenomenon of life. London was the City of Destruction, from which I was to flee; I was Christian; the Wicket of the Way of Life I had strangely identified with the turnpike at Batterseabridge end; and the rising ground of Mortlake and Wimbledon was the Land of Beulah — the Enchanted Mountains of the Shepherds. If I could once get there, I was saved: — a carnal view, perhaps, and a childish one; but there was a dim meaning and human reality in it nevertheless.

As for the Bible, I knew nothing of it really, beyond the Old Testament. Indeed, the life of Christ had little chance of becoming interesting to me. My mother had given me formally to understand that it spoke of matters too deep for me; that, "till converted, the natural man could not understand the things of God:" and I obtained little more explanation of it from the two unintelligible, dreary sermons to which I listened every dreary Sunday, in terror lest a chance shuffle of my feet, or a hint of drowsiness, - the natural result of the stifling gallery and glaring windows and gas-lights, --- should bring down a lecture and a punishment when I returned home. Oh, those "sabbaths!" - days, not of rest, but utter weariness, when the beetles and the flowers were put by, and there was nothing to fill up the long vacuity but books of which I could not understand a word; when play, laughter, or even a stare out of window at the sinful, merry, sabbath-breaking promenaders, were all forbidden, as if the commandment had

run, "In it thou shalt take no manner of amusement, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter." By what strange ascetic perversion has that got to mean "keeping holy the sabbathday?"

Yet there was an hour's relief in the evening, when either my mother told us Old Testament stories, or some preacher or two came in to supper after meeting; and I used to sit in the corner and listen to their talk; not that I understood a word, but the mere struggle to understand — the mere watching my mother's earnest face — my pride in the reverent flattery with which the worthy men addressed her as "a mother in Israel," were enough to fill up the blank for me till bed-time.

Of "vital Christianity" I heard much; but, with all my efforts, could find out nothing. Indeed, it did not seem interesting enough to tempt me to find out much. It seemed a set of doctrines, believing in which was to have a magical effect on people, by saving them from the everlasting torture due to sins and temptations which I had never felt. Now and then, believing, in obedience to my mother's assurances, and the solemn prayers of the ministers about me, that I was a child of hell, and a lost and miserable sinner, I used to have accesses of terror, and fancy that I should surely wake next morning in everlasting flames. Once I put my finger a moment into the fire, as certain Papists, and Protestants too, have done, not only to themselves, but to their disciples, to see if it would be so very dreadfully painful; with what conclusions the reader may judge. . . . Still, I could not keep up the excitement. Why should I? The fear of pain is not the fear of sin, that I know of; and, indeed, the thing was unreal altogether in my case, and my heart, my common sense rebelled against it again and again; till at last I got a terrible whipping for taking my little sister's part, and saying that if she was to die, - so gentle, and obedient, and affectionate as she was. - God would be very unjust in sending her to hell-fire, and that I was quite certain He would do no such thing - unless He were the Devil: an opinion which I have since seen no reason to change. The confusion between the King of Hell and the King of Heaven has cleared up, thank God, since then!

So I was whipped and put to bed — the whipping altering my secret heart just about as much as the dread of hell-fire did.

I speak as a Christian man — an orthodox Churchman (if

you require that shibboleth). Was I so very wrong? What was there in the idea of religion which was presented to me at home to captivate me? What was the use of a child's hearing of "God's great love manifested in the scheme of redemption," when he heard, in the same breath, that the effects of that redemption were practically confined only to one human being out of a thousand, and that the other nine hundred and ninetynine were lost and damned from their birth-hour to all eternity -not only by the absolute will and reprobation of God (though that infernal blasphemy I heard often enough), but also, putting that out of the question, by the mere fact of being born of Adam's race? And this to a generation to whom God's love shines out in every tree and flower and hedge-side bird; to whom the daily discoveries of science are revealing that love in every microscopic animalcule which peoples the stagnant pool! This to working men, whose craving is only for some idea which shall give equal hopes, claims, and deliverances, to all mankind alike! This to working men, who, in the smiles of their innocent children, see the heaven which they have lost - the messages of baby-cherubs, made in God's own image! This to me, to whom every butterfly, every look at my little sister, contradicted the lie! You may say that such thoughts were too deep for a child; that I am ascribing to my boyhood the scepticism of my manhood; but it is not so; and what went on in my mind goes on in the minds of thousands. It is the cause of the contempt into which not merely sectarian Protestantism, but Christianity altogether, has fallen, in the minds of the thinking workmen. Clergymen, who anathematise us for wandering into Unitarianism-you, you have driven us thither. You must find some explanation of the facts of Christianity more in accordance with the truths which we do know, and will live and die for, or you can never hope to make us Christians; or, if we do return to the true fold, it will be as I returned, after long, miserable years of darkling error, to a higher truth than most of you have yet learned to preach.

But those old Jewish heroes did fill my whole heart and soul. I learnt from them lessons which I never wish to unlearn. Whatever else I saw about them, this I saw, — that they were patriots, deliverers from that tyranny and injustice from which the child's heart, — "child of the devil" though you may call him, — instinctively, and, as I believe, by a divine inspiration, revolts. Moses leading his people out of Egypt; Gideon, Barak, and Samson, slaying their oppressors; David, hiding in the mountains from the tyrant, with his little band of those who had fled from the oppressions of an aristocracy of Nabals; Jehu, executing God's vengeance on the kings — they were my heroes, my models; they mixed themselves up with the dim legends about the Reformation-martyrs, Cromwell and Hampden, Sidney and Monmouth, which I had heard at my mother's knee. Not that the perennial oppression of the masses, in all ages and countries, had yet risen on me as an awful, torturing, fixed idea. I fancied, poor fool! that tyranny was the exception, and not the rule. But it was the mere sense of abstract pity and justice which was delighted in me. I thought that these were old fairy tales, such as never need be realised again. I learnt otherwise in after years.

I have often wondered since, why all cannot read the same lesson as I did in those old Hebrew Scriptures — that they, of all books in the world, have been wrested into proofs of the divine right of kings, the eternal necessity of slavery! But the eye only sees what it brings with it, the power of seeing. The upper classes, from their first day at school to their last day at college, read of nothing but the glories of Salamis and Marathon, of freedom and of the old republics. And what comes of it? No more than their tutors know will come of it, when they thrust into the boys' hands books which give the lie in every page to their own political superstitions.

But when I was just turned of thirteen, an altogether new fairy-land was opened to me by some missionary tracts and journals, which were lent to my mother by the ministers. Pacific coral islands and volcanoes, cocoa-nut groves and bananas, graceful savages with paint and feathers --- what an El Dorado! How I devoured them and dreamt of them, and went there in fancy, and preached small sermons as I lay in bed at night to Tahitians and New-Zealanders, though I confess my spiritual eyes were, just as my physical eyes would have been, far more busy with the scenery than with the souls of my audience. However, that was the place for me, I saw clearly. And one day, I recollect it well, in the little dingy, foul, reeking, twelve-foot-square back-yard, where huge smoky party-walls shut out every breath of air and almost all the light of heaven, I had climbed up between the water-butt and the angle of the wall for the purpose of fishing out of the dirty fluid which lay there, crusted with soot and alive with

insects, to be renewed only three times in the seven days, some of the great larvæ and kicking monsters which made up a large item in my list of wonders: all of a sudden the horror of the place came over me; those grim prison-walls above, with their canopy of lurid smoke; the dreary, sloppy, broken pavement; the horrible stench of the stagnant cesspools; the utter want of form, colour, life, in the whole place, crushed me down, without my being able to analyse my feelings as I can now; and then came over me that dream of Pacific Islands, and the free, open sea; and I slid down from my perch, and bursting into tears threw myself upon my knees in the court, and prayed aloud to God to let me be a missionary.

Half fearfully I let out my wishes to my mother when she came home. She gave me no answer; but, as I found out afterwards, — too late, alas! for her, if not for me, — she, like Mary, had "laid up all these things, and treasured them in her heart."

You may guess then my delight when, a few days afterwards, I heard that a real live missionary was coming to take tea with us. A man who had actually been in New Zealand! - the thought was rapture. I painted him to myself over and over again; and when, after the first burst of fancy, I recollected that he might possibly not have adopted the native costume of that island, or, if he had, that perhaps it would look too strange for him to wear it about London, I settled within myself that he was to be a tall, venerable-looking man, like the portraits of old Puritan divines which adorned our day-room; and as I had heard that "he was powerful in prayer," I adorned his right-hand with that mystic weapon "all-prayer," with which Christian, when all other means have failed, finally vanquished the fiend - which instrument, in my mind, was somewhat after the model of an infernal sort of bill or halbert - all hooks, edges, spikes, and crescents which I had passed, shuddering, once, in the hand of an old suit of armour in Wardour-street.

He came — and with him the two ministers who often drank tea with my mother; both of whom, as they played some small part in the drama of my after-life, I may as well describe here. The elder was a little, sleek, silver-haired old man, with a blank, weak face, just like a white rabbit. He loved me, and I loved him too, for there were always lollipops in his pocket for me and Susan. Had his head been equal to his heart! — but what has been was to be — and the dissenting clergy, with a few noble exceptions among the Independents, are not the strong men of the day — none know that better than the workmen. The old man's name was Bowyer. The other, Mr. Wigginton, was a younger man; tall, grim, dark, bilious, with a narrow forehead, retreating suddenly from his eyebrows up to a conical peak of black hair over his ears. He preached "higher doctrine," *i. e.*, more fatalist and antinomian than his gentler colleague, — and, having also a stentorian voice, was much the greater favourite at the chapel. I hated him — and if any man ever deserved hatred, he did.

Well, they came. My heart was in my mouth as I opened the door to them, and sank back again to the very lowest depths of my inner man when my eyes fell on the face and figure of the missionary - a squat, red-faced, pig-eyed, lowbrowed man, with great soft lips that opened back to his very ears; sensuality, conceit, and cunning marked on every feature - an innate vulgarity, from which the artisan and the child recoil with an instinct as true, perhaps truer, than that of the courtier, showing itself in every tone and motion - I shrank into a corner, so crestfallen that I could not even exert myself to hand round the bread-and-butter, for which I got duly scolded afterwards. Oh! that man! - how he bawled and contradicted, and laid down the law, and spoke to my mother in a fondling, patronising way, which made me, I knew not why, boil over with jealousy and indignation. How he filled his teacup half full of the white sugar to buy which my mother had curtailed her yesterday's dinner - how he drained the few remaining drops of the three-pennyworth of cream, with which Susan was stealing off to keep it as an unexpected treat for my mother at breakfast the next morning - how he talked of the natives, not as St. Paul might of his converts, but as a planter might of his slaves; overlaying all his unintentional confessions of his own greed and prosperity, with cant, flimsy enough for even a boy to see through, while his eyes were not blinded with the superstition that a man must be pious who sufficiently interlards his speech with a jumble of old English picked out of our translation of the New Testament. Such was the man I saw. I don't deny that all are not like him. I believe there are noble men of all denominations, doing their best according to their light, all over the world; but such was the one I saw — and the men who are sent home to plead the missionary cause, whatever the men may be like who stay behind and work, are, from my small experience, too often such. It appears to me to be the rule that many of those who go abroad as missionaries, go simply because they are men of such inferior powers and attainments that if they stayed in England they would starve.

Three parts of his conversation, after all, was made up of abuse of the missionaries of the Church of England, not for doing nothing, but for being so much more successful than his own sect; — accusing them, in the same breath, of being just of the inferior type of which he was himself, and also of being mere University fine gentlemen. Really, I did not wonder, upon his own showing, at the savages preferring them to him; and I was pleased to hear the old white-headed minister gently interpose at the end of one of his tirades — "We must not be jealous, my brother, if the Establishment has discovered what we, I hope, shall find out some day, that it is not wise to draft our missionaries from the offscouring of the ministry, and serve God with that which costs us nothing except the expense of providing for them beyond seas."

There was somewhat of a roguish twinkle in the old man's eye as he said it, which emboldened me to whisper a question to him.

"Why is it, Sir, that in olden times the heathens used to crucify the missionaries and burn them, and now they give them beautiful farms, and build them houses, and carry them about on their backs?"

The old man seemed a little puzzled, and so did the company, to whom he smilingly retailed my question.

As nobody seemed inclined to offer a solution, I ventured one myself.

"Perhaps the heathens are grown better than they used to be?"

"The heart of man," answered the tall, dark minister, "is, and ever was, equally at enmity with God."

"Then, perhaps," I ventured again, "what the missionaries preach now is not quite the same as what the missionaries used to preach in St. Paul's time, and so the heathens are not so angry at it?"

My mother looked thunder at me, and so did all except my white-headed friend, who said, gently enough,

# "It may be that the child's words come from God."

Whether they did or not, the child took very good care to speak no more words till he was alone with his mother; and then finished off that disastrous evening by a punishment for the indecency of saying, before his little sister, that he thought it "a great pity the missionaries taught black people to wear ugly coats and trousers; they must have looked so much handsomer running about with nothing on but feathers and strings of shells."

So the missionary dream died out of me, by a foolish and illogical antipathy enough; though, after all, it was a child of my imagination only, not of my heart; and the fancy, having bred it, was able to kill it also. And David became my ideal. To be a shepherd-boy, and sit among beautiful mountains, and sing hymns of my own making, and kill lions and bears, with now and then the chance of a stray giant - what a glorious life! And if David slew giants with a sling and a stone, why should not I? - at all events, one ought to know how; so I made a sling out of an old garter and some string, and began to practise in the little backyard. But my first shot broke a neighbour's window, value seven-pence, and the next flew back in my face, and cut my head open; so I was sent supperless to bed for a week, till the seven-pence had been duly saved out of my hungry stomach — and, on the whole, I found the hymn-writing side of David's character the more feasible; so I tried, and with much brains-beating, committed the following lines to a scrap of dirty paper. And it was strangely significant, that in this, my first attempt, there was an instinctive denial of the very doctrine of "particular redemption," which I had been hearing all my life, and an instinctive yearning after the very Being in whom I had been told I had "no part nor lot" till I was "converted." Here they are. I am not ashamed to call them, - doggerel though they be, - an inspiration from Him of whom they speak. If not from Him, good readers, from whom?

> Jesus, He loves one and all; Jesus, He loves children small; Their souls are sitting round His feet, On high, before His mercy-seat.

When on earth He walked in shame, Children small unto Him came; At his feet they knelt and prayed, On their heads His hands He laid. Came a spirit on them then, Greater than of mighty men; A spirit gentle, meek, and mild, A spirit good for king and child.

Oh! that spirit give to me, Jesus, Lord, where'er I be! So \_\_\_\_\_

But I did not finish them, not seeing very clearly what to do with that spirit when I obtained it; for, indeed, it seemed a much finer thing to fight material Apollyons with material swords of iron, like my friend Christian, or to go bear and lion hunting with David, than to convert heathens by meekness at least, if true meekness was at all like that of the missionary whom I had lately seen.

I showed the verses in secret to my little sister. My mother heard us singing them together, and extorted, grimly enough, a confession of the authorship. I expected to be punished for them (I was accustomed weekly to be punished for all sorts of deeds and words, of the harmfulness of which I had not a notion). It was, therefore, an agreeable surprise when the old minister, the next Sunday evening, patted my head, and praised me for them.

"A hopeful sign of young grace, brother," said he to the dark tall man. "May we behold here an infant Timothy!"

"Bad doctrine, brother, in that first line — bad doctrine, which I am sure he did not learn from our excellent sister here. Remember, my boy, henceforth, that Jesus does not love one and all — not that I am angry with you. The carnal mind cannot be expected to understand divine things, any more than the beasts that perish. Nevertheless, the blessed message of the Gospel stands true, that Christ loves none but His Bride, the Church. His merits, my poor child, extend to none but the elect. Ah! my dear sister Locke, how delightful to think of the narrow way of discriminating grace! How it enhances the believer's view of his own exceeding privileges, to remember that there be few that be saved!"

I said nothing. I thought myself only too lucky to escape so well from the danger of having done anything out of my own head. But somehow Susan and I never altered it when we sang it to ourselves.

I thought it necessary for the sake of those who might read my story, to string together these few scattered recollections of my boyhood, - to give, as it were, some sample of the cotyledon leaves of my young life-plant, and of the soil in which it took root, ere it was transplanted - but I will not forestal my sorrows. After all, they have been but types of the woes of thousands who "die and give no sign." Those to whom the struggles of every, even the meanest, human being are scenes of an awful drama, every incident of which is to be noted with reverent interest, will not find them void of meaning; while the life which opens in my next chapter is, perhaps, full enough of mere dramatic interest (and whose life is not, were it but truly written?) to amuse merely as a novel. Ay, grim and real is the action and suffering which begins with my next page, - as you yourself would have found, highborn reader (if such chance to light upon this story), had you found yourself at fifteen, after a youth of convent-like seclusion, settled, apparently for life - in a tailor's workshop. Ay - laugh! - we tailors can quote poetry as well as

make your court-dresses:

You sit in a cloud and sing, like pictured angels, And say the world runs smooth — while right below Welters the black fermenting heap of griefs Whereon your state is built.

# CHAPTER II.

#### The Tailors' Workroom.

HAVE you done laughing? Then I will tell you how the thing came to pass.

My father had a brother, who had steadily risen in life, in proportion as my father fell. They had both begun life in a grocer's shop. My father saved enough to marry, when of middle age, a woman of his own years, and set up a little shop, where there were far too many such already, in the hope — to him, as to the rest of the world, quite just and innocent — of drawing away as much as possible of his neighbours' custom. He failed, died — as so many small tradesmen do — of bad debts and a broken heart, and left us beggars. His brother, more prudent, had, in the mean time, risen to be foreman; then he married, on the strength of his handsome person, his master's blooming widow; and rose and rose, year by year, till, at the time of which I speak, he was owner of a first-rate grocery establishment in the City, and a pleasant villa near Herne Hill, and had a son, a year or two older than myself, at King's College, preparing for Cambridge and the Church that being now-a-days the approved method of converting a tradesman's son into a gentleman, — whereof let artisans, and gentlemen also, take note.

My aristocratic readers - if I ever get any, which I pray God I may-may be surprised at so great an inequality of fortune between two cousins; but the thing is common in our class. In the higher ranks, a difference in income implies none in education or manners, and the poor "gentleman" is a fit companion for dukes and princes - thanks to the old usages of Norman chivalry, which after all were a democratic protest against the sovereignty, if not of rank, at least of money. The knight, however penniless, was the prince's equal, even his superior, from whose hands he must receive knighthood; and the "squire of low degree," who honourably earned his spurs, rose also into that guild, whose qualifications, however barbaric, were still higher ones than any which the pocket But in the commercial classes money most truly and gives. fearfully "makes the man." A difference in income, as you go lower, makes more and more difference in the supply of the common necessaries of life; and worse - in education and manners, in all which polishes the man, till you may see often, as in my case, one cousin a Cambridge undergraduate, and the other a tailor's journeyman.

My uncle one day came down to visit us, resplendent in a black velvet waistcoat, thick gold chain, and acres of shirtfront; and I and Susan were turned to feed on our own curiosity and awe in the back-yard, while he and my mother were closeted together for an hour or so in the living-room. When he was gone, my mother called me in, and with eyes which would have been tearful had she allowed herself such a weakness before us, told me very solemnly and slowly, as if to impress upon me the awfulness of the matter, that I was to be sent to a tailor's workrooms the next day.

And an awful step it was in her eyes, as she laid her hands on my head and murmured to herself, "Behold, I send you forth as a lamb in the midst of wolves. Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." And then, rising hastily to conceal her own emotion, fled up-stairs, where we could hear her throw herself on her knees by the bedside, and sob piteously.

That evening was spent dolefully enough, in a sermon of warnings against all manner of sins and temptations, the very names of which I had never heard, but to which, as she informed me, I was by my fallen nature altogether prone: and right enough was she in so saying, though, as often happens, the temptations from which I was in real danger were just the ones of which she had no notion — fighting more or less extinct Satans, as Mr. Carlyle says, and quite unconscious of the real, modern, man-devouring Satan close at her elbow.

To me, in spite of all the terror which she tried to awaken in me, the change was not unwelcome; at all events, it promised me food for my eyes and my ears, - some escape from the narrow cage in which, though I hardly dare confess it to myself, I was beginning to pine. Little I dreamt to what a darker cage I was to be translated! Not that I accuse my uncle of neglect or cruelty, though the thing was altogether of his commanding. He was as generous to us as society required him to be. We were entirely dependant on him, as my mother told me then for the first time, for support. And had he not a right to dispose of my person, having bought it by an allowance to my mother of five-and-twenty pounds a year? I did not forget that fact; the thought of my dependance on him rankled in me, till it almost bred hatred in me to a man who had certainly never done or meant anything to me but in kindness. For what could he make me but a tailor - or a shoemaker? A pale, consumptive, rickety, weakly boy, all forehead and no muscle - have not clothes and shoes been from time immemorial the appointed work of such? The fact that that weakly frame is generally compensated by a proportionally increased activity of brain, is too unimportant to enter into the calculations of the great King Laissez-faire. Well, my dear Society, it is you that suffer for the mistake, after all, more than we. If you do tether your cleverest artisans on tailors' shopboards and cobblers' benches, and they - as sedentary folk will -- fall a thinking, and come to strange conclusions thereby, they really ought to be much more thankful to you than you are to them. If Thomas Cooper had passed his first five-and-twenty years at the plough tail instead of the shoemaker's awl, many words would have been left unsaid which, once spoken, working men are not likely to forget.

Alton Locke.

With a beating heart I shambled along by my mother's side next day to Mr. Smith's shop, in a street off Piccadilly; and stood by her side, just within the door, waiting till some one would condescend to speak to us, and wondering when the time would come when I, like the gentlemen who skipped up and down the shop, should shine glorious in patent-leather boots, and a blue satin tie sprigged with gold.

Two personages, both equally magnificent, stood talking with their backs to us; and my mother, in doubt, like myself, as to which of them was the tailor, at last summoned up courage to address the wrong one, by asking if he were Mr. Smith.

The person addressed answered by a most polite smile and bow, and assured her that he had not that honour; while the other he-he'ed, evidently a little flattered by the mistake, and then uttered in a tremendous voice these words:

"I have nothing for you, my good woman — go. Mr. Elliot! how did you come to allow these people to get into the establishment?"

"My name is Locke, sir, and I was to bring my son here this morning."

"Oh — ah! — Mr. Elliot, see to these persons. As I was saying, my lard, the crimson velvet suit, about thirty-five guineas. By-the-by, that coat ours? I thought so — idea grand and light — masses well broken — very fine chiaroscuro about the whole — an aristocratic wrinkle just above the hips — which I flatter myself no one but myself and my friend Mr. Cooke really do understand. The vapid smoothness of the door dummy, my lard, should be confined to the regions of the Strand. Mr. Elliot, where are you? Just be so good as to show his lardship that lovely new thing in drab and bleu foncé. Ah! your lardship can't wait. — Now, my good woman, is this the young man?"

"Yes," said my mother: "and — and — God deal so with you, sir, as you deal with the widow and the orphan."

"Oh — ah — that will depend very much, I should say, on how the widow and the orphan deal with me. Mr. Elliot, take this person into the office and transact the little formalities with her. Jones, take the young man up-stairs to the workroom."

I stumbled after Mr. Jones up a dark, narrow, iron staircase till we emerged through a trap-door into a garret at the top of the house. I recoiled with disgust at the scene before me; and here I was to work — perhaps through life! A low lean-to room, stifling me with the combined odours of human breath and perspiration, stale beer, the sweet sickly smell of gin, and the sour and hardly less disgusting one of new cloth. On the floor, thick with dust and dirt, scraps of stuff and ends of thread, sat some dozen haggard, untidy, shoeless men, with a mingled look of care and recklessness that made me shudder. The windows were tight closed to keep out the cold winter air; and the condensed breath ran in streams down the panes, chequering the dreary out-look of chimney-tops and smoke. The conductor handed me over to one of the men.

"Here, Crossthwaite, take this younker and make a tailor of him. Keep him next you, and prick him up with your needle if he shirks."

He disappeared down the trap-door, and mechanically, as if in a dream, I sat down by the man and listened to his instructions, kindly enough bestowed. But I did not remain in peace two minutes. A burst of chatter rose as the foreman vanished, and a tall, bloated, sharp-nosed young man next me bawled in my ear, —

"I say, young'un, fork out the tin and pay your footing at Conscrumption Hospital."

"What do you mean?"

"Aint he just green? — Down with the stumpy — a tizzy for a pot of half-and-half."

"I never drink beer."

"Then never do," whispered the man at my side; "as sure as hell's hell, it's your only chance."

There was a fierce, deep earnestness in the tone which made me look up at the speaker, but the other instantly chimed in —

"Oh, yer don't, don't yer, my young Father Mathy? then yer'll soon learn it here if yer want to keep yer victuals down."

"And I have promised to take my wages home to my mother."

"O criminy! hark to that, my coves! here's a chap as is going to take the blunt home to his mammy."

"T'aint much of it the old'un 'll see," said another. "Ven yer pockets it at the Cock and Bottle, my kiddy, yer won't find much of it left o' Sunday mornings."

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#### ALTON LOCKE,

"Don't his mother know he's out?" asked another; "and won't ske know it —

> Ven he's sitting in his glory Half-price at the Victory.

Oh! no, we never mentions her — her name is never heard. Certainly not, by no means. Why should it?"

"Well, if yer won't stand a pot," quoth the tall man, "I will, that's all, and blow temperance. 'A short life and a merry one,' says the tailor —

> The ministers talk a great deal about port, And they makes Cape wine very dear, But blow their hi's if ever they tries To deprive a poor cove of his beer.

Here, Sam, run to the Cock and Bottle for a pot of half-andhalf to my score."

A thin, pale lad jumped up and vanished, while my tormentor turned to me:

"I say, young'un, do you know why we're nearer heaven here than our neighbours?"

"I shouldn't have thought so," answered I with a naïveté which raised a laugh, and dashed the tall man for a moment.

"Yer don't? then I'll tell yer. A cause we're a top of the house in the first place, and next place yer'll die here six months sooner nor if yer worked in the room below. Aint that logic and science, Orator?" appealing to Crossthwaite.

"Why?" asked I.

"A cause you get all the other floors' stinks up here as well as your own. Concentrated essence of man's flesh, is this here as you're a breathing. Cellar workroom we calls Rheumatic Ward, because of the damp. Ground-floor's Fever Ward them as don't get typhus gets dysentery, and them as don't get dysentery gets typhus — your nose 'd tell yer why if you opened the back windy. First floor's Ashmy Ward — don't you hear 'um now through the cracks in the boards, a puffing away like a nest of young locomotives? And this here most august and upper-crust cockloft is the Conscrumptive Hospital. First you begins to cough, then you proceeds to expectorate — spittoons, as you see, perwided free gracious for nothing — fined a kivarten if you spits on the floor —

Then your cheeks they grows red, and your nose it grows thin, And your bones they sticks out, till they comes through your skin:

#### TAILOR AND POET.

and then, when you've sufficiently covered the poor dear shivering bare backs of the hairystocracy —

> Die, die, die, Away you fly, Your soul is in the sky!

as the hinspired Shakspeare wittily remarks."

And the ribald lay down on his back, stretched himself out, and pretended to die in a fit of coughing, which last was, alas! no counterfeit, while poor I, shocked and bewildered, let my tears fall fast upon my knees.

tears fall fast upon my knees. "Fine him a pot!" roared one, "for talking about kicking the bucket. He's a nice young man to keep a cove's spirits up, and talk about 'a short life and a merry one." Here comes the heavy. Hand it here to take the taste of that fellow's talk out of my mouth."

"Well, my young'un," recommenced my tormentor, "and how do you like your company?"

"Leave the boy alone," growled Crossthwaite; "don't you see he's crying?"

"Is that anything good to eat? Give me some on it if it is — it'll save me washing my face." And he took hold of my hair and pulled my head back.

"I'll tell you what, Jemmy Downes," said Crossthwaite, in a voice which made him draw back, "if you don't drop that, I'll give you such a taste of my tongue as shall turn you blue."

"You'd better try it on then. Do - only just now - if you please."

"Be quiet, you fool!" said another. "You're a pretty fellow to chaff the orator. He'll slang you up the chimney afore you can get your shoes on."

"Fine him a kivarten for quarrelling," cried another; and the bully subsided into a minute's silence, after a sotto voce — "Blow temperance, and blow all Chartists, say I!" and then delivered himself of his feelings in a doggerel song:

> "Some folks leads coves a dance, With their pledge of temperance, And their plans for donkey sociation; And their pockets full they crams By their patriotic flams, And then swears 'tis for the good of the nation.

#### ALTON LOCKE,

#### But I don't care two inions For political opinions, While I can stand my heavy and my quartern; For to drown dull care within, In baccy, beer, and gin, Is the prime of a working-tailor's fortin!

There's common sense for yer now; hand the pot here."

I recollect nothing more of that day, except that I bent myself to my work with assiduity enough to earn praises from Crossthwaite. It was to be done, and I did it. The only virtue I ever possessed (if virtue it be) is the power of absorbing my whole heart and mind in the pursuit of the moment, however dull or trivial, if there be good reason why it should be pursued at all.

I owe, too, an apology to my readers for introducing all this ribaldry. God knows it is as little to my taste as it can be to theirs, but the thing exists: and those who live, if not by, yet still beside such a state of things, ought to know what the men are like to whose labour, ay, life-blood, they owe their luxuries. They are "their brothers' keepers," let them deny it as they will. Thank God, many are finding that out; and the morals of the working tailors, as well as of other classes of artisans, are rapidly improving: a change which has been brought about partly by the wisdom and kindness of a few master tailors, who have built workshops fit for human beings, and have resolutely stood out against the iniquitous and destructive alterations in the system of employment. Among them I may, and will, whether they like it or not, make honourable mention of Mr. Willis, of St. James's-street, and Mr. Stultz, of Bond-street.

But nine-tenths of the improvement has been owing, not to the masters, but to the men themselves; and who among them, my aristocratic readers, do you think, have been the great preachers and practisers of temperance, thrift, chastity, selfrespect, and education? Who?—shriek not in your Belgravian saloons—the Chartists; the communist Chartists: upon whom you and your venal press heap every kind of cowardly execration and ribald slander. You have found out many things since Peterloo; add that fact to the number.

It may seem strange that I did not tell my mother into what a pandemonium I had fallen, and got her to deliver me; but a delicacy, which was not all evil, kept me back. I shrank from seeming to dislike to earn my daily bread; and still more from seeming to object to what she had appointed for me. Her will had been always law; it seemed a deadly sin to dispute it. I took for granted, too, that she knew what the place was like, and that, therefore, it must be right for me. And when I came home at night, and got back to my beloved missionary stories, I gathered materials enough to occupy my thoughts during the next day's work, and make me blind and deaf to all the evil around me. My mother, poor dear creature, would have denounced my day-dreams sternly enough, had she known of their existence; but were they not holy angels from heaven? guardians sent by that Father, whom I had been taught not to believe in, to shield my senses from pollution?

I was ashamed, too, to mention to my mother the wickedness which I saw and heard. With the delicacy of an innocent boy, I almost imputed the very witnessing of it as a sin to myself; and soon I began to be ashamed of more than the mere sitting by and hearing. I found myself gradually learning slang-insolence, laughing at coarse jokes, taking part in angry conversations; my moral tone was gradually becoming lower; but yet the habit of prayer remained, and every night at my bedside, when I prayed to "be converted and made a child of God," I prayed that the same mercy might be extended to my fellow-workmen, "if they belonged to the number of the elect." Those prayers may have been answered in a wider and deeper sense than I then thought of.

But, altogether, I felt myself in a most distracted, rudderless state. My mother's advice I felt daily less and less inclined to ask. A gulf was opening between us; we were moving in two different worlds, and she saw it, and imputed it to me as a sin; and was the more cold to me by day, and prayed for me (as I knew afterwards) the more passionately while I slept. But help or teacher I had none. I knew not that I had a Father in heaven. How could He be my Father till I was converted? I was a child of the Devil, they told me; and now and then I felt inclined to take them at their word, and behave like one. No sympathising face looked on me out of the wide heaven — off the wide earth, none. I was all boiling with new hopes, new temptations, new passions, new sorrows, and "I looked to the right hand and to the left, and no man cared for my soul."

I had felt myself from the first strangely drawn towards

Crossthwaite, carefully as he seemed to avoid me, except to give me business directions in the workroom. He alone had shown me any kindness; and he, too, alone was untainted with the sin around him. Silent, moody, and preoccupied, he was yet the king of the room. His opinion was always asked, and listened to. His eye always cowed the ribald and the blasphemer; his songs, when he rarely broke out into merriment, were always rapturously applauded. Men hated, and yet respected him. I shrank from him at first, when I heard him called a Chartist; for my dim notions of that class were, that they were a very wicked set of people, who wanted to kill all the soldiers and policemen and respectable people, and rob all the shops of their contents. But, Chartist or none, Chrossthwaite fascinated me. I often found myself neglecting my work to study his face. I liked him, too, because he was as I was - small, pale, and weakly. He might have been five-and-twenty; but his looks, like those of too many a working man, were rather those of a man of forty. Wild grey eyes gleamed out from under huge knitted brows, and a perpendicular wall of brain, too large for his puny body. He was not only, I soon discovered, a water-drinker, but a strict "vegetarian" also; to which, perhaps, he owed a great deal of the almost preternatural clearness, volubility, and sensitiveness of his mind. But whether from his ascetic habits, or the unhealthiness of his trade, the marks of ill-health were upon him; and his sallow cheek, and ever-working lip, proclaimed too surely -

> The fiery soul which, working out its way Fretted the pigmy body to decay; And o'er informed the tenement of clay.

I longed to open my heart to him. Instinctively I felt that he was a kindred spirit. Often, turning round suddenly in the workroom, I caught him watching me with an expression which seemed to say, "Poor boy, and art thou too one of us? Has thou too to fight with poverty and guidelessness, and the cravings of an unsatisfied intellect, as I have done!" But when I tried to speak to him earnestly, his manner was peremptory and repellent. It was well for me that so it was well for me, I see now, that it was not from him my mind received the first lessons in self-development. For guides did come to me in good time, though not such, perhaps, as either my mother or my readers would have chosen for me.

My great desire now was to get knowledge. By getting that I fancied, as most self-educated men are apt to do, I should surely get wisdom. Books, I thought, would tell me all I needed. But where to get the books? And which? I had exhausted our small stock at home; I was sick and tired, without knowing why, of their narrow conventional view of everything. After all, I had been reading them all along, not for their doctrines but for their facts, and knew not where to find more, except in forbidden paths. I dare not ask my mother for books, for I dare not confess to her that religious ones were just what I did not want; and all history, poetry, science, I had been accustomed to hear spoken of as "carnal learning, human philosophy," more or less diabolic and ruinous to the soul. So, as usually happens in this life --"By the law was the knowledge of sin" - and unnatural restrictions on the development of the human spirit only associated with guilt of conscience, what ought to have been an innocent and necessary blessing.

My poor mother, not singular in her mistake, had sent me forth, out of an unconscious paradise into the evil world, without allowing me even the sad strength which comes from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; she expected in me the innocence of the dove, as if that was possible on such an earth as this, without the wisdom of the serpent to support it. She forbade me strictly to stop and look into the windows of print shops, and I strictly obeyed her. But she forbade me, too, to read any book which I had not first shown her; and that restriction, reasonable enough in the abstract, practically meant, in the case of a poor boy like myself, reading no books at all. And then came my first act of disobedience, the parent of many more. Bitterly have I repented it, and bitterly been punished. Yet, strange contradiction! I dare not wish it undone. But such is the great law of life. Punished for our sins we surely are; and yet how often they become our blessings, teaching us that which nothing else can teach us! Nothing else? One says so. Rich parents, I suppose, say so, when they send their sons to public schools "to learn life." We working men have too often no other teacher than our own errors. But surely, surely, the rich ought to have been able to discover some mode of education in which knowledge may be acquired without the price of conscience. Yet they have not; and we must not complain of them for not giving such a one to the working man when they have not yet even given it to their own children.

In a street through which I used to walk homeward was an old book shop, piled and fringed outside and in with books of every age, size, and colour. And here I at last summoned courage to stop, and timidly and stealthily taking out some volume whose title attracted me, snatch hastily a few pages and hasten on, half fearful of being called on to purchase, half ashamed of a desire which I fancied every one else considered as unlawful as my mother did. Sometimes I was lucky enough to find the same volume several days running, and to take up the subject where I had left it off; and thus I contrived to hurry through a great deal of "Childe Harold," "Lara," and the "Corsair" - a new world of wonders to me. They fed, those poems, both my health and my diseases; while they gave me, little of them as I could understand, a thousand new notions about scenery and man, a sense of poetic melody and luxuriance as yet utterly unknown. They chimed in with all my discontent, my melancholy, my thirst after any life of action and excitement, however frivolous, insane, or even worse. I forgot the Corsair's sinful trade in his free and daring life; rather, I honestly eliminated the bad element - in which, God knows, I took no delight - and kept the good one. However that might be, the innocent - guilty pleasure grew on me day by day. Innocent, because human - guilty, because disobedient. But have I not paid the penalty?

One evening, however, I fell accidentally on a new book ---"The Life and Poems of J. Bethune." I opened the story of his life - became interested, absorbed - and there I stood, I know not how long, on the greasy pavement, heedless of the passers who thrust me right and left, reading by the flaring gaslight that sad history of labour, sorrow, and death. - How the Highland cotter, in spite of disease, penury, starvation itself, and the daily struggle to earn his bread by digging and ditching, educated himself - how he toiled unceasingly with his hands - how he wrote his poems in secret on dirty scraps of paper and old leaves of books - how thus he wore himself out, manful and godly, "bating not a jot of heart or hope," till the weak flesh would bear no more; and the noble spirit, unrecognised by the lord of the soil, returned to God who gave it. I seemed to see in his history a sad presage of my own. If he, stronger, more self-restrained, more righteous far than ever I

could be, had died thus unknown, unassisted, in the stern battle with social disadvantages, what must be my lot?

And tears of sympathy, rather than of selfish fear, fell fast upon the book.

A harsh voice from the inner darkness of the shop startled me.

"Hoot, laddie, ye'll better no spoil my books wi' greeting ower them."

I replaced the book hastily, and was hurrying on, but the same voice called me back in a more kindly tone.

"Stop a wee, my laddie. I'm no angered wi'ye. Come in, and we'll just ha' a bit crack thegither."

I went in, for there was a geniality in the tone to which I was unaccustomed, and something whispered to me the hope of an adventure, as indeed it proved to be, if an event deserves that name which decided the course of my whole destiny.

"What war ye greeting about, then? What was the book?"

"Bethune's Life and Poems,' sir," I said. "And certainly they did affect me very much."

"Affect ye? Ah, Johnnie Bethune, puir fellow! Ye maunna take on about sic like laddies, or ye'll greet your e'en out o' your head. It's mony a braw man beside Johnnie Bethune has gane Johnnie Bethune's gate."

Though unaccustomed to the Scotch accent, I could make out enough of this speech to be in nowise consoled by it. But the old man turned the conversation by asking me abruptly my name, and trade, and family.

"Hum, hum, widow, eh? puir body! work at Smith's shop, eh? Ye'll ken John Crossthwaite, then? ay? hum, hum; an' ye're desirous o' reading books, vara weel — let's see your cawpabilities."

And he pulled me into the dim light of the little back window, shoved back his spectacles, and peering at me from underneath them, began, to my great astonishment, to feel my head all over.

"Hum, hum, a vara gude forehead — vara gude indeed. Causative organs large, perceptive ditto. Imagination superabundant — mun be heeded. Benevolence, conscientiousness. ditto, ditto. Caution — no that large — might be developed," with a quiet chuckle, "under a gude Scot's education. Just turn your head into profile, laddie. Hum, hum. Back o' the head a thegither defective. Firmness sma' — love of approbation unco big. Beware o' leeing, as ye live; ye'll need it. Philoprogenitiveness gude. Ye'll be fond o' bairns, I'm guessing?"

"Of what?"

"Children, laddie, - children."

"Very," answered I, in utter dismay at what seemed to me a magical process for getting at all my secret failings.

"Hum, hum! Amative and combative organs sma' — a general want o' healthy animalism, as my freen' Mr. Deville wad say. And ye want to read books?"

I confessed my desire, without, alas, confessing that my mother had forbidden it.

"Vara weel; then books I'll lend ye, after I've had a crack wi'Crossthwaite aboot ye, gin I find his opinion o' ye satisfactory. Come to me the day after to-morrow. An' mind, here are my rules: — a' damage done to a book to be paid for, or na mair books lent; ye'll mind to take no books without leave; specially ye'll mind no to read in bed o' nights, — industrious folks ought to be sleepin' betimes, an' I'd no be a party to burning puir weans in their beds; and lastly, ye'll observe not to read mair than five books at once."

I assured him that I thought such a thing impossible; but he smiled in his saturnine way, and said —

"We'll see this day fortnight. Now, then, I've observed ye for a month past over that aristocratic Byron's poems. And I'm willing to teach the young idea how to shoot — but no to shoot itself; so ye'll just leave alane that vinegary, souldestroying trash, and I'll lend ye, gin I hear a gude report of ye, 'The Paradise Lost,' o' John Milton — a gran' classic model; and for the doctrine o't, it's just aboot as gude as ye'll hear elsewhere the noo. So gang your gate, and tell John Crossthwaite, privately, auld Sandy Mackaye wad like to see him the morn's night."

I went home in wonder and delight. Books! books! books! I should have my fill of them at last. And when I said my prayers at night, I thanked God for this unexpected boon; and then remembered that my mother had forbidden it. That thought checked the thanks, but not the pleasure. Oh, parents! are there not real sins enough in the world already, without your defiling it, over and above, by inventing new ones?

### TAILOR AND POET.

# CHAPTER III.

### Sandy Mackaye.

THAT day fortnight came, — and the old Scotchman's words came true. Four books of his I had already, and I came in to borrow a fifth; whereon he began with a solemn chuckle:

"Eh, laddie, laddie, I've been treating ye as the grocers do their new prentices. They first gie the boys three days' free warren among the figs and the sugar-candy, and they get scunnered wi' sweets after that. Noo, then, my lad, y've just been reading four books in three days — and here's a fifth. Ye'll no open this again."

"Oh!" I cried, piteously enough, "just let me finish what I am reading. I'm in the middle of such a wonderful account of the Hornitos of Jurullo."

"Hornets or wasps, a swarm o' them ye're like to have at this rate; and a very bad substitute ye'll find them for the Attic bee. Now tak'tent. I'm no in the habit of speaking without desiberation, for it saves a man a great deal of trouble in changing his mind. If ye canna traduce to me a page o' Virgil by this day three months, ye read no more o' my books. Desultory reading is the bane o' lads. Ye maun begin with self-restraint and method, my man, gin ye intend to gie yoursel' a liberal education. So I'll just mak' you a present of an auld Latin grammar, and ye maun begin where your betters ha' begun before you."

"But who will teach me Latin?"

"Hoot! man! who'll teach a man anything except himsel'? It's only gentlefolks and puir aristocrat bodies that go to be spoilt wi' tutors and pedagogues, cramming and loading them wi' knowledge, as ye'd load a gun, to shoot it all out again, just as it went down, in a college examination, and forget all aboot it after."

"Ah!" I sighed, "if I could have gone to college!"

"What for, then? My father was a Hieland farmer, and yet he was a weel learned man: and 'Sandy, my lad,' he used to say, 'a man kens just as much as he's taught himsel', and na mair. So get wisdom; and wi' all your getting, get understanding.' And so I did. And mony's the Greek exercise I've written in the cowbyres. And mony's the page o' Virgil, too, I've turned into good Dawric Scotch to ane that's dead and gane, poor hizzie, sitting under the same plaid, with the sheep feeding round us, up among the hills, looking out ower the broad blue sea, and the wee haven wi'the fishing cobles—"

There was a long solemn pause. I cannot tell why, but I loved the man from that moment; and I thought, too, that he began to love me. Those few words seemed a proof of confidence, perhaps all the deeper, because accidental and unconscious.

I took the Virgil which he lent me, with Hamilton's literal translation between the lines, and an old tattered Latin grammar; I felt myself quite a learned man - actually the possessor of a Latin book! I regarded as something almost miraculous the opening of this new field for my ambition. Not that I was consciously, much less selfishly, ambitious. I had no idea as yet to be anything but a tailor to the end; to make clothes - perhaps in a less infernal atmosphere - but still to make clothes, and live thereby. I did not suspect that I possessed powers above the mass. My intense longing after knowledge had been to me like a girl's first love-a thing to be concealed from every eye - to be looked at askance even by myself, delicious as it was, with holy shame and trembling. And thus it was not cowardice merely, but natural modesty, which put me on a hundred plans of concealing my studies from my mother, and even from my sister.

I slept in a little lean-to garret at the back of the house, some ten feet long by six wide. I could just stand upright against the inner wall, while the roof on the other side ran down to the floor. There was no fireplace in it, or any means of ventilation. No wonder I coughed all night accordingly, and woke about two every morning with choking throat and aching head. My mother often said that the room was "too small for a Christian to sleep in, but where could she get a better?"

Such was my only study. I could not use it as such, however, at night without discovery; for my mother carefully looked in every evening, to see that my candle was out. But when my kind cough woke me, I rose, and creeping like amouse about the room — for my mother and sister slept in the next chamber, and every sound was audible through the narrow partition — I drew my darling books out from under a board of the floor, one end of which I had gradually loosened at odd minutes, and with them a rushlight, earned by running on messages, or by taking bits of work home, and finishing them for my fellows.

No wonder that with this scanty rest, and this complicated exertion of hands, eyes, and brain, followed by the long dreary day's work of the shop, my health began to fail; my eyes grew weaker and weaker; my cough became more acute; my appetite failed me daily. My mother noticed the change, and questioned me about it, affectionately enough. But I durst not, alas! tell the truth. It was not one offence, but the arrears of months of disobedience which I should have had to confess; and so arose infinite false excuses, and petty prevarications, which embittered and clogged still more my already overtasked spirit. About my own ailments - formidable as I believed they were - I never had a moment's anxiety. The expectation of early death was as unnatural to me as it is, I suspect, to almost all. I die? Had I not hopes, plans, desires, infinite? Could I die while they were unfulfilled? Even now, I do not believe I shall die yet. I will not believe it — but let that pass.

Yes, let that pass. Perhaps I have lived long enough longer than many a grey-headed man.

> There is a race of mortals who become Old in their youth, and die ere middle age.

And might not those days of mine then have counted as months? - those days when, before starting forth to walk two miles to the shop at six o'clock in the morning, I sat some three or four hours shivering on my bed, putting myself into cramped and painful postures, not daring even to cough, lest my mother should fancy me unwell, and come in to see me, poor dear soul! - my eyes aching over the page, my feet wrapped up in the bedclothes, to keep them from the miserable pain of the cold; longing, watching, dawn after dawn, for the kind summer mornings, when I should need no candlelight. Look at the picture awhile, ye comfortable folks, who take down from your shelves what books you like best at the moment, and then lie back, amid prints and statuettes, to grow wise in an easy-chair, with a blazing fire and a camphine lamp. The lower classes uneducated! Perhaps you would be so too, if learning cost you the privation which it costs some of them.

But this concealment could not last. My only wonder is,

that I continued to get whole months of undiscovered study. One morning, about four o'clock, as might have been expected, my mother heard me stirring, came in, and found me sitting cross-legged on my bed, stitching away, indeed, with all my might, but with a Virgil open before me.

She glanced at the book, clutched it with one hand and my arm with the other, and sternly asked,

"Where did you get this heathen stuff?"

A lie rose to my lips; but I had been so gradually entangled in the loathed meshes of a system of concealment, and consequent prevarication, that I felt as if one direct falsehood would ruin for ever my fast-failing self-respect, and I told her the whole truth. She took the book and left the room. It was Saturday morning, and I spent two miserable days, for she never spoke a word to me till the two ministers had made their appearance, and drank their tea on Sunday evening; then at last she opened:

"And now, Mr. Wigginton, what account have you of this Mr. Mackaye, who has seduced my unhappy boy from the paths of obedience?"

"I am sorry to say, madam," answered the dark man, with a solemn snuffle, "that he proves to be a most objectionable and altogether unregenerate character. He is, as I am informed, neither more nor less than a Chartist and open blasphemer."

"He is not!" I interrupted, angrily. "He has told me more about God, and given me better advice, than any human being, except my mother."

"Ah! madam, so thinks the unconverted heart, ignorant that the god of the Deist is not the God of the Bible — a consuming fire to all but His beloved elect; the god of the Deist, unhappy youth, is a mere self-invented, all-indulgent phantom — a will-o'-the-wisp, deluding the unwary, as he has deluded you, into the slough of carnal reason and shameful profligacy."

"Do you mean to call me a profligate?" I retorted fiercely, for my blood was up, and I felt I was fighting for all which I prized in the world; "if you do, you lie. Ask my mother when I ever disobeyed her before? I have never touched a drop of anything stronger than water; I have slaved overhours to pay for my own candle, I have! — I have no sins to accuse myself of, and neither you nor any other person know of any. Do you call me a profligate because I wish to educate myself and rise in life?"

"Ah!" groaned my poor mother to herself, "still unconvinced of sin!"

"The old Adam, my dear madam, you see — standing, as he always does, on his own filthy rags of works, while all the imaginations of his heart are only evil continually. Listen to me, poor sinner — "

"I will not listen to you," I cried, the accumulated disgust of years bursting out once and for all, "for I hate and despise you, eating my poor mother here out of house and home. You are one of those who creep into widows' houses, and for pretence make long prayers. You, sir, I will hear," I went on, turning to the dear old man who had sat by shaking his white locks with a sad and puzzled air, "for I love you."

"My dear sister Locke," he began, "I really think sometimes - that is, a-hem - with your leave, brother - I am almost disposed - but I should wish to defer to your superior zeal - yet, at the same time, perhaps, the desire for information, however carnal in itself, may be an instrument in the Lord's hands — you know what I mean. I always thought him a gracious youth, madam, didn't you? And perhaps — I only observe it in passing - the Lord's people among the dissenting connexions are apt to undervalue human learning as a means — of course, I mean only as a means. It is not generally known, I believe, that our reverend Puritan patriarchs, Howe and Baxter, Owen and many more, were not altogether unacquainted with heathen authors; nay, that they may have been called absolutely learned men. And some of our leading ministers are inclined — no doubt they will be led rightly in so important a matter - to follow the example of the Independents in educating their young ministers, and turning Satan's weapons of heathen mythology against himself, as St. Paul is said to have done. My dear boy, what books have you now got by you of Mr. Mackaye's?"

"Milton's Poems and a Latin Virgil."

"Ah!" groaned the dark man; "will poetry, will Latin save an immortal soul?"

"I'll tell you what, sir; you say yourself that it depends on God's absolute counsel whether I am saved or not. So, if I am elect, I shall be saved whatever I do; and if I am not, I shall be damned whatever I do; and in the mean time you had

Alton Locke.

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better mind your own business, and let me do the best I can for this life, as the next is all settled for me."

This flippant, but after all not unreasonable speech, seemed to silence the man; and I took the opportunity of running up-stairs and bringing down my Milton. The old man was speaking as I re-entered.

"And you know, my dear madam, Mr. Milton was a true converted man, and a Puritan."

"He was Oliver Cromwell's secretary," I added.

"Did he teach you to disobey your mother?" asked my mother.

I did not answer; and the old man, after turning over a few leaves, as if he knew the book well, looked up.

"I think, madam, you might let the youth keep these books, if he will promise, as I am sure he will, to see no more of Mr. Mackaye."

I was ready to burst out crying, but I made up my mind and answered,

"I must see him once again, or he will think me so ungrateful. He is the best friend that I ever had, except you, mother. Besides, I do not know if he will lend me any, after this."

My mother looked at the old minister, and then gave a sullen assent.

"Promise me only to see him once — but I cannot trust you. You have deceived me once, Alton, and you may again!"

"I shall not, I shall not," I answered proudly. "You do not know me" — and I spoke true.

"You do not know yourself, my poor dear foolish child!" she replied — and that was true too.

"And now, dear friends," said the dark man, "let us join in offering up a few words of special intercession."

We all knelt down, and I soon discovered that by the special intercession was meant a string of bitter and groundless slanders against poor me, twisted into the form of a prayer for my conversion, "if it were God's will." To which I responded with a closing "Amen," for which I was sorry afterwards, when I recollect that it was said in merely insolent mockery. But the little faith I had was breaking up fast not altogether, surely, by my own fault.\*

\* The portraits of the minister and the missionary are surely exceptions to their class, rather than the average. The Baptists have had their Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall, and among missionaries Dr. Carey, and At all events, from that day I was emancipated from modern Puritanism. The ministers both avoided all serious conversation with me; and my mother did the same; while, with a strength of mind, rare among women, she never alluded to the scene of that Sunday evening. It was a rule with her never to recur to what was once done and settled. What was to be, might be prayed over. But it was to be endured in silence; yet wider and wider ever from that time opened the gulf between us.

I went trembling the next afternoon to Mackaye and told my story. He first scolded me severely for disobeying my mother. "He that begins o' that gate, laddie, ends by disobeying God and his ain conscience. Gin ye're to be a scholar, God will make you one — and if not, ye'll no mak' yoursel' ane in spite o' Him and His commandments." And then he filled his pipe and chuckled away in silence; at last, he exploded in a horse-laugh.

"So ye gied the ministers a bit o' yer mind? 'The deil's amang the tailors' in gude earnest, as the sang says. There's Johnnie Crossthwaite kicked the Papist priest out o' his house yestreen. Puir ministers, it's ill times wi' them! They gang about keckling and screighing after the working men, like a hen that's hatched ducklings, when she sees them tak' the water. Little Dunkeld's coming to London sune, I'm thinking.

Hech! sic a parish, a parish, a parish; Hech! sic a parish as little Dunkeld! They hae stickit the minister, hanged the precentor, Dung down the steeple, and drucken the bell.

"But may I keep the books a little while, Mr. Mackaye?"

"Keep them till ye die, gin ye will. What is the worth o' them to me? What is the worth o' anything to me, puir auld deevil, that ha' no half a dizen years to live, at the furthest. God bless ye, my bairn; gang hame, and mind your mither, or it's little gude books 'll do ye."

noble spirits in plenty. But such men as those who excited Alton Locke's disgust are to be met with, in every sect; in the Church of England, and in the Church of Rome. And it is a real and fearful scandal to the young, to see such men listened to as God's messengers, in spite of their utter want of any manhood or virtue, simply because they are "orthodox," each according to the shibboleths of his hearers, and possess that vulpine "discretion of dulness," whose miraculous might Dean Swift sets forth in his "Essay on the Fates of Clergymen." Such men do exist, and prosper; and as long as they are allowed to do so, Alton Lockes will meet them, and be scandalised by them. — ED.

## CHAPTER IV.

### Tailors and Soldiers.

I was now thrown again utterly on my own resources. I read and re-read Milton's "Poems" and Virgil's "Æneid" for six more months at every spare moment; thus spending over them, I suppose, all in all, far more time than most gentlemen have done. I found, too, in the last volume of Milton, a few of his select prose works: the "Areopagitica," the "Defence of the English People," and one or two more, in which I gradually began to take an interest; and, little of them as I could comprehend, I was awed by their tremendous depth and power, as well as excited by the utterly new trains of thought into which they led me. Terrible was the amount of bodily fatigue which I had to undergo in reading at every spare moment, while walking to and fro from my work, while sitting up, often from midnight till dawn, stitching away to pay for the tallow-candle which I burnt, till I had to resort to all sorts of uncomfortable contrivances for keeping myself awake, even at the expense of bodily pain - Heaven forbid that I should weary my readers by describing them! Young men of the upper classes, to whom study - pursue it as intensely as you will - is but the business of the day, and every spare moment relaxation; little you guess the frightful drudgery undergone by a man of the people who has vowed to educate himself, -to live at once two lives, each as severe as the whole of yours, to bring to the self-imposed toil of intellectual improvement, a body and brain already worn out by a day of toilsome manual labour. I did it. God forbid, though, that I should take credit to myself for it. Hundreds more have done it, with still fewer advantages than mine. Hundreds more, an ever-increasing army of martyrs, are doing it at this moment: of some of them, too, perhaps you may hear hereafter.

I had read through Milton, as I said, again and again; I had gotout of him all that my youth and my unregulated mind enabled me to get. I had devoured, too, not without profit, a large old edition of "Fox's Martyrs," which the venerable minister lent me, and now I was hungering again for fresh food, and again at a loss where to find it.

I was hungering, too, for more than information — for a friend. Since my intercourse with Sandy Mackaye had been stopped, six months had passed without my once opening my

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lips to any human being upon the subjects with which my mind was haunted day and night. I wanted to know more about poetry, history, politics, philosophy - all things in heaven and earth. But, above all, I wanted a faithful and sympathising ear into which to pour all my doubts, discontents, and aspirations. My sister Susan, who was one year younger than myself, was growing into a slender, pretty, hectic girl of sixteen. But she was altogether a devout Puritan. She had just gone through the process of conviction of sin and conversion; and being looked upon at the chapel as an especially gracious professor, was either unable or unwilling to think or speak on any subject, except on those to which I felt a growing distaste. She had shrunk from me, too, very much, since my ferocious attack that Sunday evening on the dark minister, who was her special favourite. I remarked it, and it was a fresh cause of unhappiness and perplexity.

At last I made up my mind, come what would, to force myself upon Crossthwaite. He was the only man whom I knew who seemed able to help me; and his very reserve had invested him with a mystery, which served to heighten my imagination of his powers. I waylaid him one day coming out of the workroom to go home, and plunged at once desperately into the matter.

"Mr. Crossthwaite, I want to speak to you. I want to ask you to advise me."

"I have known that a long time."

"Then why did you never say a kind word to me?"

"Because I was waiting to see whether you were worth saying a kind word to. It was but the other day, remember, you were a bit of a boy. Now, I think, I may trust you with a thing or two. Besides, I wanted to see whether you trusted me enough to ask me. Now you've broke the ice at last, in with you, head and ears, and see what you can fish out."

"I am very unhappy -"

"That's no new disorder that I know of."

"No; but I think the reason I am unhappy is a strange one; at least, I never read of but one person else in the same way. I want to educate myself, and I can't."

"You must have read precious little then, if you think yourself in a strange way. Bless the boy's heart! And what the dickens do you want to be educating yourself for, pray?" This was said in a tone of good-humoured banter, which gave me courage. He offered to walk homewards with me; and, as I shambled along by his side, I told him all my story and all my griefs.

I never shall forget that walk. Every house, tree, turning, which we passed that day on our way, is indissolubly connected in my mind with some strange new thought which arose in me just at each spot; and recurs, so are the mind and the senses connected, as surely as I repass it.

I had been telling him about Sandy Mackaye. He confessed to an acquaintance with him; but in a reserved and mysterious way, which only heightened my curiosity.

We were going through the Horse Guards, and I could not help lingering to look with wistful admiration on the huge mustachoed war-machines who sauntered about the courtyard.

A tall and handsome officer, blazing in scarlet and gold, cantered in on a superb horse, and, dismounting, threw the reins to a dragoon as grand and gaudy as himself. Did I envy him? Well — I was but seventeen. And there is something noble to the mind, as well as to the eye, in the great, strong man, who can fight — a completeness, a self-restraint, a terrible sleeping power in him. As Mr. Carlyle says, "A soldier, after all, is one of the few remaining realities of the age. All other professions almost promise one thing, and perform — alas! what? But this man promises to fight, and does it; and, if he be told, will veritably take out a long sword and kill me."

So thought my companion, though the mood in which he viewed the fact was somewhat different from my own.

"Come on," he said, peevishly clutching me by the arm; "what do you want dawdling? Are you a nursery-maid, that you must stare at those red-coated butchers?" And a deep curse followed.

"What harm have they done you?"

"I should think I owed them turn enough."

"What?"

"They cut my father down at Sheffield, — perhaps with the very swords he helped to make, — because he would not sit still and starve, and see us starving round him, while those who fattened on the sweat of his brow, and on those lungs of his, which the sword-grinding dust was eating out day by day, were wantoning on venison and champagne. That's the harm they've done me, my chap!"

"Poor fellows! — they only did as they were ordered, I suppose."

"And what business have they to let themselves be ordered? What right, I say — what right has any free, reasonable soul on earth, to sell himself for a shilling a day to murder any man, right or wrong — even his own brother or his own father — just because such a whiskered, profligate jackanapes as that officer, without learning, without any god except his own looking-glass and his opera-dancer — a fellow who, just because he is born a gentleman, is set to command grey-headed men before he can command his own meanest passions. Good heavens, that the lives of free men should be entrusted to such a stuffed cockatoo; and that free men should be such traitors to their country, traitors to their own flesh and blood, as to sell themselves, for a shilling a day and the smirks of the nursery-maids, to do that fellow's bidding!"

"What are you a-grumbling about here, my man? gotten the cholera?" asked one of the dragoons, a huge, stupid-looking lad.

"About you, you young long-legged cut-throat," answered Crossthwaite, "and all your crew of traitors."

"Help, help, coomrades o' mine!" quoth the dragoon, bursting with laughter; "I'm gaun be moorthered wi' a little booy that's gane mad, and toorned Chartist."

I dragged Crossthwaite off; for what was jest to the soldiers I saw, by his face, was fierce enough earnest to him. We walked on a little, in silence.

"Now," I said, "that was a good-natured fellow enough, though he was a soldier. You and he might have cracked many a joke together, if you did but understand each other; — and he was a countryman of yours, too."

"I may crack something else besides jokes with him some day," answered he, moodily.

"Pon my word, you must take care how you do it. He is as big as four of us."

"That vile aristocrat, the old Italian poet — what's his name? — Ariosto — ay! — he knew which quarter the wind was making for, when he said that fire-arms would be the end of all your old knights and gentlemen in armour, that hewed down unarmed innocents as if they had been sheep. Gunpowder is your true leveller — dash physical strength! A boy's a man with a musket in his hand, my chap!"

"God forbid," I said, "that I should ever be made a man of in that way, or you either. I do not think we are quite big enough to make fighters; and if we were, what have we got to fight about?"

"Big enough to make fighters?" said he, half to himself; "or strong enough, perhaps? — or clever enough? — and yet Alexander was a little man, and the Petit Corporal, and Nelson, and Cæsar, too; and so was Saul of Tarsus, and weakly he was into the bargain. Æsop was a dwarf, and so was Attila; Shakspeare was lame; Alfred, a rickety weakling; Byron, clubfooted; — so much for body versus spirit brute force versus genius — genius."

I looked at him; his eyes glared like two balls of fire. Suddenly he turned to me.

"Locke, my boy, I've made an ass of myself, and got into a rage, and broken a good old resolution of mine, and a promise that I made to my dear little woman — bless her! — and said things to you that you ought to know nothing of for this long time; but those red-coats always put me beside myself. God forgive me!" And he held out his hand to me cordially.

"I can quite understand your feeling deeply on one point," I said, as I took it, "after the sad story you told me; — but why so bitter on all? What is there so very wrong about things, that we must begin fighting about it?"

"Bless your heart, poor innocent! What is wrong? what is not wrong? Wasn't there enough in that talk with Mackaye, that you told me of just now, to show anybody that, who can tell a hawk from a handsaw?"

"Was it wrong in him to give himself such trouble about the education of a poor young fellow, who has no tie on him, who can never repay him?"

"No; that's just like him. He feels for the people, for he has been one of us. He worked in a printing-office himself many a year, and he knows the heart of the working man. But he didn't tell you. No one who has money dare speak out his heart; — not that he has much certainly; but, the cunning old Scot that he is, he lives by the present system of things, and he won't speak ill of the bridge which carries him over --till the time comes." I could not understand whither all this tended, and walked on, silent and somewhat angry, at hearing the least slight cast on Mackaye.

"Don't you see, stupid?" he broke out at last. "What did he say to you about gentlemen being crammed by tutors and professors? Have not you as good a right to them as any gentleman?"

"But he told me they were no use — that every man must educate himself."

"Oh! all very fine to tell you the grapes are sour, when you can't reach them. Bah, lad! Can't you see what comes of education? — that any dolt, provided he be a gentleman, can be doctored up at school and college, enough to make him play his part decently — his mighty part of ruling us, and riding over our heads, and picking our pockets, as parson, doctor, lawyer, member of parliament — while we — you now, for instance — cleverer than ninety-nine gentlemen out of a hundred, if you had one-tenth the trouble taken with you that is taken with every pig-headed son of an aristocrat —"

"Am I clever?" asked I, in honest surprise.

"What! haven't you found that out yet? Don't try to put that on me. Don't a girl know when she's pretty, without asking her neighbours?"

"Really, I never thought about it."

"More simpleton you. Old Mackaye has, at all events; though, canny Scotchman that he is, he'll never say a word to you about it, yet he makes no secret of it to other people. I heard him the other day telling some of our friends that you were a thorough young genius."

I blushed scarlet, between pleasure and a new feeling; was it ambition?

"Why, hav'n't you a right to aspire to a college education as any do-nothing canon there at the abbey, lad?"

"I don't know that I have a right to anything."

"What, not become what Nature intended you to become? What has she given you brains for, but to be educated and used? Oh! I heard a fine lecture upon that at our club the other night. There was a man there — a gentleman, too, but a thorough-going people's man, I can tell you, Mr. O'Flynn. What an orator that man is to be sure! The Irish Æschines, I hear they call him in Conciliation Hall. Isn't he the man to

pitch into the Mammonites? 'Gentlemen and ladies,' says he, 'how long will a diabolic society' - no, an effete society it was - 'how long will an effete, emasculate, and effeminate society, in the diabolic selfishness of its eclecticism, refuse to acknowledge what my immortal countryman, Burke, calls the "" Dei voluntatem in rebus revelatam"" - the revelation of Nature's will in the phenomena of matter? The cerebration of each is the prophetic sacrament of the yet undeveloped possibilities of his mentation. The form of the brain alone, and not the possession of the vile gauds of wealth and rank, constitute man's only right to education - to the glories of art Those beaming eyes and roseate lips beneath and science. me proclaim a bevy of undeveloped Aspasias, of embryo Cleopatras, destined by Nature, and only restrained by man's injustice, from ruling the world by their beauty's eloquence. Those massive and beetling brows, gleaming with the lambent flames of patriotic ardour — what is needed to unfold them into a race of Shakspeares and of Gracchi, ready to proclaim with sword and lyre the divine harmonies of liberty, equality, and fraternity, before a quailing universe?"

"It sounds very grand," replied I, meekly; "and I should like very much certainly to have a good education. But I can't see whose injustice keeps me out of one if I can't afford to pay for it."

"Whose? Why, the parsons' to be sure. They've got the monopoly of education in England, and they get their bread by it at their public schools and universities; and of course it's their interest to keep up the price of their commodity, and let no man have a taste of it who can't pay down handsomely. And so those aristocrats of college dons go on rolling in riches, and fellowships, and scholarships, that were bequeathed by the people's friends in old times, just to educate poor scholars like you and me, and give us our rights as free men."

"But I thought the clergy were doing so much to educate the poor. At least, I hear all the dissenting ministers grumbling at their continual interference."

"Ay, educating them to make them slaves and bigots. They don't teach them what they teach their own sons. Look at the miserable smattering of general information — just enough to serve as sauce for their great first and last lesson of 'Obey the powers that be' — whatever they be; leave us alone in our comforts, and starve patiently; do, like good boys, for it's God's will. And then, if a boy does show talent in school, do they help him up in life? Not they; when he has just learnt enough to whet his appetite for more, they turn him adrift again, to sink and drudge — to do his duty, as they call it, in that state of life to which society and the devil have called him."

"But there are innumerable stories of great Englishmen who have risen from the lowest ranks."

"Ay; but where are the stories of those who have not risen — of all the noble geniuses who have ended in desperation, drunkenness, starvation, suicide, because no one would take the trouble of lifting them up, and enabling them to walk in the path which Nature had marked out for them? Dead men tell no tales; and this old whited sepulchre, society, ain't going to turn informer against itself."

"I trust and hope," I said, sadly, "that if God intends me to rise, He will open the way for me; perhaps the very struggles and sorrows of a poor genius may teach him more than ever wealth and prosperity could."

"True, Alton, my boy! and that's my only comfort. It does make men of us, this bitter battle of life. We working men, when we do come out of the furnace, come out, not tinsel and papier maché, like those fops of red-tape statesmen, but steel and granite, Alton, my boy — that has been seven times tried in the fire: and woe to the papier maché gentleman that runs against us! But," he went on, sadly, "for one who comes safe through the furnace, there are a hundred who crack in the burning. You are a young bear, my lad, with all your sorrows before you; and you'll find that aworking man's training is like the Red Indian children's. The few who are strong enough to stand it grow up warriors; but all those who are not fire-and-water-proof by nature — just die, Alton, my lad, and the tribe thinks itself well rid of them."

So that conversation ended. But it had implanted in my bosom a new seed of mingled good and evil, which was destined to bear fruit, precious perhaps as well as bitter. God knows it has hung on the tree long enough. Sour and harsh from the first, it has been many a year in ripening. But the sweetness of the apple, the potency of the grape, as the chemists tell us, are born out of acidity — a developed sourness. Will it be so with my thoughts? Dare I assert, as I sit writing here, with the wild waters slipping past the cabin windows, backwards and backwards ever, every plunge of the vessel one forward leap from the old world — worn-out world I had almost called it, of sham civilisation and real penury — dare I hope ever to return and triumph? Shall I, after all, lay my bones among my own people, and hear the voices of freemen whisper in my dying ears?

Silence, dreaming heart! Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof — and the good thereof also. Would that I had known that before! Above all, that I had known it on that night, when first the burning thought arose in my heart, that I was unjustly used; that society had not given me my rights. It came to me as a revelation, celestial-infernal, full of glorious hopes of the possible future in store for me through the perfect development of all my faculties; and full, too, of fierce present rage, wounded vanity, bitter grudgings against those more favoured than myself, which grew in time almost to cursing against the God who had made me a poor untutored working man, and seemed to have given me genius only to keep me in a Tantalus' hell of unsatisfied thirst.

Ay, respectable gentlemen and ladies, I will confess all to you - you shall have, if you enjoy it, a fresh opportunity for indulging that supreme pleasure which the press daily affords you of insulting the classes whose powers most of you know as little as you do their sufferings. Yes; the Chartist poet is vain, conceited, ambitious, uneducated, shallow, inexperienced, envious, ferocious, scurrilous, seditious, traitorous. - Is your charitable vocabulary exhausted? Then ask yourselves, how often have you yourself honestly resisted and conquered the temptation to any one of these sins, when it has come across you just once in a way, and not as they came to me, as they come to thousands of the working men, daily and hourly, "till their torments do, by length of time, become their elements?" What, are we covetous too? Yes! And if those who have, like you, still covet more, what wonder if those who have nothing covet something? Profligate too? Well, though that imputation as a generality is utterly calumnious, though your amount of respectable animal enjoyment per annum is a hundred times as great as that of the most selfindulgent artisan, yet, if you had ever felt what it is to want, not only every luxury of the senses, but even bread to eat, you would think more mercifully of the man who makes up by rare excesses, and those only of the limited kinds possible to him, for long intervals of dull privation, and says in his madness, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!" We have our sins, and you have yours. Ours may be the more gross and barbaric, but yours are none the less damnable; perhaps all the more so, for being the sleek, subtle, respectable, religious sins they are. You are frantic enough if our part of the press calls you hard names, but you cannot see that your part of the press repays it back to us with interest. We see those insults, and feel them bitterly enough; and do not forget them, alas! soon enough, while they pass unheeded by your delicate eyes as trivial truisms. Horrible, unprincipled, villanous, seditious, frantic, blasphemous, are epithets, of course, when applied to - to how large a portion of the English people, you will some day discover to your astonishment. When will that come, and how? In thunder, and storm, and garments rolled in blood? Or like the dew on the mown grass, and the clear shining of the sunlight after April rain?

Yes, it was true. Society had not given me my rights. And woe unto the man on whom that idea, true or false, rises lurid, filling all his thoughts with stifling glare, as of the pit itself. Be it true, be it false, it is equally a woe to believe it; to have to live on a negation; to have to worship for our only idea, as hundreds of thousands of us have this day, the hatred of the things which are. Ay, though one of us here and there may die in faith, in sight of the promised land, yet is it not hard, when looking from the top of Pisgah into "the good time coming," to watch the years slipping away one by one, and death crawling nearer and nearer, and the people wearying themselves in the fire for very vanity, and Jordan not yet passed, the promised land not yet entered? While our little children die around us, like lambs beneath the knife, of cholera and typhus and consumption, and all the diseases which the good time can and will prevent; which, as science has proved, and you the rich confess, might be prevented at once, if you dared to bring in one bold and comprehensive measure, and not sacrifice yearly the lives of thousands to the idol of vested interests, and a majority in the House. Is it not hard to men who smart beneath such things to help crying aloud - "Thou cursed Moloch-Mammon, take my life if thou wilt; let me die in the wilderness, for I have deserved it; but these little ones in mines and factories, in typhus-cellars, and Tooting pandemoniums, what have they done? If not in their fathers cause, yet still in theirs, were it so great a sin to die upon a barricade?"

Or after all, my working brothers, is it true of our promised land, even as of that Jewish one of old, that the *priests*' feet must first cross the mystic stream into the good land and large which God has prepared for us?

Is it so indeed? Then in the name of the Lord of Hosts, ye priests of His, why will ye not awake, and arise, and go over Jordan, that the people of the Lord may follow you?

### CHAPTER V.

#### The Sceptic's Mother.

My readers will perceive, from what I have detailed, that I was not likely to get any positive ground of comfort from Crossthwaite; and from within myself there was daily less and less hope of any. Daily the struggle became more intolerable between my duty to my mother and my duty to myself - that inward thirst for mental self-improvement, which, without any clear consciousness of its sanctity or inspiration, I felt, and could not help feeling, that I must follow. No doubt it was very self-willed and ambitious of me to do that which rich men's sons are flogged for not doing, and rewarded with all manner of prizes, scholarships, fellowships, for doing. But the nineteenth year is a time of life at which self-will is apt to exhibit itself in other people besides tailors; and those religious persons who think it no sin to drive their sons on through classics and mathematics, in hopes of gaining them a station in life, ought not to be very hard upon me for driving myself on through the same path, without any such selfish hope of gain - though perhaps the very fact of my having no wish or expectation of such advantage will constitute in their eyes my sin and folly, and prove that I was following the dictates merely of a carnal lust, and not of a proper worldly prudence. I really do not wish to be flippant or sneering. I have seen the evil of it as much as any man, in myself and in my own class. But there are excuses for such a fault in the working man. It does sour and madden him to be called presumptuous and ambitious for the very same aspirations which are lauded up to

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the skies in the sons of the rich - unless, indeed, he will do one little thing, and so make his peace with society. If he will desert his own class; if he will try to become a sham gentleman, a parasite, and, if he can, a Mammonite, the world will compliment him on his noble desire to "rise in life." He will have won his spurs, and be admitted into that exclusive pale of knighthood, beyond which it is a sin to carry arms even in self-defence. But if the working genius dares to be true to his own class - to stay among them - to regenerate them to defend them --- to devote his talents to those among whom God placed him and brought him up - then he is the demagogue, the incendiary, the fanatic, the dreamer. So you would have the monopoly of talent, too, exclusive worldlings? And yet you pretend to believe in the miracle of Pentecost, and the religion that was taught by the carpenter's Son, and preached across the world by fishermen!

I was several times minded to argue the question out with my mother, and assert for myself the same independence of soul which I was now earning for my body by my wages. Once I had resolved to speak to her that very evening; but, strangely enough, happening to open the Bible, which, alas! I did seldom at that time, my eye fell upon the chapter where Jesus, after having justified to His parents His absence in the Temple, while hearing the doctors and asking them questions, yet went down with them to Nazareth after all, and was subject unto them. The story struck me vividly as a symbol of my own duties. But on reading further, I found more than one passage which seemed to me to convey a directly opposite lesson, where His mother and his brethren, fancying Him mad, attempted to interfere with His labours, and asserting their family rights as reasons for retaining Him, met with a peremptory rebuff. I puzzled my head for some time to find out which of the two cases was the more applicable to my state of self-development. The notion of asking for teaching from on high on such a point had never crossed me. Indeed, if it had, I did not believe sufficiently either in the story or in the doctrines connected with it, to have tried such a resource. And so, as may be supposed, my growing self-conceit decided for me that the latter course was the fitting one.

And yet I had not energy to carry it out. I was getting so worn out in body and mind from continual study and labour, stinted food and want of sleep, that I could not face the thought of an explosion, such as I knew must ensue, and I lingered on in the same unhappy state, becoming more and more morose in manner to my mother, while I was as assiduous as ever in all filial duties. But I had no pleasure in home. She seldom spoke to me. Indeed, there was no common topic about which we could speak. Besides, ever since that fatal Sunday evening, I saw that she suspected me and watched me. I had good reason to believe that she set spies upon my conduct. Poor dear mother! God forbid that I should accuse thee for a single care of thine, for a single suspicion even, prompted as they all were by a mother's anxious love. I would never have committed these things to paper, hadst thou not been far beyond the reach or hearing of them; and only now, in hopes that they may serve as a warning, in some degree to mothers, but ten times more to children. For I sinned against thee, deeply and shamefully, in thought and deed, while thou didst never sin against me; though all thy caution did but hasten the fatal explosion which came, and perhaps must have come, under some form or other, in any case.

I had been detained one night in the shop till late; and on my return my mother demanded, in a severe tone, the reason of my stay; and on my telling her, answered as severely that she did not believe me; that she had too much reason to suspect that I had been with bad companions.

"Who dared to put such a thought into your head?"

She "would not give up her authorities, but she had too much reason to believe them."

Again I demanded the name of my slanderer, and was refused it. And then I burst out, for the first time in my life, into a real fit of rage with her. I cannot tell how I dared to say what I did, but I was weak, nervous, irritable — my brain excited beyond all natural tension. Above all, I felt that she was unjust to me; and my good conscience, as well as my pride, rebelled.

"You have never trusted me," I cried; "you have watched me —"

"Did you not deceive me once already?"

"And if I did," I answered, more and more excited, "have I not slaved for you, stinted myself of clothes to pay your rent? Have I not run to and fro for you like a slave, while I knew all the time you did not respect me or trust me? If you had only treated me as a child and an idiot, I could have borne it. But you have been thinking of me all the while as an incarnate fiend — dead in trespasses and sins — a child of wrath and the devil. What right have you to be astonished if I should do my father's works?"

"You may be ignorant of vital religion," she answered; and you may insult me. But if you make a mock of God's word, you leave my house. If you can laugh at religion, you can deceive me."

The pent-up scepticism of years burst forth.

"Mother," I said, "don't talk to me about religion, and election, and conversion, and all that - I don't believe one word of it. Nobody does, except good kind people - (like you, alas! I was going to say, but the devil stopped the words at my lips) - who must needs have some reason to account for their goodness. That Bowyer - he's a soft heart by nature, and as he is, so he does - religion has had nothing to do with that, any more than it has with that black-faced, canting scoundrel who has been telling you lies about me. Much his heart is changed. He carries sneak and slanderer written in his face - and sneak and slanderer he will be, elect or none. Religion? Nobody believes in it. The rich don't; or they wouldn't fill their churches up with pews, and shut the poor out, all the time they are calling them brothers. They believe the gospel? Then why do they leave the men who make their clothes to starve in such hells on earth as our workroom? No more do the tradespeople believe in it; or they wouldn't go home from sermon to sand the sugar, and put sloe-leaves in the tea, and send out lying puffs of their vamped-up goods, and grind the last farthing out of the poor creatures who rent their wretched stinking houses. And as for the workmen — they laugh at it all, I can tell you. Much good religion is doing for them! You may see it's fit only for women and children — for go where you will, church or chapel, you see hardly anything but bonnets and babies! I don't believe a word of it, - once and for all. I'm old enough to think for myself, and a free-thinker I will be, and believe nothing but what I know and understand."

I had hardly spoken the words, when I would have given worlds to recal them — but it was to be — and it was.

Sternly she looked at me full in the face, till my eyes dropped before her gaze. Then she spoke steadily and slowly:

Allon Locke.

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"Leave this house this moment. You are no son of mine henceforward. Do you think I will have my daughter polluted by the company of an infidel and a blasphemer?"

"I will go," I answered fiercely; "I can get my own living at all events!" And before I had time to think, I had rushed upstairs, packed up my bundle, not forgetting the precious books, and was on my way through the frosty, echoing streets, under the cold glare of the winter's moon.

I had gone perhaps half a mile, when the thought of home rushed over me — the little room where I had spent my life the scene of all my childish joys and sorrows — which I should never see again, for I felt that my departure was for ever. Then I longed to see my mother once again — not to speak to her — for I was at once too proud and too cowardly to do that — but to have a look at her through the window. One look for all the while, though I was boiling over with rage and indignation, I felt that it was all on the surface — that in the depths of our hearts I loved her and she loved me. And yet I wished to be angry, wished to hate her. Strange contradiction of the flesh and spirit!

Hastily and silently I retraced my steps to the house. The gate was padlocked. I cautiously stole over the palings to the window — the shutter was closed and fast. I longed to knock — I lifted my hand to the door, and dare not: indeed; I knew that it was useless, in my dread of my mother's habit of stern determination. That room — that mother I never saw again. I turned away; sickened at heart, I was clambering back again, looking behind me towards the window, when I felt a strong grip on my collar, and turning round, had a policeman's lantern flashed in my face.

"Hullo, young'un, and what do you want here?" with a strong emphasis, after the fashion of policemen, on all his pronouns.

"Hush! or you'll alarm my mother!"

"Oh! eh! Forgot the latch-key, you sucking Don Juan, that's it, is it? Late home from the Victory?"

I told him simply how the case stood, and entreated him to get me a night's lodging, assuring him that my mother would not admit me, or I ask to be admitted.

The policeman seemed puzzled, but after scratching his hat in lieu of his head for some seconds, replied,

"This here is the dodge - you goes outside and lies down

on the kerb-stone; whereby I spies you a-sleeping in the streets, contrary to act o' parliament; whereby it is my duty to take you to the station-house; whereby you gets a night's lodging free gracious for nothing, and company perwided by her Majesty."

"Oh, not to the station-house!" I cried, in shame and terror.

"Werry well; then you must keep moving all night continually, whereby you avoids the hact; or else you goes to a twopenny-rope shop and gets a lie down. And your bundle you'd best leave at my house. Twopenny-rope society a'n't particular. I'm going off my beat; you walk home with me and leave your traps. Everybody knows me—Costello, V 21, that's my number."

So on I went with the kind-hearted man, who preached solemnly to me all the way on the fifth commandment. But I heard very little of it; for before I had proceeded a quarter of a mile, a deadly faintness and dizziness came over me, I staggered, and fell against the railings.

"And have you been a-drinking arter all?"

"I never-a drop in my life-nothing but bread-andwater this fortnight."

And it was true. I had been paying for my own food, and had stinted myself to such an extent, that between starvation, want of sleep, and over-exertion, I was worn to a shadow, and the last drop had filled the cup; the evening's scene and its consequences had been too much for me, and in the middle of an attempt to explain matters to the policeman, I dropped on the pavement, bruising my face heavily.

He picked me up, put me under one arm and my bundle under the other, and was proceeding on his march, when three men came rollicking up.

"Hullo, Poleax—Costello—What's that? Work for us? A demp unpleasant body?"

"Oh, Mr. Bromley, sir! Hope you're well, sir! Werry rum go this here, sir! I finds this cove in the streets. He says his mother turned him out o' doors. He seems very fair spoken, and very bad in he's head, and very bad in he's chest, and very bad in he's legs, he does. And I can't come to no conclusions respecting my conduct in this here case, nohow!"

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"Memorialise the Health of Towns Commission," sug-

"Bleed him in the great toe," said the second.

"Put a blister on the back of his left eye-ball," said a third.

"Case of male asterisks," observed the first. "Rj. Aquæ pumpis puræ quantum suff. Applicatur exterò pro re natâ. J. Bromley, M.D., and don't he wish he may get through!" "Tip us your daddle, my boy," said the second speaker.

"Tip us your daddle, my boy," said the second speaker. "I'll tell you what, Bromley, this fellow's very bad. He's got no more pulse than the Pimlico sewer. Run in into the next pot'us. Here—you lay hold of him, Bromley—that last round with the cabman nearly put my humerus out."

The huge, burly, pea-jacketed medical student—for such I saw at once he was—laid hold of me on the right tenderly enough, and walked me off between him and the policeman.

I fell again into a faintness, from which I was awakened by being shoved through the folding-doors of a gin-shop, into a glare of light and hubbub of blackguardism, and placed on a settle, while my conductor called out—

"Pots round, Mary, and a go of brandy hot with, for the patient. Here, young'un; toss it off, it'll make your hair grow."

I feebly answered that I never had drunk anything stronger than water.

"High time to begin, then; no wonder you're so ill. Well, if you won't, I'll make you—"

And taking my head under his arm, he seized me by the nose, while another poured the liquor down my throat—and certainly it revived me at once.

A drunken drab pulled another drunken drab off the settle to make room for the "poor young man;" and I sat there with a confused notion that something strange and dreadful had happened to me, while the party drained their respective quarts of porter, and talked over the last boat-race with the Leander.

"Now then, gen'l'men," said the policeman, "if you think he's recovered, we'll take him home to his mother; she ought for to take him in, surely."

"Yes, if she has as much heart in her as a dried walnut."

But I resisted stoutly; though I longed to vindicate my mother's affection, yet I could not face her. I entreated to be taken to the station-house; threatened, in my desperation, to break the bar glasses, which, like Doll Tearsheet's abuse, only elicited from the policeman a solemn "Very well;" and, under the unwonted excitement of the brandy, struggled so fiercely, and talked so incoherently, that the medical students interfered.

"We shall have this fellow in phrenitis, or laryngitis, or dothenenteritis, or some other itis, before long, if he's aggravated."

"And whichever it is, it'll kill him. He has no more stamina left than a yard of pump water."

"I should consider him chargeable to the parish," suggested the bar-keeper.

"Exactually so, my Solomon of licensed victuallers. Get a workhouse order for him, Costello."

"And I should consider, also, sir," said the licensed victualler, with increased importance, "having been a guardian myself, and knowing the hact, as the parish couldn't refuse, because they're in power to recover all hexpenses out of his mother."

"To be sure; it's all the unnatural old witch's fault."

"No, it is not," said I, faintly.

"Wait till your opinion's asked, young'un. Go kick up the authorities, policeman."

"Now, I'll just tell you how that'll work, gemmen," answered the policeman, solemnly. "I goes to the overseer werry good sort o' man — but he's in bed. I knocks for half an hour. He puts he's nightcap out o' windy, and sends me to the relieving-officer. Werry good sort of man he too; but he's in bed. I knocks for another half-hour. He puts his nightcap out o' windy — sends me to the medical officer for a certificate. Medical officer's gone to a midwifery case. I hunts him for an hour or so. He's got hold of a babby with three heads, or summat else; and two more women a-calling out for him like blazes. 'He'll come to-morrow morning.' Now, I just axes your opinion of that there most procrastinationest go."

The big student, having cursed the parochial authorities in general, offered to pay for my night's lodging at the publichouse. The good man of the house demurred at first, but relented on being reminded of the value of a medical student's custom; whereon, without more ado, two of the rough diamonds took me between them, carried me up-stairs, undressed me, and put me into bed, as tenderly as if they had been women.

"He'll have the tantrums before morning, I'm afraid," said one.

"Very likely to turn to typhus," said the other.

"Well, I suppose - it's a horrid bore, but

What must be must; man is but dust, If you can't get crumb, you must just eat crust.

Send me up a go of hot with, and I'll sit up with him till he's asleep, dead, or better."

"Well, then, I'll stay too; we may just as well make a night of it here as well as anywhere else."

And he pulled a short black pipe out of his pocket, and sat down to meditate with his feet on the hobs of the empty grate; the other man went down for the liquor; while I, between the brandy and exhaustion, fell fast asleep, and never stirred till I woke the next morning with a racking headache, and saw the big student standing by my bedside, having, as I afterwards heard, sat by me till four in the morning.

"Hullo, young'un, come to your senses? Headache, eh? Slightly comato-crapulose? We'll give you some soda and salvolatile, and I'll pay for your breakfast."

And so he did, and when he was joined by his companions on their way to St. George's, they were very anxious, having heard my story, to force a few shillings on me "for luck," which, I need not say, I peremptorily refused, assuring them that I could and would get my own living, and never take a farthing from any man.

"That's a plucky dog, though he's a tailor," I heard them say, as, after overwhelming them with thanks, and vowing, amid shouts of laughter, to repay them every farthing I had cost them, I took my way, sick and stunned, towards my dear old Sandy Mackaye's street.

Rough diamonds indeed! I have never met you again, but I have not forgotten you. Your early life may be a coarse, too often a profligate one—but you know the people, and the people know you: and your tenderness and care, bestowed without hope of repayment, cheers daily many a poor soul in hospital wards and fever-cellars — to meet its reward some day at the people's hands. You belong to us at heart, as the Paris barricades can tell. Alas! for the society which stifles in after-life too many of your better feelings, by making you mere flunkeys and parasites, dependent for your livelihood on the caprices and luxuries of the rich.

CHAPTER VI.

#### The Dulwich Gallery.

SANDY MACKAVE received me in a characteristic way growled at me for half an hour for quarrelling with my mother and when I was at my wit's end, suddenly offered me a bed in his house and the use of his little sitting-room — and, bliss too great to hope! of his books also; and when I talked of payment, told me to hold my tongue and mind my own business. So I settled myself at once; and that very evening he installed himself as my private tutor, took down a Latin book, and set me to work on it.

"An' mind ye, laddie," said he, half in jest and half in earnest, "gin I find ye playing truant, and reading a' sorts o' nonsense instead of minding the scholastic methods and proprieties, I'll just bring ye in a bill at the year's end o' twa guineas a week for lodgings and tuition, and tak' the law o' ye; so mind and read what I tell ye. Do you comprehend noo?"

I did comprehend, and obeyed him, determining to repay him some day — and somehow — how I did not very clearly see. Thus I put myself more or less into the old man's power; foolishly enough the wise world will say. But I had no suspicion in my character; and I could not look at those keen grey eyes, when, after staring into vacancy during some long preachment, they suddenly flashed round at me, and through me, full of fun and quaint thought, and kindly earnestness, and fancy that man less honest than his face seemed to proclaim him.

By-the-by, I have as yet given no description of the old eccentric's abode — an unpardonable omission, I suppose, in these days of Dutch painting and Boz. But the omission was correct, both historically and artistically, for I had as yet only gone to him for books, books, nothing but books; and I had been blind to everything in his shop but that fairyland of shelves, filled, in my simple fancy, with inexhaustible treasures, wonder-working, omnipotent, as the magic seal of Solomon.

It was not till I had been settled and at work for several nights in his sanctum, behind the shop, that I began to become conscious what a strange den that sanctum was.

It was so dark, that without a gas-light no one but he could see to read there, except on very sunny days. Not only were the shelves which covered every inch of wall crammed with books and pamphlets, but the little window was blocked up with them, the floor was piled with bundles of them, in some places three feet deep, apparently in the wildest confusion — though there was some mysterious order in them which he understood, and symbolised, I suppose, by the various strange and ludicrous nicknames on their tickets for he never was at fault a moment if a customer asked for a book, though it were buried deep in the chaotic stratum. Out of this book alluvium a hole seemed to have been dug near the fireplace, just big enough to hold his arm-chair and a table. book-strewn like everything else, and garnished with odds and ends of MSS., and a snuffer-tray containing scraps of half-smoked tobacco, "pipe-dottles," as he called them, which were carefully resmoked over and over again, till nothing but ash was left. His whole culinary utensils - for he cooked as well as eat in this strange hole - were an old rusty kettle, which stood on one hob, and a blue plate which, when washed, stood on the other. A barrel of true Aberdeen meal peered out of a corner, half buried in books, and "a keg o' whusky, the gift o' freens," peeped in like case out of another.

This was his only food. "It was a' poison," he used to say, "in London. Bread full o' alum and bones, and sic filth — meat over-driven till it was a' braxy — water stopped wi' dead men's juice. Naething was safe but gude Scot's parritch and Athol brose." He carried his water-horror so far as to walk some quarter of a mile every morning to fill his kettle at a favourite pump. "Was he a cannibal, to drink out o' that pump hard-by, right under the kirkyard?" But it was little he either ate or drank — he seemed to live upon tobacco. From four in the morning till twelve at night, the pipe never left his lips, except when he went into the outer shop. "It promoted meditation, and drove awa' the lusts o' the flesh. Ech! it was worthy o' that auld tyrant Jamie, to write his counter-blast to the poor man's freen! The hypocrite; to gang preaching the virtues o' evil-savoured smoke 'ad dæmones abigendos' — and then rail again tobacco, as if it was no as gude for the purpose as auld rags and horn shavings?"

Sandy Mackaye had a great fancy for political caricatures, rows of which, there being no room for them on the walls, hung on strings from the ceiling - like clothes hung out to dry - and among them dangled various books to which he had taken an antipathy, principally High Tory and Benthamite, crucified, impaled through their covers, and suspended in all sorts of torturing attitudes. Among them, right over the table, figured a copy of Icon Basilike, dressed up in a paper shirt, all drawn over with figures of flames and devils, and surmounted by a peaked paper cap, like a victim at an auto-da-fé. And in the midst of all this chaos grinned from the chimney-piece, among pipes and pens, pinches of salt and scraps of butter, a tall cast of Michael Angelo's wellknown skinless model - his pristine white defaced by a cap of soot upon the top of his scalpless skull, and every muscle and tendon thrown into horrible relief by the dirt which had lodged among the cracks. There it stood, pointing with its ghastly arm towards the door, and holding on its wrist a label with the following inscription:

> Here stand I, the working man, Get more off me if you can.

I questioned Mackaye one evening about those hanged and crucified books, and asked him if he ever sold any of them.

"Ou, ay," he said; "if folks are fools enough to ask for them, I'll just answer a fool according to his folly."

"But," I said, "Mr. Mackaye, do you think it right to sell books of the very opinions of which you disapprove so much?"

"Hoot, laddie, it's just a spoiling o' the Egyptians; so mind your book, and dinna tak in hand cases o' conscience for ither folk. Ye'll ha' wark eneugh wi' yer ain before ye're dune."

And he folded round his knees his Joseph's coat, as he called it, an old dressing-gown with one plaid sleeve, and one blue one, red shawl-skirts, and a black broadcloth back, not to mention innumerable patches of every imaginable stuff and colour, filled his pipe, and buried his nose in "Harrington's Oceana." He read at least twelve hours every day of his life, and that exclusively old history and politics, though his favourite books were Thomas Carlyle's works. Two or three evenings in the week, when he had seen me safe settled at my studies, he used to disappear mysteriously for several hours, and it was some time before I found out, by a chance expression, that he was attending some meeting or committee of working-men. I begged him to take me there with him. But I was stopped by a laconic answer.

"When ye're ready."

"And when shall I be ready, Mr. Mackaye?"

"Read yer book till I tell ye."

And he twisted himself into his best coat, which had once been black, squeezed on his little Scotch cap, and went out.

I now found myself, as the reader may suppose, in an element far more congenial to my literary tastes, and which compelled far less privation of sleep and food in order to find time and means for reading; and my health began to mend from the very first day. But the thought of my mother haunted me; and Mackaye seemed in no hurry to let me escape from it, for he insisted on my writing to her in a penitent strain, informing her of my whereabouts, and offering to return home if she should wish it. With feelings strangely mingled between the desire of seeing her again and the dread of returning to the old drudgery of surveillance, I sent the letter, and waited a whole week without any answer. At last, one evening, when I returned from work, Sandy seemed in a state of unusual exhilaration. He looked at me again and again, winking and chuckling to himself in a way which showed me that his good spirits had something to do with my concerns; but he did not open on the subject till I had settled to my evening's reading. Then, having brewed himself an unusually strong mug of whisky-toddy, and brought out with great ceremony a clean pipe, he commenced.

"Alton, laddie, I've been fiechting Philistines for ye the day."

"Ah! have you heard from my mother?"

"I wadna say that exactly; but there's been a gran baillie body wi'me that calls himsel your uncle, and a braw young callant, a bairn o'his, I'm thinking." "Ah! that's my cousin George; and tell me — do tell me, what you said to them."

"Ou — that'll be mair concern o' mine than o' yourn. But ye're no going back to your mither."

My heart leapt up with — joy; there is no denying it and then I burst into tears.

"And she won't see me? Has she really cast me off?"

"Why, that'll be verra much as ye prosper, I'm thinking. Ye're an unaccredited hero, the noo, as Thomas Carlyle has it. 'But gin ye do weel by yoursel,' saith the Psalmist, 'ye'll find a' men speak well o' ye' — if ye gang their gate. But ye're to gang to see your uncle at his shop o' Monday next, at one o'clock. Now stint your greeting, and read awa'."

On the next Monday I took a holiday, the first in which I had ever indulged myself; and having spent a good hour in scrubbing away at my best shoes and Sunday suit, started, in fear and trembling, for my uncle's "establishment."

I was agreeably surprised, on being shown into the little back office at the back of the shop, to meet with a tolerably gracious reception from the good-natured Mammonite. He did not shake hands with me, it is true; - was I not a poor relation? But he told me to sit down, commended me for the excellent character which he had of me both from my master and Mackaye, and then entered on the subject of my literary tastes. He heard I was a precious clever fellow. No wonder, I came of a clever stock; his poor dear brother had plenty of brains for everything but business. "And you see, my boy" (with a glance at the big ledgers and busy shop without), "I knew a thing or two in my time, or I should not have been here. But without capital, I think brains a curse. Still we must make the best of a bad matter; and if you are inclined to help to raise the family name - not that I think much of book writers myself - poor starving devils, half of them - but still people do talk about them - and a man might get a snug thing as newspaper editor, with interest; or clerk to something or other - always some new company in the wind now - and I should have no objection, if you seemed likely to do us credit, to speak a word for you. I've none of your mother's con-founded puritanical notions, I can tell you; and, what's more, I have, thank Heaven, as fine a city connexion as any man. But you must mind and make yourself a good accountant - learn double entry on the Italian method - that's a

good practical study; and if that old Sawney is soft enough to teach you other things gratis, he may as well teach you that too. I'll bet he knows something about it — the old Scotch fox. There now — that'll do — there's five shillings for you — mind you don't lose them — and if I hear a good account of you, why, perhaps — but there's no use making promises."

At this moment a tall, handsome young man, whom I did not at first recognise as my cousin George, swung into the office, and shook me cordially by the hand.

"Hullo, Alton, how are you? Why, I hear you're coming out as a regular genius — breaking out in a new place, upon my honour! Have you done with him, governor?"

"Well, I think I have. I wish you'd have a talk with him, my boy. I'm sorry I can't see more of him, but I have to meet a party on business at the West-end at two, and Alderman Tumbril and family dine with us this evening, don't they? I think our small table will be full."

"Of course it will. Come along with me, and we'll have a chat in some quiet out-of-the-way place. This city is really so noisy that you can't hear your own ears, as our dean says in lecture."

So he carried me off, down back streets and alleys, a little puzzled at the extreme cordiality of his manner. Perhaps it sprung, as I learned afterward to suspect, from his consistent and perpetual habit of ingratiating himself with every one whom he approached. He never cut a chimney-sweep if he knew him. And he found it pay. The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

Perhaps it sprung also, as I began to suspect in the first hundred yards of our walk, from the desire of showing off before me the university clothes, manners, and gossip, which he had just brought back with him from Cambridge.

I had not seen him more than three or four times in my life before, and then he appeared to me merely a tall, handsome, conceited, slangy boy. But I now found him much improved — in all externals at least. He had made it his business, I knew, to perfect himself in all athletic pursuits which were open to a Londoner. As he told me that day he found it pay, when one got among gentlemen. Thus he had gone up to Cambridge a capital skater, rower, pugilist — and billiard player. Whether or not that last accomplishment ought to be classed in the list of athletic sports, he contrived, by his own account, to keep it in that of paying ones. In both these branches he seemed to have had plenty of opportunities of distinguishing himself at college; and his tall, powerful figure showed the fruit of these exercises in a stately and confident, almost martial, carriage. Something jaunty, perhaps swaggering, remained still in his air and dress, which yet sat not ungracefully on him; but I could see that he had been mixing in society more polished and artificial than that to which we had either of us been accustomed, and in his smart Rochester, well-cut trousers, and delicate French boots, he excited, I will not deny it, my boyish admiration and envy.

"Well," he said, as soon as we were out of the shop, "which way? Got a holiday? And how did you intend to spend it?"

"I wanted very much," I said, meekly, "to see the pictures at the National Gallery."

"Oh! ah! pictures don't pay; but, if you like — much better ones at Dulwich — that's the place to go to — you can see the others any day — and at Dulwich, you know, they've got — why let me see — " And he ran over half-a-dozen outlandish names of painters, which, as I have never again met with them, I am inclined on the whole to consider as somewhat extemporaneous creations. However, I agreed to go.

"Ah! capital — very nice quiet walk, and convenient for me — very little out of my way home. I'll walk there with you."

"One word for your neighbour and two for yourself," thought I; but on we walked. To see good pictures had been a long-cherished hope of mine. Everything beautiful in form or colour was beginning of late to have an intense fascination for me. I had, now that I was emancipated, gradually dared to feed my greedy eyes by passing stares into the print-shop windows, and had learnt from them a thousand new notions, new emotions, new longings after beauties of Nature, which seemed destined never to be satisfied. But pictures, above all, foreign ones, had been, in my mother's eyes, Anathema Maranatha, as vile Popish and Pagan vanities, the rags of the scarlet woman no less than the surplice itself — and now, when it came to the point, I hesitated at an act of such awful disobedience, even though unknown to her. My cousin, however, laughed down my scruples, told me I was out of leadingstrings now, and, which was true enough, that it was "a \* \* \* \* deal better to amuse oneself in picture galleries without leave, than live a life of sneaking and lying under petticoat government, as all home-birds were sure to do in the long-run." And so I went on, while my cousin kept up a running fire of chat the whole way, intermixing shrewd, bold observations upon every woman who passed, with sneers at the fellows of the college to which we were going - their idleness and luxury - the large grammar-school which they were bound by their charter to keep up, and did not - and hints about private interest in high quarters, through which their wealthy uselessness had been politely overlooked, when all similar institutions in the kingdom were subject to the searching examination of a government commission. Then there were stories of boat-races and gay noblemen, breakfast parties, and lectures on Greek plays, flavoured with a spice of Cambridge slang, all equally new to me - glimpses into a world of wonders, which made me feel, as I shambled along at his side, trying to keep step with his strides, more weakly and awkward and ignorant than ever.

We entered the gallery. I was in a fever of expectation.

The rich sombre light of the rooms, the rich heavy warmth of the stove-heated air, the brilliant and varied colouring and gilded frames which embroidered the walls, the hushed earnestness of a few artists who were copying, and the few visitors who where lounging from picture to picture, struck me at once with mysterious awe. But my attention was in a moment concentrated on one figure opposite to me at the furthest end. I hurried straight towards it. When I had got half-way up the gallery I looked round for my cousin. He had turned aside to some picture of a Venus which caught my eye also, but which, I remember now, only raised in me then a shudder and a blush, and a fancy that the clergymen must be really as bad as my mother had taught me to believe, if they could allow in their galleries pictures of undressed women. I have learnt to view such things differently now, thank God. I have learnt that to the pure all things are pure. I have learnt the meaning of that great saying - the foundation of all art, as well as all mo desty, all love, which tells us how "the man and his wife were both naked, and not ashamed." But this book is the history of my mental growth; and my mistakes as well as my discoveries are steps in that development, and may bear a lesson in them.

How I have rambled! But as that day was the turningpoint of my whole short life, I may be excused for lingering upon every feature of it.

Timidly, but eagerly, I went up to the picture, and stood entranced before it. It was Guido's St. Sebastian. All the world knows the picture, and all the world knows, too, the defects of the master, though in this instance he seems to have risen above himself, by a sudden inspiration, into that true naturalness, which is the highest expression of the Spiritual. But the very defects of the picture, its exaggeration, its theatricality, were especially calculated to catch the eye of a boy awaking out of the narrow dulness of Puritanism. The breadth and vastness of light and shade upon those manly limbs, so grand and yet so delicate, standing out against the background of lurid night, the helplessness of the bound arms, the arrow quivering in the shrinking side, the upturned brow, the eyes in whose dark depths enthusiastic faith seemed conquering agony and shame, the parted lips, which seemed to ask, like those martyrs in the Revelations, reproachful, halfresigned, "O Lord, how long?" - Gazing at that picture since, I have understood how the idolatry of painted saints could arise in the minds even of the most educated, who were not disciplined by that stern regard for fact which is - or ought to be - the strength of Englishmen. I have understood the heart of that Italian girl, whom some such picture of St. Sebastian, perhaps this very one, excited, as the Venus of Praxiteles the Grecian boy, to hopeless love, madness, and death. Then I had never heard of St. Sebastian. I did not dream of any connexion between that, or indeed any picture, and Christianity; and yet, as I stood before it, I seemed to be face to face with the ghosts of my old Puritan forefathers, to see the spirit which supported them on pillories and scaffolds - the spirit of that true St. Margaret, the Scottish maiden whom Claverhouse and his soldiers chained to a post on the sea-sands to die by inches in the rising tide, till the sound of her hymns was slowly drowned in the dash of the hungry leaping waves. My heart swelled within me, my eyes seemed bursting from my head with the intensity of my gaze, and great tears, I knew not why, rolled slowly down my face.

A woman's voice close to me, gentle yet of deeper tone than most, woke me from my trance.

"You seem to be deeply interested in that picture?"

I looked round, yet not at the speaker. My eyes, before they could meet hers, were caught by an apparition the most beautiful I had ever yet beheld. And what - what - have I seen equal to her since? Strange, that I should love to talk of her. Strange, that I fret at myself now because I cannot set down on paper line by line, and hue by hue, that wonderful loveliness of which - But no matter. Had I but such an imagination as Petrarch, or rather, perhaps, had I his deliberate cold self-consciousness, what volumes of similes and conceits I might pour out, connecting that peerless face and figure with all lovely things which heaven and earth contain. As it is, because I cannot say all, I will say nothing, but repeat to the end again and again, Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beyond all statue, picture, or poet's dream. Seventeen - slight but rounded, a masque and features delicate and regular, as if fresh from the chisel of Praxiteles - I must try to describe after all, you see - a skin of alabaster (privet-flowers, Horace and Ariosto would have said, more true to Nature), stained with the faintest flush; auburn hair, with that peculiar crisped wave seen in the old Italian pictures, and the warm, dark hazel eyes which so often accompany it; lips like a thread of vermilion, somewhat too thin, perhaps - but I thought little of that then; with such perfect finish and grace in every line and hue of her features and her dress, down to the little fingers and nails, which showed through her thin gloves, that she seemed to my fancy fresh from the innermost chamber of some enchanted palace, "where no air of heaven could visit her cheek too roughly." I dropped my eyes, quite dazzled. The question was repeated by a lady who stood with her, whose face I remarked then-as I did to the last, alas!-too little; dazzled at the first by outward beauty, perhaps because so utterly unaccustomed to it.

"It is indeed a wonderful picture," I said, timidly. "May I ask what is the subject of it?"

"Oh! don't you know?" said the young beauty, with a smile that thrilled through me. "It is St. Sebastian."

"I — I am very much ashamed," I answered, colouring up, "but I do not know who St. Sebastian was. Was he a Popish saint?"

A tall, stately old man, who stood with the two ladies, laughed kindly. "No, not till they made him one against his will; and at the same time, by putting him into the mill which grinds old folks young again, converted him from a grizzled old Roman tribune into the young Apollo of Popery."

"You will puzzle your hearer, my dear uncle," said the same deep-toned woman's voice which had first spoken to me. "As you volunteered the saint's name, Lillian, you shall also tell his history."

Simply and shortly, with just feeling enough to send through me a fresh thrill of delighted interest, without trenching the least on the most stately reserve, she told me the wellknown history of the saint's martyrdom.

If I seem minute in my description, let those who read my story remember that such courteous dignity, however natural, I am bound to believe, it is to them, was to me an utterly new excellence in human nature. All my mother's Spartan nobleness of manner seemed unexpectedly combined with all my little sister's careless ease.

"What a beautiful poem the story would make!" said I, as soon as I recovered my thoughts.

"Well spoken, young man," answered the old gentleman. "Let us hope that your seeing a subject for a good poem will be the first step towards your writing one."

As he spoke, he bent on me two clear grey eyes, full of kindliness, mingled with practised discernment. I saw that he was evidently a clergyman; but what his tight silk stockings and peculiar hat denoted I did not know. There was about him the air of a man accustomed equally to thought, to men, and to power. And I remarked somewhat maliciously, that my cousin, who had strutted up towards us on seeing me talking to two ladies, the instant he caught sight of those black silk stockings and that strange hat, fell suddenly in countenance, and sidling off somewhat meekly into the background, became absorbed in the examination of a Holy Family.

I answered something humbly, I forget what, which led to a conversation. They questioned me as to my name, my mother, my business, my studies; while I revelled in the delight of stolen glances at my new found Venus Victrix, who was as forward as any of them in her questions and her interest. Perhaps she enjoyed, at least she could not help seeing, the admiration for herself which I took no pains to conceal. At last the old man cut the conversation short by a quiet "Good morning, sir," which astonished me. I had never heard words Alton Locke. 5 whose tone was so courteous and yet so chillingly peremptory. As they turned away, he repeated to himself once or twice, as if to fix them in his mind, my name and my master's, and awoke in me, perhaps too thoughtlessly, a tumult of vague hopes. Once and again the beauty and her companion looked back towards me, and seemed talking of me, and my face was burning scarlet, when my cousin swung up in his hard, offhand way.

"By Jove, Alton, my boy! you're a knowing fellow. I congratulate you! At your years, indeed! to rise a dean and two beauties at the first throw, and hook them fast!"

"A dean!" I said, in some trepidation.

"Ay, a live dean — didn't you see the cloven foot sticking out from under his shoe-buckle? What news for your mother! What will the ghosts of your grandfathers to the seventh generation say to this, Alton? Colloquing in Pagan picture galleries with shovel-hatted Philistines! And that's not the worst, Alton," he ran on. "Those daughters of Moab — those daughters of Moab — "

"Hold your tongue," I said, almost crying with vexation.

"Look there, if you want to save your good-temper. There, she is looking back again — not at poor me, though. What a lovely girl she is! — and a real lady — *l'air noble* — the real genuine grit, as Sam Slick says, and no mistake. By Jove, what a face! what hands! what feet! what a figure — in spite of crinolines and all abominations! And didn't she know it? And didn't she know that you knew it too?" And he ran on, descanting coarsely on beauties which I dared not even have profaned by naming, in a way that made me, I knew not why, mad with jealousy and indignation. She seemed mine alone in all the world. What right had any other human being, above all, he, to dare to mention her? I turned again to my St. Sebastian. That movement only brought on me a fresh volley of banter.

"Oh, that's the dodge, is it, to catch intellectual fine ladies? — to fall into an ecstatic attitude before a picture — But then we must have Alton's genius, you know, to find out which the fine pictures are. I must read up that subject, by-the-by. It might be a paying one among the dons. For the present, here goes in for an attitude. Will this do, Alton?" and he arranged himself admiringly before the picture in an attitude so absurd and yet so graceful, that I did not know whether to laugh at him or hate him.

"At all events," he added, dryly, "it will be as good as playing the evangelical at Carus's tea-parties, or taking the sacrament regularly for fear one's testimonials should be refused." And then he looked at me, and through me, in his intense, confident way, to see that his hasty words had not injured him with me. He used to meet one's eye as boldly as any man I ever saw; but it was not the simple gaze of honesty and innocence, but an imperious, searching look, as if defying scrutiny. His was a true mesmeric eye, if ever there was one. No wonder it worked the miracles it did.

"Come along," he said, suddenly seizing my arm. "Don't you see they're leaving? Out of the gallery after them, and get a good look at the carriage and the arms upon it. I saw one standing there as we came in. It may pay us — you, that is — to know it again."

We went out, I holding him back, I knew not why, and arrived at the outer gate just in time to see them enter the carriage and drive off. I gazed to the last, but did not stir.

"Good boy," he said; "knowing still. If you had bowed, or showed the least sign of recognition, you would have broken the spell."

But I hardly heard what he said, and stood gazing stupidly after the carriage as it disappeared. I did not know then what had happened to me. I know now, alas! too well.

### CHAPTER VII.

#### First Love.

TRULY I said, I did not know what had happened to me. I did not attempt to analyse the intense, overpowering instinct which from that moment made the lovely vision I had seen the lodestar of all my thoughts. Even now, I can see nothing in those feelings of mine but simple admiration — idolatry if you will — of physical beauty. Doubtless there was more doubtless — I had seen pretty faces before, and knew that they were pretty, but they had passed from my retina, like the prints of beauties which I saw in the shop windows, without exciting a thought — even a conscious emotion of complacency. But this face did not pass away. Day and night I saw it, just

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as I had seen it in the gallery. The same playful smile - the same glance alternately turned to me, and the glowing picture above her head - and that was all I saw or felt. No child ever nestled upon its mother's shoulder with feelings more celestially pure, than those with which I counted over day and night each separate lineament of that exceeding loveliness. Romantic? extravagant? Yes; if the world be right in calling a passion romantic just in proportion as it is not merely hopeless, but pure and unselfish, drawing its delicious power from no hope or faintest desire of enjoyment, but merely from simple delight in its object - then my passion was most romantic. I never thought of disparity in rank. Why should I? That could not blind the eyes of my imagination. She was beautiful, and that was all, and all in all, to me; and had our stations been exchanged, or more than exchanged; had I been King Cophetua, and she the beggar-maid, I should have gloried in her just as much.

Beloved sleepless hours, which I spent in picturing that scene to myself, with all the brilliance of fresh recollection! Beloved hours! how soon you passed away! Soon - soon my imagination began to fade; the traces of her features on my mind's eye became confused and dim; and then came over me the fierce desire to see her again, that I might renew the freshness of that charming image. Thereon grew up an agony of longing - an agony of weeks, and months, and years. Where could I find that face again? was my ruling thought from morning until eve. I knew that it was hopeless to look for her at the gallery where I had first seen her. My only hope was, that at some place of public resort at the West-end I might catch, if but for a moment, an inspiring glance of that radiant countenance. I lingered round the Burton Arch and Hyde Park Gate - but in vain. I peered into every carriage, every bonnet that passed me in the thoroughfares - in vain. I stood patiently at the doors of exhibitions, and concerts, and playhouses, to be shoved back by policemen, and insulted by footmen - but in vain. Then I tried the fashionable churches, one by one; and sat in the free seats, to listen to prayers and sermons, not a word of which, alas! I cared to understand, with my eyes searching carefully every pew and gallery, face by face; always fancying, in self-torturing waywardness, that she might be just in the part of the gallery which I could not see. O! miserable days of hope deferred,

#### TAILOR AND POET.

making the heart sick! Miserable gnawing of disappointment with which I returned at nightfall, to force myself down to my books! Equally miserable rack of hope on which my nerves were stretched every morning when I rose, counting the hours till my day's work should be over, and my mad search begin again! At last "my torment did by length of time become my element." I returned steadily as ever to the studies which I had at first neglected, much to Mackaye's wonder and disgust; and the vain hunt after that face became a part of my daily task, to be got through with the same dull, sullen effort, with which all I did was now transacted.

Mackaye, I suppose, at first, attributed my absences and idleness to my having got into bad company. But it was some weeks before he gently enough told me his suspicions, and they were answered by a burst of tears, and a passionate denial, which set them at rest for ever. But I had not courage to tell him what was the matter with me. A sacred modesty, as well as a sense of the impossibility of explaining my emotions, held me back. I had a half-dread, too, to confess the whole truth, of his ridiculing a fancy, to say the least, so utterly impracticable; and my only confidant was a picture in the National Gallery, in one of the faces of which I had discovered some likeness to my Venus; and there I used to go and stand at spare half hours, and feel the happier for staring and staring, and whispering to the dead canvas the extravagances of my idolatry.

But soon the bitter draught of disappointment began to breed harsher thoughts in me. Those fine gentlemen who rode past me in the park, who rolled by in carriages, sitting face to face with ladies, as richly dressed, if not as beautiful, as she was — they could see her when they liked — why not I? What right had their eyes to a feast denied to mine? They, too, who did not appreciate, adore that beauty as I did — for who could worship her like me? At least they had not suffered for her as I had done; they had not stood in rain and frost, fatigue, and blank despair — watching — watching month after month; and I was making coats for them! The very garment I was stitching at, might, in a day's time, be in her presence — touching her dress; and its wearer bowing, and smiling, and whispering — he had not bought that bliss by watching in the rain. It made me mad to think of it. I will say no more about it. That is a period of my life on which I cannot even now look back without a shudder.

At last, after perhaps a year or more, I summoned up courage to tell my story to Sandy Mackaye, and burst out with complaints more pardonable, perhaps, than reasonable.

"Why have I not as good a right to speak to her, to move in the same society in which she moves, as any of the fops of the day? Is it because these aristocrats are more intellectual than I? I should not fear to measure brains against most of them now; and give me the opportunities which they have, and I would die if I did not outstrip them. Why have I not those opportunities? Is that fault of others to be visited on me? Is it because they are more refined than I? What right have they, if this said refinement be so necessary a qualification, a difference so deep — that, without it, there is to be an everlasting gulf between man and man — what right have they to refuse to let me share in it, to give me the opportunity of acquiring it?"

"Wad ye ha' them set up a dancing academy for working men, wi' 'manners tocht here to the lower classes?' 'They'll no break up their ain monopoly; trust them for it! Na: if ye want to get amang them, I'll tell ye the way o't. Write a book o' poems, and ca' it 'A Voice fra' the Goose, by a Working Tailor' — and then — why, after a dizen years or so of starving and scribbling for your bread, ye'll ha' a chance o' finding yoursel' a lion, and a flunkey, and a licker o' trenchers — ane that jokes for his dinner, and sells his soul for a fine leddy's smile — till ye presume to think they're in earnest, and fancy yoursel a man o' the same blude as they, and fa' in love wi' one o' them — and then they'll teach you your level, and send ye off to gauge whusky like Burns, or leave ye to die in a ditch as they did wi' puir Thom."

"Married to anither body? — and nursing anither body's bairns? Ah boy, boy — do ye think that was what ye were made for; to please yersel wi' a woman's smiles, or e'en a woman's kisses — or to please yersel at all? How do ye expect ever to be happy, or strong, or a man at a', as long as ye go on looking to enjoy yersel — yersel? I ha' tried it. Mony was the year I looked for nought but my ain pleasure, and got it too, when it was a' Sandy Mackaye, bonny Sandy Mackaye, There he sits singing the lang simmer's day; Lassies gae to him And kiss him, and woo him — Na bird is sa merry as Sandy Mackaye.

An' muckle good cam' o't. Ye may fancy I'm talking like a sour, disappointed auld carle. But I tell ye nay. I've got that's worth living for, though I am downhearted at times, and fancy a's wrong, and there's na hope for us on earth, we be a' sic liars - a' liars, I think: 'a universal liars-rock substrawtum,' as Mr. Carlyle says. I'm a great liar often mysel, specially when I'm praying. Do ye think I'd live on here in this meeserable crankit auld bane-barrel o' a body, if it was not for The Cause, and for the puir young fellows that come in to me whiles to get some book-learning about the gran' auld Roman times, when folks didna care for themselves, but for the nation, and a man counted wife and bairns and money as dross and dung, in comparison wi' the great Roman city, that was the mither o' them a', and wad last on, free and glorious, after they and their bairns were a' dead thegither? Hoot man! If I had na The Cause to care for and to work for, whether I ever see it triumphant on earth or no - I'd just tak' the cauld-water-cure off Waterloo-bridge, and mak' mysel a case for the Humane Society."

"And what is The Cause?" I asked.

"Wud I tell ye? We want no ready-made freens o' The Cause. I dinna hauld wi' thae French indoctrinating pedants, that took to stick free opinions into a man as ye'd stick pins into a pincushion, to fa' out again the first shake. Na — The Cause must find a man, and tak hauld o' him, willy-nilly, and grow up in him like an inspiration, till he can see nocht but in the light o't. Puir bairn!" he went on, looking with a halfsad, half-comic face at me — "puir bairn — like a young bear, wi' a' your sorrows before ye! This time seven years ye'll ha' no need to come speering and questioning what The Cause is, and the Gran' Cause, and the Only Cause worth working for on the earth o' God. And noo gang your gate, and mak' fine feathers for foul birds. I'm gaun whar ye'll be ganging too, before long."

As I went sadly out of the shop, he called me back.

"Stay a wee, bairn; there's the Roman History for ye. There ye'll read what The Cause is, and how they that seek their ain are no worthy thereof." I took the book, and found in the legends of Brutus, and Cocles, and Scævola, and the retreat to the Mons Sacer, and the Gladiator's war, what The Cause was, and forgot awhile in those tales of antique heroism and patriotic self-sacrifice my own selfish longings and sorrows.

But, after all, the very advice which was meant to cure me of those selfish longings, only tended, by diverting me from my living outward idol, to turn my thoughts more than ever inward, and tempt them to feed on their own substance. I passed whole days on the workroom floor in brooding silence - my mind peopled with an incoherent rabble of phantasms patched up from every object of which I had ever read. I could not control my day-dreams; they swept me away with them over sea and land, and into the bowels of the earth. My soul escaped on every side from my civilised dungeon of brick and mortar, into the great free world from which my body was debarred. Now I was the corsair in the pride of freedom on the dark blue sea. Now I wandered in fairy caverns among the bones of primæval monsters. I fought at the side of Leonidas, and the Maccabee who stabbed the Sultan's elephant, and saw him crushed beneath its falling bulk. Now I was a hunter in tropic forests - I heard the parrots scream, and saw the humming-birds flit on from gorgeous flower to flower. Gradually I took a voluntary pleasure in calling up these images, and working out their details into words with all the accuracy and care for which my small knowledge gave me materials. And as the self-indulgent habit grew on me, I began to live two lives - one mechanical and outward, one inward and imaginative. The thread passed through my fingers without my knowing it; I did my work as a machine might do it. The dingy stifling room, the wan faces of my companions, the scanty meals which I snatched, I saw dimly, as in a dream. The tropics, and Greece, the imaginary battles which I fought, the phantoms into whose mouths I put my thoughts, were real and true to me. They met me when I woke - they floated along beside me as I walked to work they acted their fantastic dramas before me through the sleepless hours of night. Gradually certain faces among them became familiar - certain personages grew into coherence, as embodiments of those few types of character which had

struck me the most, and played an analogous part in every fresh fantasia. Sandy Mackaye's face figured incongruously enough as Leonidas, Brutus, a Pilgrim Father; and gradually, in spite of myself, and the fear with which I looked on the recurrence of that dream, Lillian's figure reentered my fairyland. I saved her from a hundred dangers; I followed her through dragon-guarded caverns and the corridors of magic castles; I walked by her side through the forests of the Amazon....

And now I began to crave for some means of expressing these fancies to myself. While they were mere thoughts, parts of me, they were unsatisfactory, however delicious. I longed to put them outside me, that I might look at them and talk to them as permanent independent things. First I tried to sketch them on the whitewashed walls of my garret, on scraps of paper begged from Mackaye, or picked up in the workroom. But from my ignorance of any rules of drawing, they were utterly devoid of beauty, and only excited my disgust. Besides, I had thoughts as well as objects to express thoughts strange, sad, wild, about my own feelings, my own destiny, and drawing could not speak them for me.

Then I turned instinctively to poetry: with its rules I was getting rapidly conversant. The mere desire of imitation urged me on, and when I tried, the grace of rhyme and metre covered a thousand defects. I tell my story, not as I saw it then, but as I see it now. A long and lonely voyage, with its monotonous days and sleepless nights — its sickness and heart-loneliness, has given me opportunities for analysing my past history which were impossible then, amid the ceaseless in-rush of new images, the ceaseless ferment of their re-combination, in which my life was passed from sixteen to twenty-five. The poet, I suppose, must be a seer as long as he is a worker, and a seer only. He has no time to philosophise - to "think about thinking," as Goethe, I have somewhere read, says that he never could do. It is too often only in sickness and prostration and sheer despair, that the fierce voracity and swift digestion of his soul can cease, and give him time to know himself and God's dealings with him; and for that reason it is good for him, too, to have been afflicted.

I do not write all this to boast of it; I am ready to bear sneers at my romance — my day-dreams — my unpractical habits of mind, for I know that I deserve them. But such was the appointed growth of my uneducated mind; no more unhealthy a growth, if I am to believe books, than that of many a carefully trained one. High-born geniuses, they tell me, have their idle visions as well as we working-men; and Oxford has seen of late years as wild Icarias conceived as ever were fathered by a red Republic. For, indeed, we have the same flesh and blood, the same God to teach us, the same devil to mislead us, whether we choose to believe it or not. But there were excuses for me. We Londoners are not accustomed from our youth to the poems of a great democratic genius, as the Scotchmen are to their glorious Burns. We have no chance of such an early acquaintance with poetic art as that which enabled John Bethune, one of the great unrepresented — the starving Scotch day-labourer, breaking stones upon the parish roads, to write at the age of seventeen such words as these:

> Hail, hallow'd evening! sacred hour to me! Thy clouds of grey, thy vocal melody, Thy dreamy silence oft to me have brought A sweet exchange from toil to peaceful thought. Ye purple heavens! how often has my eye, Wearied with its long gaze on drudgery, Look'd up and found refreshment in the hues That gild thy vest with colouring profuse!

O, evening grey! how oft have I admired Thy airy tapestry, whose radiance fired The glowing minstrels of the olden time, Until their very souls flow'd forth in rhyme. And I have listened, till my spirit grew Familiar with their deathless strains, and drew From the same source some portion of the glow Which fill'd their spirits, when from earth below They scann'd thy golden imagery. And I Have consecrated *thee*, bright evening sky My fount of inspiration: and I fling My spirit on thy clouds — an offering To the great Deity of dying day, Who hath transfused o'er thee his purple ray.

After all, our dreams do little harm to the rich. Those who consider Chartism as synonymous with devil-worship, should bless and encourage them, for the very reason for which we working men ought to dread them; for, quickened into prurient activity by the low, novel-mongering press, they help to enervate and besot all but the noblest minds among us. Here and there a Thomas Cooper, sitting in Stafford gaol, after a youth spent in cobbling shoes, vents his treasures of elassic and historic learning in a "Purgatory of Suicides;" or a Prince becomes the poet of the poor, no less for having fed his boyish fancy with "The Arabian Nights" and "The Pilgrim's Progress." But, with the most of us, sedentary and monotonous occupations, as has long been known, create of themselves a morbidly-meditative and fantastic turn of mind. And what else, in Heaven's name, ye fine gentlemen - what else can a working man do with his imagination, but dream? What else will you let him do with it, oh ye education-pedants, who fancy that you can teach the masses as you would drill soldiers, every soul alike, though you will not bestir yourselves to do even that? Are there no differences of rank - God's rank, not man's - among us? You have discovered, since your school-boy days, the fallacy of the old nomenclature which civilly classed us all together as "the snobs," "the blackguards;" which even - so strong is habit - tempted Burke himself to talk of us as "the swinish multitude." You are finding yourselves wrong there. A few more years' experience, not in mis-educating the poor, but in watching the poor really educate themselves, may teach you that we are not all by nature dolts and idiots; that there are differences of brain among us, just as great as there is between you; that there are those among us whose education ought not to end, and will not end, with the putting off of the parish cap and breeches; whom it is cruelty, as well as folly, to toss back into the hell of mere manual drudgery, as soon as you have - if, indeed, you have been even so bountiful as that — excited in them a new thirst of the intellect and imagination. If you provide that craving with no wholesome food, you at least have no right to blame it if it shall gorge itself with poison.

Dare for once to do a strange thing, and let yourself be laughed at; go to a workman's meeting — a Chartist meeting, if you will; and look honestly at the faces and brows of those so-called incendiaries, whom your venal caricaturists have taught you to believe a mixture of cur-dog and baboon — we, for our part, shall not be ashamed to show foreheads against your laughing House of Commons — and then say, what employment can those men find in the soulless routine of mechanical labour for the mass of brain which they almost

#### ALTON LOCKE,

universally possess? They must either dream or agitate; perhaps they are now learning how to do both to some purpose.

But I have found, by sad experience, that there is little use in declamation. I had much better simply tell my story, and leave my readers to judge of the facts, if, indeed, they will be so far courteous as to believe them.

# CHAPTER VIII.

#### Light in a Dark Place.

So I made my first attempt at poetry - need I say that my subject was the beautiful Lillian? And need I say, too, that I was as utterly disgusted at my attempt to express her in words, as I had been at my trial with the pencil? It chanced also, that after hammering out half a dozen verses, I met with Mr. Tennyson's poems; and the unequalled sketches of women that I found there, while they had, with the rest of the book, a new and abiding influence on my mind, were quite enough to show me my own fatal incompetency in that line. I threw my verses away, never to resume them. Perhaps I proved thereby the depth of my affection. Our mightiest feelings are always those which remain most unspoken. The most intense lovers and the greatest poets have generally, I think, written very little personal love-poetry, while they have shown in fictitious characters a knowledge of the passion too painfully intimate to be spoken of in the first person.

But to escape from my own thoughts, I could not help writing something; and to escape from my own private sorrows, writing on some matter with which I had no personal concern. And so, after much casting about for subjects, Childe Harold and the old missionary records contrived to celebrate a spiritual wedding in my brain, of which anomalous marriage came a proportionately anomalous offspring.

My hero was not to be a pirate, but a pious sea-rover, who, with a crew of saints, or at least uncommonly fine fellows, who could be very manly and jolly, and yet all be good Christians, of a somewhat vague and latitudinarian cast of doctrine (for my own was becoming rapidly so), set forth under the red-cross flag to colonise and convert one of my old paradises, a South Sea Island.

I forget most of the lines — they were probably great trash, but I hugged them to my bosom as a young mother does her first child.

> 'Twas sunset in the lone Pacific world, The rich gleams fading in the western sky; Within the still Lagoon the sails were furled, The red-cross flag alone was flaunting high. Before them was the low and palm-fringed shore, Behind, the outer ocean's baffled roar.

After which valiant plunge in medias res, came a great lump of description, after the manner of youths — of the island, and the white houses, and the banana groves, and above all, the single volcano towering over the whole, which

Shaking a sinful isle with thundering shocks,

Reproved the worshippers of stones and stocks.

Then how a line of foam appears on the Lagoon, which is supposed at first to be a shoal of fish, but turns out to be a troop of naked island beauties, swimming out to the ship. The decent missionaries were certainly guiltless of putting that into my head, whether they ever saw it or not — a great many things happening in the South Seas of which they find it convenient to say nothing. I think I picked it up from Wallis, or Cook, or some other plain-spoken voyager.

The crew gaze in pardonable admiration, but the hero, in a long speech, reproves them for their lightmindedness, reminds them of their sacred mission, and informs them that,

> The soldiers of the cross should turn their eyes From carnal lusts and heathen vanities;

beyond which indisputable assertion I never got; for this being about the fiftieth stanza, I stopped to take breath a little; and reading and re-reading, patching and touching continually, grew so accustomed to my bantling's face, that, like a mother, I could not tell whether it was handsome or hideous, sense or nonsense. I have since found out that the true plan, for myself at least, is to write off as much as possible at a time, and then lay it by and forget it for weeks if I can, for months. After that, on returning to it, the mind regards it as something altogether strange and new, and can, or rather ought to, judge of it as it would of the work of another pen. But really, between conceit and disgust, fancying myself one day a great new poet, and the next a mere twaddler, I got so puzzled and anxious, that I determined to pluck up courage, go to Mackaye, and ask him to solve the problem for me.

"Hech, sirs, poetry! I've been expecting it. I suppose it's the appointed gate o' a workman's intellectual life — that same lust o' versification. Aweel, aweel — let's hear."

Blushing and trembling, I read my verses aloud in as resonant and magniloquent a voice as I could command. I thought Mackaye's upper lip would never stop lengthening, or his lower lip protruding. He chuckled intensely at the unfortunate rhyme between "shocks" and "stocks." Indeed, it kept him in chuckling matter for a whole month afterwards; but when I had got to the shoal of naked girls, he could bear no more, and burst out —

"What the devil! is there no harlotry and idolatry here in England, that ye maun gang speering after it in the Cannibal Islands? Are ye gaun to be like they puir aristocrat bodies, that wad suner hear an Italian dog howl, than an English nightingale sing, and winna harken to Mr. John Thomas till he calls himself Giovanni Thomasino; or do ye tak yoursel for a singing-bird, to go all your days tweedle-dumdeeing out into the lift, just for the lust o' hearing your ain clan clatter? Will ye be a man or a lintie? Coral Islands? Pacific? What do ye ken about Pacifics? Are ye a cockney or a Cannibal Islander? Dinna stand there, ye gowk, as fusionless as a docken, but tell me that! Whaur do ye live?"

"What do you mean, Mr. Mackaye?" asked I, with a doleful and disappointed visage.

"Mean — why, if God had meant ye to write aboot Pacifics, He'd ha' put ye there — and because He means ye to write aboot London town, He's put ye there — and gien ye an unco sharp taste o' the ways o't; and I'll gie yo anither. Come along wi'me."

And he seized me by the arm, and hardly giving me time to put on my hat, marched me out into the streets, and away through Clare Market to St. Giles's.

It was a foul, chilly, foggy Saturday night. From the butchers' and greengrocers' shops the gas-lights flared and flickered, wild and ghastly, over haggard groups of slip-shod dirty women, bargaining for scraps of stale meat and frost-

bitten vegetables, wrangling about short weight and bad quality. Fish-stalls and fruit-stalls lined the edge of the greasy pavement, sending up odors as foul as the language of sellers and buyers. Blood and sewer-water crawled from under doors and out of spouts, and reeked down the gutters among offal, animal and vegetable, in every stage of putrefaction. Foul vapours rose from cowsheds and slaughterhouses, and the doorways of undrained alleys, where the inhabitants carried the filth out on their shoes from the backyard into the court, and from the court up into the main street; while above, hanging like cliffs over the streets those narrow, brawling torrents of filth, and poverty, and sin — the houses with their teeming load of life were piled up into the dingy choking night. A ghastly, deafening, sickening sight it was. Go, scented Belgravian! and see what London is! and then go to the library which God has given thee -one often fears in vain - and see what science says this London might be!

"Ay," he muttered to himself, as he strode along, "sing awa; get yoursel wi' child wi' pretty fancies and gran' words, like the rest o' the poets, and gang to hell for it."

"To hell, Mr. Mackaye?"

"Ay, to a verra real hell, Alton Locke, laddie — a warse ane than ony fiends' kitchen, or subterranean Smithfield that ye'll hear o' in the pulpits — the hell on earth o' being a flunkey, and a humbug, and a useless peacock, wasting God's gifts on your ain lusts and pleasures — and kenning it — and not being able to get oot o' it, for the chains o' vanity and self-indulgence. I've warned ye. Now look there —"

He stopped suddenly before the entrance of a miserable alley -

"Look! there's not a soul down that yard but's either beggar, drunkard, thief, or warse. Write anent that! Say how ye saw the mouth o' hell, and the twa pillars thereof at the entry — the pawnbroker's shop o' one side and the ginpalace at the other — twa monstrous deevils, eating up men, and women, and bairns, body and soul. Look at the jaws o' the monsters, how they open and open, and swallow in anither victim and anither. Write anent that."

"What jaws, Mr. Mackaye?"

"They faulding-doors o' the gin-shop, goose. Are na they a mair damnable man-devouring idol than ony red-hot statue o' Moloch, or wicker Gogmagog, wherein thae auld Britons burnt their prisoners? Look at thae bare-footed, bare-backed hizzies, with their arms roun' the men's necks, and their mouths full o' vitriol and beastly words! Look at that Irishwoman pouring the gin down the babbie's throat! Look at that rough o' a boy gaun out o' the pawn-shop, where he's been pledging the handkerchief he stole the morning, into the gin-shop, to buy beer poisoned wi' grains o' paradise, and cocculus indicus, and saut, and a' damnable, maddening, thirst-breeding, lust-breeding drugs! Look at that girl that went in wi' a shawl on her back and cam' out wi'out ane! Drunkards frae the breast! — harlots frae the cradle! damned before they're born! John Calvin had an inkling o' the truth there, I'm a'most driven to think, wi' his reprobation deevil's doctrines!"

"Well — but — Mr. Mackaye, I know nothing about these poor creatures."

"Then ye ought. What do ye ken anent the Pacific? Which is maist to your business? — thae bare-backed hizzies that play the harlot o' the other side o' the warld, or these these thousands o' bare-backed hizzies that play the harlot o' your ain side — made out o' your ain flesh and blude? You a poet! True poetry, like true charity, my laddie, begins at hame. If ye'll be a poet at a', ye maun be a cockney poet; and while the cockneys be what they be, ye maun write, like Jeremiah of old, o' lamentation and mourning and woe, for the sins o' your people. Gin ye want to learn the spirit o' a people's poet, down wi' your Bible and read thae auld Hebrew prophets; gin ye wad learn the style, read your Burns frae morning till night; and gin ye'd learn the matter, just gang after your nose, and keep your eyes open, and ye'll no miss it."

"But all this is so - so unpoetical."

"Hech! Is there no the heeven above them there, and the hell beneath them? and God frowning, and the deevil grinning? No poetry there! Is no the verra idea of the classic tragedy defined to be, man conquered by circumstance? Canna ye see it there? And the verra idea of the modern tragedy, man conquering circumstance? — and I'll show ye that, too — in mony a garret where no eye but the gude God's enters, to see the patience, and the fortitude, and the selfsacrifice, and the luve stronger than death, that's shining in thae dark places o' the earth. Come wi' me, and see."

We went on through a back street or two, and then into a huge, miserable house, which, a hundred years ago, perhaps, had witnessed the luxury, and rung to the laughter of some one great fashionable family, alone there in their glory. Now every room of it held its family, or its group of families - a phalanstery of all the fiends; - its grand staircase, with the carved ballustrades rotting and crumbling away piecemeal, converted into a common sewer for all its inmates. Up stair after stair we went, while wails of children, and curses of men, steamed out upon the hot stifling rush of air from every doorway, till, at the topmost story, we knocked at a garret door. We entered. Bare it was of furniture, comfortless, and freezing cold; but, with the exception of the plaster dropping from the roof, and the broken windows patched with rags and paper, there was a scrupulous neatness about the whole, which contrasted strangely with the filth and slovenliness outside. There was no bed in the room - no table. On a broken chair by the chimney sat a miserable old woman, fancying that she was warming her hands over embers which had long been cold, shaking her head, and muttering to herself with palsied lips about the guardians and the workhouse; while upon a few rags on the floor lay a girl, ugly, small-pox-marked, holloweyed, emaciated, her only bed-clothes the skirt of a large handsome new riding-habit, at which two other girls, wan and tawdry, were stitching busily, as they sat right and left of her on the floor. The old woman took no notice of us as we entered; but one of the girls looked up, and, with a pleased gesture of recognition, put her finger up to her lips, and whispered, "Ellen's asleep."

"I'm not asleep, dears," answered a faint, unearthly voice; "I was only praying. Is that Mr. Mackaye?"

"Ay, my lasses; but ha' ye gotten na fire the nicht?"

"No," said one of them, bitterly, "we've earned no fire tonight, by fair trade or foul either."

The sick girl tried to raise herself up and speak, but was stopped by a frightful fit of coughing and expectoration, as painful, apparently, to the sufferer as it was, I confess, disgusting even to me.

I saw Mackaye slip something into the hand of one of the girls, and whisper, "A half-hundred of coals;" to which she Alton Locke. replied with an eager look of gratitude that Inever can forget, and hurried out. Then the sufferer, as if taking advantage of her absence, began to speak quickly and eagerly.

"Oh, Mr. Mackaye — dear, kind Mr. Mackaye — do speak to her; and do speak to poor Lizzy here! I'm not afraid to say it before her, because she's more gentle like, and hasn't learnt to say bad words yet — but do speak to them, and tell them not to go the bad way, like all the rest. Tell them it'll never prosper. I know it is want that drives them to it, as it drives all of us — but tell them it's best to starve and die honest girls, than to go about with the shame and the curse of God on their hearts, for the sake of keeping this poor, miserable, vile body together a few short years more in this world o' sorrow. Do tell them, Mr. Mackaye."

"I'm thinking," said he, with the tears running down his old, withered face, "ye'll mak a better preacher at that text than I shall, Ellen."

"Oh, no, no; who am I, to speak to them? — it's no merit o'mine, Mr. Mackaye, that the Lord's kept me pure through it all. I should have been just as bad as any of them, if the Lord had not kept me out of temptation in His great mercy, by making me the poor, ill-favoured creature I am. From that time I was burnt when I was a child, and had the smallpox afterwards, oh! how sinful I was, and repined and rebelled against the Lord! And now I see it was all His blessed mercy to keep me out of evil, pure and unspotted for my dear Jesus, when He comes to take me to himself. I saw Him last night, Mr. Mackaye, as plain as I see you now, all in a flame of beautiful white fire, smiling at me so sweetly; and He showed me the wounds in His hands and His feet, and He said, 'Ellen, my own child, those that suffer with me here, they shall be glorified with me hereafter, for I'm coming very soon to take you home.'"

Sandy shook his head at all this with a strange expression of face, as if he sympathised and yet disagreed, respected and yet smiled at the shape which her religious ideas had assumed; and I remarked in the mean time that the poor girl's neck and arm were all scarred and distorted, apparently from the effects of a burn.

"Ah," said Sandy, at length, "I tauld ye ye were the better preacher of the two; ye've mair comfort to gie Sandy than he has to gie the like o' ye. But how is the wound in your back the day?"

Oh, it was wonderfully better! the doctor had come and given her such blessed ease with a great thick leather he had put under it, and then she did not feel the boards through so much. "But oh, Mr. Mackaye, I'm so afraid it will make me live longer to keep me away from my dear Saviour. And there's one thing, too, that's breaking my heart, and makes me long to die this very minute, even if I didn't go to Heaven at all, Mr. Mackaye." (And she burst out crying, and between her sobs it came out, as well as I could gather, that her notion was, that her illness was the cause of keeping the girls in "the bad way," as she called it.) "For Lizzy here, I did hope that she had repented of it after all my talking to her; but since I've been so bad, and the girls have had to keep me most o' the time, she's gone out of nights just as bad as ever."

Lizzy had hid her face in her hands the greater part of this speech. Now she looked up passionately, almost fiercely —

"Repent — I have repented — I repent of it every hour — I hate myself, and hate all the world because of it; but I must — I must; I cannot see her starve, and I cannot starve myself. When she first fell sick she kept on as long as she could, doing what she could, and then between us we only earned three shillings a week, and there was ever so much to take off for fire, and twopence for thread, and fivepence for candles; and then we were always getting fined, because they never gave us out the work till too late on purpose, and then they lowered prices again; and now Ellen can't work at all, and there's four of us with the old lady, to keep off two's work that couldn't keep themselves alone."

"Doesn't the parish allow the old lady anything?" I ventured to ask.

"They used to allow half-a-crown for a bit; and the doctor ordered Ellen things from the parish, but it isn't half of 'em she ever got; and when the meat came, it was half times not fit to eat, and when it was her stomach turned against it. If she was a lady she'd be cockered up with all sorts of soups and jellies, and nice things, just the minute she fancied 'em, and lie on a water bed instead of the bare floor — and so she ought; but where's the parish 'll do that? And the hospital wouldn't take her in because she was incurable; and, besides,

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the old'un wouldn't let her go — nor into the union neither. When she's in a good-humour like, she'll sit by her by the hour, holding her hand and kissing of it, and nursing of it, for all the world like a doll. But she won't hear of the workhouse; so now, these last three weeks, they takes off all her pay, because they says she must go into the house, and not kill her daughter by keeping her out — as if they warn't a killing her themselves."

"No workhouse — no workhouse!" said the old woman, turning round suddenly, in a clear, lofty voice. "No workhouse, sir, for an officer's daughter!"

And she relapsed into her stupor.

At that moment the other girl entered with the coals — but without staying to light the fire, ran up to Ellen with some trumpery dainty she had bought, and tried to persuade her to eat it.

"We have been telling Mr. Mackaye everything," said poor Lizzy.

"A pleasant story, isn't it? Oh! if that fine lady, as we're making that riding-habit for, would just spare only half the money that goes in dressing her up to ride in the park, to send us out to the colonies, wouldn't I be an honest girl there? — Maybe an honest man's wife! Oh! my God! wouldn't I slave my fingers to the bone for him! Wouldn't I mend my life then! I couldn't help it — it would be like getting into heaven out of hell. But now — we must — we must — I tell you. I shall go mad soon, I think, or take to drink. When I passed the gin-shop down there just now I had to run like mad for fear I should go in — and if I once took to that — Now then to work again. Make up the fire, Mrs. \*\*\*\*, please do."

And she sat down and began stitching frantically at the riding-habit, from which the other girl had hardly lifted her hands or eyes for a moment during our visit.

We made a motion as if to go.

"God bless you," said Ellen; "come again soon, dear Mr. Mackaye."

"Good-by," said the elder girl; "and good night to you. Night and day's all the same here — we must have this home by seven o'clock to-morrow morning. My lady's going to ride early they say, whoever she may be, and we must just sit up all night. It's often we haven't had our clothes off for a week together, from four in the morning till two the next morning sometimes — stitch, stitch, stitch. — Somebody's wrote a song about that — I'll learn to sing it — it 'll sound fitting-like, up here."

"Better sing hymns," said Ellen. "Hymns for \*\*\*\*\*?" answered the other; and then burst out into that peculiar wild, ringing, fiendish laugh has my reader never heard it?

I pulled out the two or three shillings which I possessed, and tried to make the girls take them, for the sake of poor Ellen.

"No; you're a working man, and we won't feed on you you'll want it some day - all the trade's going the same way as we, as fast as ever it can!"

Sandy and I went down the stairs.

"Poetic element? Yon lassie, rejoicing in her disfigurement and not her beauty, like the nuns of Peterborough in auld time, - is there na poetry there? That puir lassie, dying on the bare boards and seeing her Saviour in her dreams, is there na poetry there, callant? That auld body owre the fire, wi'her 'an officer's dochter,' is there na poetry there? That ither, prostituting hersel to buy food food for her freen - is there na poetry there? - tragedy -

> With hues as when some mighty painter dips His pen in dyes of earthquake and eclipse.

Ay, Shelley's gran'; always gran': but Fact is grander -- God and Satan are grander. All around ye, in every gin-shop and coster-monger's cellar, are God and Satan at death grips; every garret is a haill Paradise Lost or Paradise Regained: and will ye think it beneath ye to be the 'People's Poet?'"

## CHAPTER IX.

### Poetry and Poets.

In the history of individuals, as well as in that of nations, there is often a period of sudden blossoming - a short luxuriant summer, not without its tornadoes and thunder-glooms, in which all the buried seeds of past observation leap forth together into life, and form, and beauty. And such with me were the two years that followed. I thought - I talked poetry to myself all day long. I wrote nightly on my return

from work. I am astonished, on looking back, at the variety and quantity of my productions during that short time. My subjects were intentionally and professedly cockney ones. I had taken Mackaye at his word. I had made up my mind, that if I had any poetic power, I must do my duty therewith in that station of life to which it had pleased God to call me, and look at everything simply and faithfully as a London To this, I suppose, is to be attributed the little artisan. geniality and originality for which the public have kindly praised my verses; - a geniality which sprung, not from the atmosphere whence I drew, but from the honesty and singlemindedness with which, I hope, I laboured. Not from the atmosphere, indeed --- that was ungenial enough; crime and poverty, all-devouring competition, and hopeless struggles against Mammon and Moloch, amid the roar of wheels, the ceaseless stream of pale, hard faces, intent on gain, or brooding over woe; amid endless prison-walls of brick, beneath a lurid, crushing sky of smoke and mist. It was a dark, noisy, thunderous element, that London life; a troubled sea that cannot rest, casting up mire and dirt; resonant of the clanking of chains, the grinding of remorseless machinery, the wail of lost spirits from the pit. And it did its work upon me; it gave a gloomy colouring, a glare as of some Dantean "Inferno," to all my utterances. It did not excite me, or make me fierce - I was too much inured to it - but it crushed and saddened me; it deepened in me that peculiar melancholy of intellectual youth, which Mr. Carlyle has christened for ever by one of his immortal nicknames, "Werterism;" I battened on my own melancholy. I believed, I loved to believe, that every face I passed bore the traces of discontent as deep as was my own - and was I so far wrong? Was I so far wrong either in the gloomy tone of my own poetry? Should not a London poet's work just now be to cry, like the Jew of old, about the walls of Jerusalem - "Woe, woe to this city!" Is this a time to listen to the voices of singing men and singing women? or to cry, "Oh! that my head were a fountain of tears, that I might weep for the sins of my people?" Is it not note-worthy, also, that it is in this vein that the London poets have always been greatest? Which of poor Hood's lyrics have an equal chance of immortality with "The Song of the Shirt" and "The Bridge of Sighs," rising, as they do, right out of the depths of that Inferno, sublime from their very simplicity? Which of Charles Mackay's lyrics can compare for a moment with the Eschylean grandeur, the terrible rhythmic lilt of his "Cholera Chant" —

Dense on the stream the vapours lay, Thick as wool on the cold highway; Spungy and dim each lonely lamp Shone o'er the streets so dull and damp; The moonbeams could not pierce the cloud That swathed the city like a shroud; There stood three shapes on the bridge alone, Three figures by the coping-stone; Gaunt and tall and undefined, Spectres built of mist and wind.

I see his footmarks east and west — I hear his tread in the silence fall — He shall not sleep, he shall not rest — He comes to aid us one and all. Were men as wise as men might be, They would not work for you, for me, For him that cometh over the sea; But they will not hear the warning voice: The Cholera comes, — Rejoice! rejoice! He shall be lord of the swarming town! And mow them down, and mow them down!

Not that I neglected, on the other hand, every means of extending the wanderings of my spirit into sunnier and more verdant pathways. If I had to tell the gay ones above of the gloom around me, I had also to go forth into the sunshine to bring home if it were but a wild-flower garland to those that sit in darkness and the shadow of death. That was all that I could offer them. The reader shall judge, when he has read this book throughout, whether I did not at last find for them something better than even all the beauties of nature.

But it was on canvas, and not among realities, that I had to choose my garlands; and therefore the picture galleries became more than ever my favourite — haunt, I was going to say; but, alas! it was not six times a year that I got access to them. Still, when once every May I found myself, by dint of a hard-saved shilling, actually within the walls of that to me enchanted palace, the Royal Academy Exhibition — Oh, ye rich! who gaze round you at will upon your prints and pictures, if hunger is, as they say, a better sauce than any Ude invents, and fasting itself may become the handmaid of luxury, you should spend, as I did perforce, weeks and months shut out from every glimpse of Nature, if you would taste her beauties, even on canvas, with perfect relish and childish self-abandonment. How I loved and blessed those painters! how I thanked Creswick for every transparent shade-chequered pool; Fielding, for every rain-clad down; Cooper, for every knot of quiet cattle beneath the cool grey willows; Stanfield, for every snowy peak, and sheet of foamfringed sapphire — each and every one of them a leaf out of the magic book which else was ever closed to me. Again, I say, how I loved and blest those painters! On the other hand, I was not neglecting to read as well as to write poetry; and, to speak first of the highest, I know no book, always excepting Milton, which at once so quickened and exalted my poetical view of man and his history, as that great prose poem, the single epic of modern days, Thomas Carlyle's "French Revolution." Of the general effect which his works had on me, I shall say nothing: it was the same as they have had, thank God, on thousands of my class and of every other. But that book above all first recalled me to the overwhelming and yet ennobling knowledge that there was such a thing as Duty; first taught me to see in history not the mere farce-tragedy of man's crimes and follies, but the dealings of a righteous Ruler of the universe, whose ways are in the great deep, and whom the sins and errors, as well as the virtues and discoveries of man, must obey and justify.

Then, in a happy day, I fell on Alfred Tennyson's poetry, and found there, astonished and delighted, the embodiment of thoughts about the earth around me which I had concealed, because I fancied them peculiar to myself. Why is it that the latest poet has generally the greatest influence over the minds of the young? Surely not for the mere charm of novelty? The reason is, that he, living amid the same hopes, the same temptations, the same sphere of observation as they, gives utterance and outward form to the very questions which, vague and wordless, have been exercising their hearts. And what endeared Tennyson especially to me, the working man, was, as I afterwards discovered, the altogether democratic tendency of his poems. True, all great poets are by their office democrats; seers of man only as man; singers of the joys, the sorrows, the aspirations common to all humanity; but in Alfred Tennyson there is an element especially demo-

eratic, truly levelling; not his political opinions, about which I know nothing, and care less, but his handling of the trivial every-day sights and sounds of nature. Brought up, as I understand, in a part of England which possesses not much of the picturesque, and nothing of that which the vulgar call sublime, he has learnt to see that in all nature, in the hedgerow and the sandbank, as well as in the alp peak and the ocean waste, is a world of true sublimity, - a minute infinite, - an ever-fertile garden of poetic images, the roots of which are in the unfathomable and the eternal, as truly as any phenomenon which astonishes and awes the eye. The descriptions of the desolate pools and creeks where the dying swan floated, the hint of the silvery marsh mosses by Mariana's moat, came to me like revelations. I always knew there was something beautiful, wonderful, sublime in those flowery dykes of Battersea-fields; in the long gravelly sweeps of that lone tidal shore; and here was a man who had put them into words for me! This is what I call democratic art - the revelation of the poetry which lies in common things. And surely all the age is tending in that direction: in Landseer and his dogs - in Fielding and his downs, with a host of noble fellow-artists - and in all authors who have really seized the nation's mind, from Crabbe and Burns and Wordsworth to Hood and Dickens, the great tide sets ever onward, outward, towards that which is common to the many, not that which is exclusive to the few - towards the likeness of Him who causes His rain to fall on the just and on the unjust, and His sun to shine on the evil and the good; who knoweth the cattle upon a thousand hills, and all the beasts of the field are in His sight.

Well — I must return to my story. And here some one may ask me, "But did you not find this true spiritual democracy, this universal knowledge and sympathy, in Shakspeare above all other poets?" It may be my shame to have to confess it; but though I find it now, I did not then. I do not think, however, my case is singular: from what I can ascertain, there is even with regularly educated minds a period of life at which that great writer is not appreciated, just on account of his very greatness; on account of the deep and large experience which the true understanding of his plays requires — experience of man, of history, of art, and above all of those sorrows whereby, as Hezekiah says, and as I have learnt almost too well — "whereby men live, and in all which is the life of the spirit." At seventeen, indeed, I had devoured Shakspeare, though merely for the food to my fancy which his plots and incidents supplied, for the gorgeous colouring of his scenery; but at the period of which I am now writing, I had exhausted that source of mere pleasure; I was craving for more explicit and dogmatic teaching than any which he seemed to supply; and for three years, strange as it may appear, I hardly ever looked into his pages. Under what circumstances I afterwards recurred to his exhaustless treasures, my readers shall in due time be told.

So I worked away manfully with such tools and stock as I possessed, and of course produced, at first, like all young writers, some sufficiently servile imitations of my favourite poets.

"Ugh!" said Sandy, "wha wants mongrels atween Burns and Tennyson? A gude stock baith: but gin ye'd cross the breed ye maun unite the spirits, and no the manners, o' the men. Why maun ilk a one the noo steal his neebor's barnacles before he glints out o' windows? Mak a style for yoursel, laddie; ye're na mair Scots' hind than ye are Lincolnshire laird; sae gang yer ain gate and leave them to gang theirs; and just mak a gran', brode, simple Saxon style for yoursel."

"But how can I, till I know what sort of a style it ought to be?"

"Oh! but yon's amazing like Tom Sheridan's answer to his father. 'Tom,' says the auld man, 'I'm thinking ye maun tak a wife.' 'Verra weel, father,' says the puir skellum; 'and wha's wife shall I tak?' Wha's style shall I tak? say all the callants the noo. Mak a style as ye would mak a wife, by marrying her a' to yoursel; and ye'll nae mair ken what's your style till it's made, than ye'll ken what your wife's like till she's been mony a year by your ingle."

"My dear Mackaye," I said, "you have the most unmerciful way of raising difficulties, and then leaving poor fellows to lay the ghost for themselves."

"Hech, then, I'm a'thegither a negative teacher, as they ca' it in the new lallans. I'll gang out o' my gate to tell a man his kye are laired, but I'm no obligated thereby to pu' them out for him. After a', nae man is rid o' a difficulty till he's conquered it singlehanded for himsel: pesides, I'm nae poet, mair's the gude hap for you." "Why, then?"

"Och, och! they're puir, feckless, crabbit, unpractical bodies, they poets; but if it's your doom, ye maun dree it; and I'm sair afeard ye ha' gotten the disease o' genius, mair's the pity, and maun write, I suppose, willy-nilly. Some folks' booels are that made o' catgut, that they canna stir without chirruping and screeking."

However, æstro percitus, I wrote on; and in about two years and a half had got together "Songs of the Highways" enough to fill a small octavo volume, the circumstances of whose birth shall be given hereafter. Whether I ever attained to anything like an original style, readers must judge for themselves the readers of the same volume I mean, for I have inserted none of those poems in this my autobiography; first, because it seems too like puffing my own works; and next, because I do not want to injure the as yet not over great sale of the same. But, if any one's curiosity is so far excited that he wishes to see what I have accomplished, the best advice which I can give him is, to go forth and buy all the working men's poetry which has appeared during the last twenty years, without favour or exception; among which he must needs of course, find mine, and also, I am happy to say, a great deal which is much better and more instructive than mine.

## CHAPTER X.

#### How folks turn Chartists.

THOSE who read my story only for amusement, I advise to skip this chapter. Those, on the other hand, who really wish to ascertain what working men actually do suffer — to see whether their political discontent has not its roots, not merely in fanciful ambition, but in misery and slavery most real and agonizing — those in whose eyes the accounts of a system, or rather barbaric absence of all system, which involves starvation, nakedness, prostitution, and long imprisonment in dungeons worse than the cells of the Inquisition, will be invested with something at least of tragic interest, may, I hope, think it worth their while to learn how the clothes which they wear are made, and listen to a few occasional statistics, which, though they may seem to the wealthy mere lists of dull figures, are to the workmen symbols of terrible physical realities — of hunger, degradation, and despair.\*

Well: one day our employer died. He had been one of the old sort of fashionable West-end tailors in the fast decreasing honourable trade; keeping a modest shop, hardly to be distinguished from a dwelling-house, except by his name on the window blinds. He paid good prices for work, though not as good, of course, as he had given twenty years before, and prided himself upon having all his work done at home. His workrooms, as I have said, were no elysiums; but still, as good, alas! as those of three tailors out of four. He was proud, luxurious, foppish; but he was honest and kindly enough, and did many a generous thing by men who had been long in his employ. At all events, his journeymen could live on what he paid them.

But his son, succeeding to the business, determined, like Rehoboam of old, to go ahead with the times. Fired with the great spirit of the nineteenth century - at least with that one which is vulgarly considered its especial glory - he resolved to make haste to be rich. His father had made money very slowly of late; while dozens, who had begun business long after him, had now retired to luxurious ease and suburban villas. Why should he remain in the minority? Why should he not get rich as fast as he could? Why should he stick to the old, slow-going, honourable trade? Out of some four hundred and fifty West-end tailors, there were not one hundred left who were old-fashioned and stupid enough to go on keeping down their own profits by having all their work done at home and at first-hand. Ridiculous scruples! The government knew none such. Were not the army clothes, the post-office clothes, the policemen's clothes, furnished by contractors and sweaters, who hired the work at low prices, and let it out again to journeymen at still lower ones? Why should he pay his men two shillings where the government paid them one? Were there not cheap houses even at the West-end, which had saved several thousands a year merely by reducing their workmen's wages? And if the workmen

\* Facts still worse than those which Mr. Locke's story contains have been made public by the Morning Chronicle in a series of noble letters on "Labour and the Poor;" which we entreat all Christian people to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest." "That will be better for them," as Mahomet, in similar cases, used to say. chose to take lower wages, he was not bound actually to make them a present of more than they asked for! They would go to the cheapest market for anything they wanted, and so must he. Besides, wages had really been quite exorbitant. Half his men threw each of them as much money away in gin and beer yearly, as would pay two workmen at a cheap house. Why was he to be robbing his family of comforts to pay for their extravagance? And charging his customers, too, unnecessarily high prices — it was really robbing the public!

Such, I suppose, were some of the arguments which led to an official announcement, one Saturday night, that our young employer intended to enlarge his establishment, for the purpose of commencing business in the "show-trade;" and that, emulous of Messrs. Aaron, Levi, and the rest of that class, magnificent alterations were to take place in the premises, to make room for which our workrooms were to be demolished, and that for that reason — for of course it was only for that reason — all work would in future be given out, to be made up at the men's own homes.

Our employer's arguments, if they were such as I suppose, were reasonable enough according to the present code of commercial morality. But strange to say, the auditory, insensible to the delight with which the public would view the splendid architectural improvements - with taste too grovelling to appreciate the glories of plate-glass shop-fronts and brass scroll work - too selfish to rejoice, for its own sake, in the beauty of arabesques and chandeliers, which though they never might behold the astonished public would - with souls too niggardly to leap for joy at the thought that gents would henceforth buy the registered guanaco vest, and the patent elastic omni-seasonum paletôt half-a-crown cheaper than ever - or that needy noblemen would pay three-pound-ten instead of five pounds for their footmen's liveries - received the news, clod-hearted as they were, in sullen silence, and actually, when they got into the street, broke out into murmurs, perhaps into execrations.

"Silence!" said Crossthwaite; "walls have ears. Come down to the nearest house of call, and talk it out like men, instead of grumbling in the street, like fish-fags."

So down we went. Crossthwaite, taking my arm, strode on in moody silence — once muttering to himself bitterly — "Oh, yes; all right and natural! What can the little sharks do but follow the big ones?"

We took a room, and Crossthwaite coolly saw us all in; and locking the door, stood with his back against it.

"Now then, mind, 'One and all,' as the Cornishmen say, and no peaching. If any man is scoundrel enough to carry tales, I'll —"

"Do what?" asked Jemmy Downes, who had settled himself on the table with a pipe and a pot of porter. "You arn't the King of the Cannibal Islands, as I know of, to cut a cove's head off?"

"No; but if a poor man's prayer can bring God's curse down upon a traitor's head — it may stay on his rascally shoulders till it rots."

"If ifs and ans were pots and pans. — Look at Shechem Isaacs, that sold penknives in the street six months ago, now a-riding in his own carriage, all along of turning sweater. If God's curse is like that — I'll be happy to take any man's share of it."

Some new idea seemed twinkling in the fellow's cunning bloated face as he spoke. I, and others also, shuddered at his words; but we all forgot them a moment afterwards, as Crossthwaite began to speak.

"We were all bound to expect this. Every working tailor must come to this at last, on the present system; and we are only lucky in having been spared so long. You all know where this will end - in the same misery as fifteen thousand out of twenty thousand of our class are enduring now. We shall become the slaves, often the bodily prisoners, of Jews, middlemen, and sweaters, who draw their livelihood out of our starvation. We shall have to face, as the rest have, everdecreasing prices of labour, ever-increasing profits made out of that labour by the contractors who will employ us - arbitrary fines, inflicted at the caprice of hirelings - the competition of women, and children, and starving Irish - our hours of work will increase one-third, our actual pay decrease to less than one-half; and in all this we shall have no hope, no chance of improvement in wages, but ever more penury, slavery, misery, as we are pressed on by those who are sucked by fifties - almost by hundreds - yearly, out of the honourable trade in which we were brought up, into the infernal system of contract work, which is devouring our trade and

many others, body and soul. Our wives will be forced to sit up night and day to help us - our children must labour from the cradle without chance of going to school, hardly of breathing the fresh air of Heaven, — our boys, as they grow up, must turn beggars or paupers — our daughters, as thousands do, must eke out their miserable earnings by prostitution. And after all, a whole family will not gain what one of us had been doing, as yet, single-handed. You know there will be no hope for us. There is no use appealing to government or parliament. I don't want to talk politics here. I shall keep them for another place. But you can recollect as well as I can, when a deputation of us went up to a member of parliament --one that was reputed a philosopher, and a political economist, and a liberal - and set before him the ever-increasing penury and misery of our trade and of those connected with it; you recollect his answer - that, however glad he would be to help us, it was impossible - he could not alter the laws of nature - that wages were regulated by the amount of competition among the men themselves, and that it was no business of government, or any one else, to interfere in contracts between the employer and employed, that those things regulated themselves by the laws of political economy, which it was madness and suicide to oppose. He may have been a wise man. I only know that he was a rich one. Every one speaks well of the bridge which carries him over. Every one fancies the laws which fill his pockets to be God's laws. But I say this. If neither government nor members of parliament can help us, we must help ourselves. Help yourselves, and Heaven will help you. Combination among ourselves is the only chance. One thing we can do - sit still."

"And starve!" said some one.

"Yes, and starve! Better starve than sin. I say, it is a sin to give in to this system. It is a sin to add our weight to the crowd of artisans who are now choking and strangling each other to death, as the prisoners did in the black hole of Calcutta. Let those who will, turn beasts of prey, and feed upon their fellows; but let us at least keep ourselves pure. It may be the law of political civilisation, the law of nature, that the rich should eat up the poor, and the poor eat up each other. Then I here rise up and curse that law, that civilisation, that nature. Either I will destroy them or they shall destroy me. As a slave, as an increased burden on my fellowsufferers, I will not live. So help me God! I will take no work home to my house; and I call upon every one here to combine, and to sign a protest to that effect."

"What's the use of that, my good Mr. Crossthwaite?" interrupted some one, querulously. "Don't you know what come of the strike a few years ago, when this piece-work and sweating first came in? The masters made fine promises, and never kept 'em; and the men who stood out had their places filled up with poor devils who were glad enough to take the work at any price — just as ours will be. There's no use kicking against the pricks. All the rest have come to it, and so must we. We must live somehow, and half a loaf is better than no bread; and even that half-loaf will go into other men's mouths, if we don't snap at it at once. Besides, we can't force others to strike. We may strike and starve ourselves, but what's the use of a dozen striking out of 20,000?"

"Will you sign the protest, gentlemen, or not?" asked Crossthwaite, in a determined voice.

Some half-dozen said they would if the others would.

"And the others won't. Well, after all, one man must take the responsibility, and I am that man. I will sign the protest by myself. I will sweep a crossing — I will turn cressgatherer, rag-picker; I will starve piecemeal, and see my wife starve with me; but do the wrong thing I will not! The Cause wants martyrs. If I must be one, I must."

All this while my mind had been undergoing a strange per-The notion of escaping that infernal workroom, turbation. and the company I met there - of taking my work home, and thereby, as I hoped, gaining more time for study — at least, having my books on the spot ready at every odd moment, was most enticing. I had hailed the proposed change as a blessing to me, till I heard Crossthwaite's arguments: not that I had not known the facts before, but it had never struck me till then that it was a real sin against my class to make myself a party in the system by which they were allowing themselves (under temptation enough, God knows) to be enslaved. But now I looked with horror on the gulf of penury before me, into the vortex of which not only I, but my whole trade, seemed irresistibly sucked. I thought with shame and remorse of the few shillings which I had earned at various times by taking piecework home, to buy my candles for study. I whispered my doubts to Crossthwaite, as he sat, pale and determined, watching the excited and querulous discussions among the other workmen.

"What? So you expect to have time to read? Study, after sixteen hours a day stitching? Study, when you cannot earn money enough to keep you from wasting and shrinking away day by day? Study, with your heart full of shame and indignation, fresh from daily insult and injustice? Study, with the black cloud of despair and penury in front of you? Little time, or heart, or strength, will you have to study, when you are making the same coats you make now, at halt the price."

I put my name down beneath Crossthwaite's on the paper which he handed me, and went out with him.

"Ay," he muttered to himself, "be slaves — what you are worthy to be, that you will be! You dare not combine — you dare not starve — you dare not die — and therefore you dare not be free! Oh! for six hundred men like Barbaroux's Marseillois — 'who knew how to die!'"

"Surely, Crossthwaite, if matters were properly represented to the government, they would not, for their own existence' sake, to put conscience out of the question, allow such a system to continue growing." "Government — government? You a tailor, and not know

that government are the very authors of this system? Not to know that they first set the example, by getting the army and navy clothes made by contractors, and taking the lowest tenders? Not to know that the police clothes, the postmen's clothes, the convicts' clothes, are all contracted for on the same infernal plan, by sweaters, and sweaters' sweaters, and sweaters' sweaters' sweaters, till government work is just the very last, lowest resource to which a poor starved-out wretch betakes himself to keep body and soul together? Why, the government prices, in almost every department, are half, and less than half, the very lowest living price. I tell you, the careless iniquity of government about these things will come out some day. It will be known, the whole abomination, and future generations will class it with the tyrannies of the Roman emperors and the Norman barons. Why, it's a fact, that the colonels of the regiments - noblemen, most of them - make their own vile profit out of us tailors - out of the pauperism of the men, the slavery of the children, the prostitution of the women. They get so much a uniform allowed Alton Locke.

them by government to clothe the men with; and then then, they let out the jobs to the contractors at less than half what government give them, and pocket the difference. And then you talk of appealing to government."

"Upon my word," I said, bitterly, "we tailors seem to owe the army a double grudge. They not only keep under other artisans, but they help to starve us first, and then shoot us, if we complain too loudly."

"Oh, ho! your blood's getting up, is it? Then you're in the humour to be told what you have been hankering to know so long — where Mackaye and I go at night. We'll strike while the iron's hot, and go down to the Chartist meeting at \* \* \* \*

"Pardon me, my dear fellow," I said. "I cannot bear the thought of being mixed up in conspiracy — perhaps, in revolt and bloodshed. Not that I am afraid. Heaven knows I am not. But I am too much harassed, miserable, already. I see too much wretchedness around me, to lend my aid in increasing the sum of suffering, by a single atom, among rich and poor, even by righteous vengeance."

"Conspiracy? Bloodshed? What has that to do with the Charter? It suits the venal Mammonite press well enough to jumble them together, and cry 'Murder, rape and robbery,' whenever the six points are mentioned; but they know, and any man of common sense ought to know, that the Charter is just as much an open political question as the Reform Bill, and ten times as much as Magna Charter was, when it got passed. What have the six points, right or wrong, to do with the question whether they can be obtained by moral force, and the pressure of opinion alone, or require what we call ulterior measures to get them carried? Come along!"

So with him I went that night.

"Well, Alton! where was the treason and murder? Your nose must have been a sharp one, to smell out any there. Did you hear anything that astonished your weak mind so very exceedingly, after all?"

"The only thing that did astonish me was to hear men of my own class — and lower still, perhaps, some of them speak with such fluency and eloquence. Such a fund of information — such excellent English — where did they get it all?" "From the God who knows nothing about ranks. They're the unknown great — the unaccredited heroes, as Master Thomas Carlyle would say, whom the flunkeys aloft have not acknowledged yet — though they'll be forced to, some day, with a vengeance. Are you convinced, once for all?"

"I really do not understand political questions, Crossthwaite."

"Does it want so very much wisdom to understand the rights and the wrongs of all that? Are the people represented? Are you represented? Do you feel like a man that's got any one to fight your battle in parliament, my young friend, eh?"

"I'm sure I don't know -- "

"Why, what in the name of common sense — what interest or feeling of yours or mine, or any man's you ever spoke to, except the shopkeeper, do Alderman A\*\*\* or Lord C\*\*\* D\*\*\*\* represent? They represent property — and we have none. They represent rank — we have none. Vested interests — we have none. Large capitals — those are just what crush us. Irresponsibility of employers, slavery of the employed, competition among masters, competition among workmen, that is the system they represent — they preach it — they glory in it. — Why, it is the very ogre that is eating us all up. They are chosen by the few, they represent the few, and they make laws for the many — and yet you don't know whether or not the people are represented!"

We were passing by the door of the Victoria Theatre; it was just half-price time — and the beggary and rascality of London were pouring in to their low amusement, from the neighbouring gin-palaces and thieves' cellars. A herd of ragged boys, vomiting forth slang, filth, and blasphemy, pushed past us, compelling us to take good care of our pockets.

"Look there! look at the amusements, the training, the civilisation, which the government permits to the children of the people! — These licensed pits of darkness, traps of temptation, profligacy, and ruin, triumphantly yawning night after night — and then tell me that the people who see their children thus kidnapped into hell, are represented by a government who licenses such things!"

"Would a change in the franchise cure that?"

"Household suffrage mightn't — but give us the Charter, and we'll see about it! Give us the Charter, and we'll send

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workmen into parliament that shall soon find out whether something better can't be put in the way of the ten thousand boys and girls in London who live by theft and prostitution, than the tender mercies of the Victoria — a pretty name! They say the Queen's a good woman — and I don't doubt it. I wonder often if she knows what her precious namesake here is like?"

"But, really, I cannot see how a mere change in representation can cure such things as that."

"Why, didn't they tell us, before the Reform Bill, that extension of the suffrage was to cure everything? And how can you have too much of a good thing? We've only taken them at their word, we Chartists. Haven't all politicians been preaching for years that England's national greatness was all owing to her political institutions - to Magna Charta, and the Bill of Rights, and representative parliaments, and all that? It was but the other day I got hold of some Tory paper, that talked about the English constitution, and the balance of queen, lords, and commons, as the 'Talismanic Palladium' of the country. 'Gad, we'll see if a move onward in the same line won't better the matter. If the balance of classes is such a blessed thing, the sooner we get the balance equal, the better; for it's rather lopsided just now, no one can deny. So, representative institutions are the talismanic palladium of the nation, are they? The palladium of the classes that have them, I dare say; and that's the very best reason why the classes that haven't got 'em should look out for the same palladium for themselves. What's sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose, isn't it? We'll try-we'll see whether the talisman they talk of has lost its power all of a sudden since '32 - whether we can't rub the magic ring a little for ourselves, and call up genii to help us out of the mire, as the shopkeepers and the gentlemen have done."

From that night I was a Chartist, heart and soul — and so were a million and a half more of the best artisans in England — at least, I had no reason to be ashamed of my company. Yes; I too, like Crossthwaite, took the upper classes at their word; bowed downto the idol of political institutions, and pinned my hopes of salvation on "the possession of one tenthousandth part of a talker in the national palaver." True, I desired the Charter, at first (as I do, indeed, at this moment), as a means to glorious ends — not only because it would give a chance of elevation, a free sphere of action, to lowly worth and talent; but because it was the path to reforms, — social, legal, sanatory, educational — to which the veriest Tory certainly not the great and good Lord Ashley — would not object. But soon, with me, and I am afraid with many, many more, the means became, by the frailty of poor human nature, an end, an idol in itself. I had so made up my mind that it was the only method of getting what I wanted, that I neglected, alas! but too often, to try the methods which lay already by me. "If we had but the Charter" — was the excuse for a thousand lazinesses, procrastinations. "If we had but the Charter" — I should be good, and free, and happy. Fool that I was! It was within, rather than without, that I needed reform.

And so I began to look on man (and too many of us, I am afraid, are doing so) as the creature and puppet of circumstances - of the particular outward system, social or political, in which he happens to find himself. An abominable heresy, no doubt; but, somehow, it appears to me just the same as Benthamites, and economists, and high-churchmen, too, for that matter, have been preaching for the last twenty years with great applause from their respective parties. One set informs the world that it is to be regenerated by cheap bread, free trade, and that peculiar form of the "freedom of industry" which, in plain language, signifies "the despotism of capital;" and which, whatever it means, is merely some outward system, circumstance, or "dodge," about man, and not in him. Another party's nostrum is more churches, more schools, more clergymen - excellent things in their way - better even than cheap bread, or free trade, provided only that they are excellent -that the churches, schools, clergymen, are good ones. But the party of whom I am speaking seem to us workmen to consider the quality quite a secondary consideration, compared with the quantity. They expect the world to be regenerated, not by becoming more a Church - none would gladlier help them in bringing that about than the Chartists themselves paradoxical as it may seem — but by being dosed somewhat more with a certain "Church system," circumstance, or "dodge." For mypart, I seem to have learnt that the only thing to regenerate the world is not more of any system, good or bad, but simply more of the Spirit of God.

About the supposed omnipotence of the Charter I have found out my mistake. I believe no more in "Morison's-Pillremedies," as Thomas Carlyle calls them. Talismans are worthless. The age of spirit-compelling spells, whether of parchment or carbuncle, is past — if, indeed, it ever existed. The Charter will no more make men good, than political economy, or the observance of the Church Calendar — a fact which we working men, I really believe, have, under the pressure of wholesome defeat and God-sent affliction, found out sooner than our more "enlightened" fellow-idolaters. But, at that time, as I have confessed already, we took our betters at their word, and believed in Morison's Pills. Only, as we looked at the world from among a class of facts somewhat different from theirs, we differed from them proportionably as to our notions of the proper ingredients in the said Pill.

But what became of our protest?

It was received — and disregarded. As for turning us off, we had, de facto, like Coriolanus banished the Romans, turned our master off. All the other hands, some forty in number, submitted and took the yoke upon them, and went down into the house of bondage, knowing whither they went. Every man of them is now a beggar, compared with what he was then. Many are dead in the prime of life of consumption, bad food and lodging, and the peculiar diseases of our trade. Some have not been heard of lately — we fancy them imprisoned in some sweaters' dens — but thereby hangs a tale, whereof more hereafter.

But it was singular, that every one of the six who had merely professed their conditional readiness to sign the protest, were contumeliously discharged the next day, without any reason being assigned. It was evident that there had been a traitor at the meeting; and every one suspected Jemmy Downes, especially as he fell into the new system with suspiciously strange alacrity. But it was as impossible to prove the offence against him as to punish him for it. Of that wretched man, too, and his subsequent career, I shall have somewhat to say hereafter. Verily, there is a God who judgeth the earth!

But now behold me and my now intimate and beloved friend, Crossthwaite, with nothing to do — a gentlemanlike occupation; but, unfortunately, in our class, involving starvation. What was to be done? We applied for work at several "honourable shops;" but at all we received the same answer. Their trade was decreasing — the public ran daily more and more to the cheap show-shops — and they themselves were forced, in order to compete with these latter, to put more and more of their work out at contract prices. *Facilis descensus Averni!* Having once been hustled out of the serried crowd of competing workmen, it was impossible to force our way in again. So, a week or ten days past, our little stocks of money were exhausted. I was downhearted at once; but Crossthwaite bore up gaily enough.

"Katie and I can pick a crust together without snarling over it. And, thank God, I have no children, and never intend to have, if I can keep true to myself, till the good times come."

"Oh! Crossthwaite, are not children a blessing?"

"Would they be a blessing to me now? No, my lad. — Let thoes bring slaves into the world who will! I will never beget children to swell the numbers of those who are trampling each other down in the struggle for daily bread, to minister in ever deepening poverty and misery to the rich man's luxury — perhaps his lust."

"Then you believe in the Malthusian doctrines?"

"I believe them to be an infernal lie, Alton Locke; though good and wise people like Miss Martineau may sometimes be deluded into preaching them. I believe there's room on English soil for twice the number there is now; and when we get the Charter we'll prove it; we'll show that God meant living human heads and hands to be blessings and not curses, tools and not burdens. But in such times as these, let those who have wives be as though they had none — as St. Paul said, when he told his people under the Roman emperor to be above begetting slaves and martyrs. A man of the people should keep himself as free from incumbrances as he can just now. He will find it all the more easy to dare and suffer for the people, when their turn comes —"

And he set his teeth firmly, almost savagely.

"I think I can earn a few shillings, now and then, by writing for a paper I know of. If that won't do, I must take up agitating for a trade, and live by spouting, as many a Tory member as well as Radical ones do. A man may do worse, for he may do nothing. At all events, my only chance now

### ALTON LOCKE,

is to help on the Charter; for the sooner it comes the better for me. And if I die — why, the little woman won't be long in coming after me, I know that well; and there's a tough business got well over for both of us!"

"Hech," said Sandy,

#### "To every man Death comes but once a life —

as my countryman, Mr. Macaulay, says, in thae gran' Roman ballants o' his. But for ye, Alton, laddie, ye're owre young to start off in the People's Church Meelitant, sae just bide wi' me, and the barrel o' meal in the corner there winna waste, —nae mair than it did wi' the widow o' Zareptha; a tale which coincides sae weel wi' the everlasting righteousnesses, that I'm at times no inclined to consider it a'thegither mythical."

But I, with thankfulness which vented itself through my eyes, finding my lips alone too narrow for it, refused to eat the bread of idleness.

"Aweel, then, ye'll just mind the shop, and dust the books whiles; I'm getting auld and stiff, and ha' need o' help i' the business."

"No," I said; "you say so out of kindness; but if you can afford no greater comforts than these, you cannot afford to keep me in addition to yourself."

"Hech, then! How do ye ken that the auld Scot eats a' he makes? I was na born the spending side o' Tweed, my man. But gin ye daur, why dinna ye pack up your duds, and the poems wi' them, and gang till your cousin i' the university? he'll surely put you in the way o' publishing them. He's bound to it by blude; and there's na shame in asking him to help you towards reaping the fruits o' your ain labours. A few punds on a bond for repayment when the edition was sauld, no, — I'd do that for mysel'; but I'm thinking ye'd better try to get a list o' subscribers. Dinna mind your independence; it's but spoiling the Egyptians, ye ken; and thae bit ballants will be their money's worth, I'll warrant, and tell them a wheen facts theyre no that well acquentit wi'. Heeh? Johnnie, my Chartist?"

"Why not go to my uncle?"

"Puir sugar-and-spice-selling baillie bodie! is there aught in his ledger about poetry, and the incommensurable value o' the products o' genius? Gang till the young scholar: he's a canny one, too, and he'll ken it to be worth his while to fash himsel a wee anent it."

So I packed up my little bundle, and lay awake all that night in a fever of expectation about the as yet unknown world of green fields and woods through which my road to Cambridge lay.

# CHAPTER XI.

#### "The Yard where the Gentlemen live."

I MAY be forgiven, surely, if I run somewhat into detail about this my first visit to the country.

I had, as I have said before, literally never been farther afield than Fulham or Battersea Rise. One Sunday evening, indeed, I had got as far as Wandsworth Common; but it was March, and, to my extreme disappointment, the heath was not in flower.

But, usually, my Sundays had been spent entirely in study; which to me was rest, so worn out were both my body and my mind with the incessant drudgery of my trade, and the slender fare to which I restricted myself. Since I had lodged with Mackaye, certainly, my food had been better. I had not required to stint my appetite for money wherewith to buy candles, ink, and pens. My wages, too, had increased with my years, and altogether I found myself gaining in strength, though I had no notion how much I possessed till I set forth on this walk to Cambridge.

It was a glorious morning at the end of May; and when I escaped from the pall of smoke which hung over the city, I found the sky a sheet of cloudless blue. How I watched for the ending of the rows of houses, which lined the road for miles — the great roots of London, running far out into the country, up which poured past me an endless stream of food and merchandise and human beings — the sap of the huge metropolitan life-tree! How each turn of the road opened a fresh line of terraces or villas, till hope deferred made the heart sick, and the country seemed — like the place where the rainbow touches the ground, or the El Dorado of Raleigh's Guiana settlers — always a little farther off! How between gaps in the houses, right and left, I caught tantalising glimpses of green fields, shut from me by dull lines of high-spiked palings! How I peeped through gates and over fences at trim lawns and gardens, and longed to stay, and admire, and speculate on the names of the strange plants and gaudy flowers; and then hurried on, always expecting to find something still finer ahead — something really worth stopping to look at — till the houses thickened again into a street, and I found myself, to my disappointment, in the midst of a town! And then more villas and palings; and then a village; when would they stop, those endless houses?

At last they did stop. Gradually the people whom I passed began to look more and more rural, and more toil-worn and ill-fed. The houses ended, cattle-yards and farm-buildings appeared; and right and left, far away, spread the low rolling sheet of green meadows and corn-fields. Oh, the joy! The lawns with their high elms and firs, the green hedgerows, the delicate hue and scent of the fresh clover-fields, the steep clay banks where I stopped to pick nosegays of wild flowers, and became again a child, - and then recollected my mother, and a walk with her on the river bank towards the Red House - and hurried on again, but could not be unhappy, while my eyes ranged free, for the first time in my life, over the chequered squares of cultivation, over glittering brooks, and hills quivering in the green haze, while above hung the skylarks, pouring out their souls in melody. And then, as the sun grew hot, and the larks dropped one by one into the growing corn, the new delight of the blessed silence! I listened to the stillness; for noise had been my native element; I had become in London quite unconscious of the ceaseless roar of the human sea, casting up mire and dirt. And now, for the first time in my life, the crushing, confusing hubbub had flowed away, and left my brain calm and free. How I felt at that moment a capability of clear, bright meditation, which was as new to me, as I believe it would have been to most Londoners in my position. I cannot help fancying that our unnatural atmosphere of excitement, physical as well as moral, is to blame for very much of the working men's restlessness and fierceness. As it was, I felt that every step forward, every breath of fresh air, gave me new life. I had gone fifteen miles before I recollected, that for the first time for many months, I had not coughed since I rose.

So on I went, down the broad, bright road, which seemed to beckon me forward into the unknown expanses of human life.

### The world was all before me, where to choose,

and I saw it both with my eyes and my imagination, in the temper of a boy broke loose from school. My heart kept holiday. I loved and blessed the birds which flitted past me, and the cows which lay dreaming on the sward. I recollect stopping with delight at a picturesque descent into the road, to watch a nursery-garden, full of roses of every shade, from brilliant yellow to darkest purple; and as I wondered at the innumerable variety of beauties which man's art had developed from a few poor and wild species, it seemed to me the most delightful life on earth, to follow in such a place the primæval trade of gardener Adam; to study the secrets of the flowerworld, the laws of soil and climate; to create new species, and gloat over the living fruit of one's own science and perseverance. And then I recollected the tailor's shop, and the Charter, and the starvation, and the oppression which I had left behind, and ashamed of my own selfishness, went hurrying on again.

At last I came to a wood — the first real wood that I had ever seen; not a mere party of stately park trees growing out of smooth turf, but a real wild copse; tangled branches and grey stems fallen across each other; deep, ragged underwood of shrubs, and great ferns like princes' feathers, and gay beds of flowers, blue and pink and yellow, with butterflies flitting about them, and trailers that climbed and dangled from bough to bough - a poor, commonplace bit of copse, I dare say, in the world's eyes, but to me a fairy wilderness of beautiful forms, mysterious gleams and shadows, teeming with manifold life. As I stood looking wistfully over the gate, alternately at the inviting vista of the green-embroidered path, and then at the grim notice over my head, "All trespassers prosecuted," a young man came up the ride, dressed in velveteen jacket and leather gaiters, sufficiently bedrabbled with mud. A fishing-rod and basket bespoke him some sort of destroyer, and I saw in a moment that he was "a gentleman." After all, there is such a thing as looking like a gentleman. There are men whose class no dirt or rags could hide, any more than they could Ulysses. I have seen such men in plenty among workmen, too; but, on the whole, the gentlemen by whom I do not mean just now the rich-have the superiority in that point. But not, please God, for ever. Give us the same air, water, exercise, education, good society, and

you will see whether this "haggardness," this "coarseness," &c., &c., for the list is too long to specify, be an accident, or a property, of the man of the people.

"May I go into your wood?" asked I at a venture, curiosity conquering pride.

"Well! what do you want there, my good fellow?"

"To see what a wood is like - I never was in one in my life."

"Humph! well — you may go in for that, and welcome. Never was in a wood in his life! — poor devil!"

"Thank you!" quoth I. And I slowly clambered over the gate. He put his hand carelessly on the top rail, vaulted over it like a deer, and then turned to stare at me.

"Hullo! I say — I forgot — don't go far in, or ramble up and down, or you'll disturb the pheasants."

I thanked him again for what license he had given me went in, and lay down by the path-side.

Here, I suppose, by the rules of modern art, a picturesque description of the said wood should follow; but I am the most incompetent person in the world to write it. And, indeed, the whole scene was so novel to me, that I had no time to analyse; I could only enjoy. I recollect lying on my face and fingering over the delicately cut leaves of the weeds, and wondering whether the people who lived in the country thought them as wonderful and beautiful as I did; - and then I recollected the thousands whom I had left behind, who, like me, had never seen the green face of God's earth; and the answer of the poor gamin in St. Giles's, who, when he was asked what the country was, answered, "the yard where the gentlemen live when they go out of town" - significant that, and pathetic; --- then I wondered whether the time would ever come when society would be far enough advanced to open to even such as he a glimpse, if it were only once a year, of the fresh, clean face of God's earth; - and then I became aware of a soft mysterious hum, above and around me, and turned on my back to look whence it proceeded, and saw the leaves, gold green and transparent in the sunlight, quivering against the deep heights of the empyrean blue; and hanging in the sunbeams that pierced the foliage, a thousand insects, like specs of fire, that poised themselves motionless on thrilling wings, and darted away, and returned to hang motionless again; - and I wondered what they eat, and whether they

thought about anything, and whether they enjoyed the sunlight; — and then that brought back to me the times when I used to lie dreaming in my crib on summer mornings, and watched the flies dancing reels between me and the ceilings; — and that again brought the thought of Susan and my mother; and I prayed for them — not sadly — I could not be sad there; — and prayed that we might all meet again some day and live happily together; perhaps in the country, where I could write poems in peace; and then, by degrees, my sentences and thoughts grew incoherent, and in happy, stupid animal comfort, I faded away into a heavy sleep, which lasted an hour or more, till I was awakened by the efforts of certain enterprising great black and red ants, who were trying to found a small Algeria in my left ear.

I rose and left the wood, and a gate or two on, stopped again to look at the same sportsman fishing in a clear silver brook. I could not help admiring with a sort of childish wonder the graceful and practised aim with which he directed his tiny bait, and called up mysterious dimples on the surface, which in a moment increased to splashings and strugglings of a great fish, compelled, as if by some invisible spell, to follow the point of the bending rod till he lay panting on the bank. I confess, in spite of all my class prejudices against "gamepreserving aristocrats," I almost envied the man; at least I seemed to understand a little of the universally attractive charms which those same outwardly contemptible field sports possess; the fresh air, fresh fields and copses, fresh running brooks, the exercise, the simple freedom, the excitement just sufficient to keep alive expectation and banish thought. --After all, his trout produced much the same mood in him as my turnpike-road did in me. And perhaps the man did not go fishing or shooting every day. The laws prevented him from shooting, at least, all the year round; so sometimes there might be something in which he made himself of use. An honest, jolly face too he had - not without thought and strength in it. "Well, it is a strange world," said I to myself, "where those who can, need not; and those who cannot, must!"

Then he came close to the gate, and I left it just in time to see a little group arrive at it — a woman of his own rank, young, pretty, and simply dressed, with a little boy, decked out as a Highlander, on a shaggy Shetland pony, which his

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mother, as I guessed her to be, was leading. And then they all met, and the little fellow held up a basket of provisions to his father, who kissed him across the gate, and hung his creel of fish behind the saddle, and patted the mother's shoulder, as she looked up lovingly and laughingly in his face. Altogether, a joyous, genial bit of — Nature? Yes, Nature. Shall I grudge simple happiness to the few, because it is as yet, alas! impossible for the many?

And yet the whole scene contrasted so painfully with me — with my past, my future, my dreams, my wrongs, that I could not look at it; and with a swelling heart I moved on all the faster because I saw they were looking at me and talking of me, and the fair wife threw after me a wistful, pitying glance, which I was afraid might develop itself into some offer of food or money — a thing which I scorned and dreaded, because it involved the trouble of a refusal.

Then, as I walked on once more, my heart smote me. If they had wished to be kind, why had I grudged them the opportunity of a good deed? At all events, I might have asked their advice. In a natural and harmonious state, when society really means brotherhood, a man could go up to any stranger, to give and receive, if not succour, yet still experience and wisdom: and was I not bound to tell them what I knew? was sure that they did not know? Was I not bound to preach the cause of my class wherever I went? Here were kindly people who, for aught I knew, would do right the moment they were told where it was wanted; if there was an accursed artificial gulf between their class and mine, had I any right to complain of it, as long as I helped to keep it up by my false pride and surly reserve? No! I would speak my mind henceforth - I would testify of what I saw and knew of the wrongs, if not of the rights, of the artisan, before whomsoever I might come. Oh! valiant conclusion of half an hour's self-tormenting scruples! How I kept it, remains to be shown.

I really fear that I am getting somewhat trivial and prolix: but there was hardly an incident in my two days' tramp which did not give me some small fresh insight into the *terra incognita* of the country; and there may be those among my readers, to whom it is not uninteresting to look, for once, at even the smallest objects with a cockney workman's eyes.

Well, I trudged on - and the shadows lengthened, and I

grew footsore and tired; but every step was new, and won me forward with fresh excitements for my curiosity.

At one village I met a crowd of little, noisy, happy boys and girls pouring out of a smart new Gothic school-house. I could not resist the temptation of snatching a glance through the open door. I saw on the walls maps, music, charts, and pictures. How I envied those little urchins! A solemn, sturdy elder, in a white cravat, evidently the parson of the parish, was patting children's heads, taking down names, and laying down the law to a shrewd, prim young schoolmaster.

Presently, as I went up the village, the clergyman strode past me, brandishing a thick stick and humming a chant, and joined a motherly-looking wife, who, basket on arm, was popping in and out of the cottages, looking alternately serious and funny, cross and kindly — I suppose, according to the sayings and doings of the folks within.

"Come," I thought, "this looks like work at least." And as 1 went out of the village, I accosted a labourer, who was trudging my way, fork on shoulder, and asked him if that was the parson and his wife?

I was surprised at the difficulty with which I got into conversation with the man; at his stupidity, feigned or real, I could not tell which; at the dogged, suspicious reserve with which he eyed me, and asked me whether I was "one of they parts?" and whether I was a Londoner, and what I wanted on the tramp, and so on, before he seemed to think it safe to answer a single question. He seemed, like almost every labourer I ever met, to have something on his mind; to live in a state of perpetual fear and concealment. When, however, he found I was both a cockney and a passer-by, he began to grow more communicative, and told me, "Ees — that were the parson, sure enough."

"And what sort of man was he?"

"Oh! he was a main kind man to the poor; leastwise, in the matter of visiting 'em, and praying with 'em, and getting 'em to put into clubs, and such like; and his lady too. Not that there was any fault to find with the man about money but 'twasn't to be expected of him."

"Why, was he not rich?"

"Oh, rich enough to the likes of us. But his own tithes here arn't more than a thirty pounds we hears tell; and if he hadn't summat of his own, he couldn't do not nothing by the poor; as it be, he pays for that ere school all to his own pocket, next part. All the rest o' the tithes goes to some great lord or other — they say he draws a matter of a thousand a year out of the parish, and not a foot ever he sot into it; and that's the way with a main lot o' parishes, up and down."

This was quite a new fact to me. "And what sort of folks were the parsons all round?"

"Oh, some of all sorts, good and bad. About six and half a dozen. There's two or three nice young gentlemen come'd round here now, but they're all what's-'em-a-call it? - some sort o' papishes; — leastwise, they has prayers in the church every day, and doesn't preach the Gospel, no how, I hears by my wife, and she knows all about it, along of going to meeting. Then there's one over thereaway, as had to leave his living he knows why. He got safe over seas. If he had been a poor man, he'd a been in \* \* \* \* \* gaol, safe enough, and soon enough. Then there's two or three as goes a-hunting - not as I sees no harm in that; if a man's got plenty of money, he ought to enjoy himself, in course: but still he can't be here and there too, to once. Then there's two or three as is bad in their healths, or thinks themselves so - or else has livings summer' else; and they lives summer' or others, and has curates. Main busy chaps is they curates, always, and wonderful hands to preach; but then, just as they gets a little knowing like at it, and folks gets to like 'em, and run to hear 'em, off they pops to summat better; and in course they're right to do so; and so we country-folks get nought but the young colts, afore they're broke, you see."

"And what sort of a preacher was his parson?"

"Oh, he preached very good Gospel, not that he went very often hisself, acause he couldn't make out the meaning of it; he preached too high, like. But his wife said it was uncommon good Gospel; and surely when he come to visit a body, and talked plain English, like, not sermon-ways, he was a very pleasant man to heer, and his lady uncommon kind to nurse folk. They sot up with me and my wife, they two did, two whole nights, when we was in the fever, afore the officer could get us a nurse."

"Well," said I, "there are some good parsons left."

"Oh, yes; there's some very good ones — each one after his own way; and there'd be more on 'em, if they did but know how bad we labourers was off. Why bless ye, I mind when they was very different. A new parson is a mighty change for the better, mostwise, we finds. Why, when I was a boy, we never had no schooling. And now mine goes and learns singing and jobrafy, and ciphering, and sich like. Not that I sees no good in it. We was a sight better off in the old times, when there weren't no schooling. Schooling harn't made wages rise, nor preaching neither."

"But surely," I said, "all this religious knowledge ought to give you comfort, even if you are badly off."

"Oh! religion's all very well for them as has time for it; and a very good thing — we ought all to mind our latter end. But I don't see how a man can hear sermons with an empty belly; and there's so much to fret a man, now, and he's so cruel tired coming home o' nights, he can't nowise go to pray a lot, as gentlefolks does."

"But are you so ill off?"

"Oh! he'd had a good harvesting enough; but then he owed all that for he's rent; and he's club money wasn't paid up, nor he's shop. And then, with he's wages" — (I forget the sum — under ten shillings) — "how could a man keep his mouth full, when he had five children? And then, folks is so unmarciful — I'll just tell you what they says to me, now, last time I was over at the board —"

And thereon he rambled off into a long jumble of medicalofficers, and relieving-officers, and Farmer This, and Squire That, which indicated a mind as ill-educated as discontented. He cursed or rather grumbled at — for he had not spirit, it seemed, to curse anything — the New Poor Law; because it "ate up the poor, flesh and bone;" — bemoaned the "Old Law," when "the Vestry was forced to give a man whatsomdever he axed for, and if they didn't, he'd go to the magistrates and make 'em, and so sure as a man got a fresh child, he went and got another loaf allowed him next vestry, like a Christian;" — and so turned through a gate, and set to work forking up some weeds on a fallow, leaving me many new thoughts to digest.

That night, I got to some town or other, and there found a night's lodging, good enough for a walking traveller.

Allon Locke.

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# CHAPTER XII.

### Cambridge.

WHEN I started again next morning, I found myself so stiff and footsore, that I could hardly put one leg before the other, much less walk upright. I was really quite in despair, before the end of the first mile; for I had no money to pay for a lift on the coach, and I knew, besides, that they would not be passing that way for several hours to come. So, with aching back and knees, I made shift to limp along, bent almost double, and ended by sitting down for a couple of hours, and looking about me, in a country which would have seemed dreary enough, I suppose, to any one but a freshly-liberated captive, such as I was. At last I got up and limped on, stiffer than ever from my rest, when a gig drove past me towards Cambridge, drawn by a stout cob, and driven by a tall, fat, jollylooking farmer, who stared at me as he passed, went on, looked back, slackened his pace, looked back again, and at last came to a dead stop, and hailed me in a broad nasal dialect ----

"Whor be ganging, then, boh?"

"To Cambridge."

"Thew'st na git there that gate. Be'est thee honest man?" "I hope so," said I, somewhat indignantly.

"What's trade?"

"A tailor," I said.

"Tailor! — guide us! Tailor a-tramp? Barn't accoostomed to tramp, then?"

"I never was out of London before," said I, meekly — for I was too worn-out to be cross — lengthy and impertinent as this cross-examination seemed.

"Oi'll gie thee lift; dee yow joomp in. Gae on, powney! Tailor, then! Oh! ah! tailor, saith he."

I obeyed most thankfully, and sat crouched together, looking up out of the corner of my eyes at the huge tower of broad-cloth by my side, and comparing the two red shoulders of mutton which held the reins, with my own wasted, white, woman-like fingers.

I found the old gentleman most inquisitive. He drew out of me all my story — questioned me about the way "Lunnon folks" lived, and whether they got ony shooting or "pattening" — whereby I found he meant skating — and broke in, every now and then, with ejaculations of childish wonder, and clumsy sympathy, on my accounts of London labour and London misery.

"Oh, father, father! — I wonders they bears it. Us'n in the fens wouldn't stand that likes. They'd roit, and roit, and roit, and tak' oot the dook-gunes to un — they would, as they did five-and-twenty year agone. Never to goo ayond the housen! — never to go ayond the housen! Kill me in a three months, that would — bor', then!"

"Are you a farmer?" I asked, at last, thinking that my turn for questioning was come.

"I bean't varmer; I be yooman born. Never paid rent in moy life, nor never wool. I farms my own land, and my vathers avore me, this ever so mony hoondred year. I've got the swoord of 'em to home, and the helmet that they fut with into the wars, then when they chopped off the king's head what was the name of um?"

"Charles the First?"

"Ees - that's the booy. We was Parliament side - true Britons all we was, down into the fens, and Oliver Cromwell, as dug Botsham lode, to the head of us. Yow coom down to Metholl, and I'll shaw ye a country. I'll shaw 'ce some'at like bullocks to call, and some'at like a field o' beans - I wool, none o' this here darned ups and downs o' hills" (though the country through which we drove was flat enough, I should have thought, to please any one), "to shake a body's victuals out of his inwards - all so flat as a barn's floor, for vorty mile on end — there's the country to live in! — and vour sons — or was vour on 'em - every one on 'em fifteen stone in his shoes, to patten again' any man from Whit'sea Mere to Denver Sluice, for twenty pounds o' gold; and there's the money to lay down, and let the man as dare cover it, down with his money, and on wi' his pattens, thirteen-inch runners, down the wind, again' ether a one o' the bairns!"

And he jingled in his pocket a heavy bag of gold, and winked, and chuckled, and then suddenly checking himself, repeated in a sad, dubious tone, two or three times, "vour on 'em there was — vour on 'em there was;" and relieved his feelings, by springing the pony into a canter till he came to a public-house, where he pulled up, called for a pot of hot ale, and insisted on treating me. I assured him that I never drank fermented liquors.

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### ALTON LOCKE,

"Aw? Eh? How can yow do that then? Die o' cowd i' the fen, that gate, yow would. Love ye then! they as dinnot tak' spirits down thor, tak' their pennord o' elevation, then — women-folk especial."

"What's elevation?"

"Oh! ho! ho! — yow goo into druggist's shop o' marketday into Cambridge, and you'll see the little boxes, doozens and doozens, a' ready on the counter; and never a ven-man's wife goo by, but what calls in for her pennord o' elevation, to last her out the week. Oh! ho! ho! Well, it keeps womenfolk quiet, it do; and it's mortal good agin ago pains."

"But what is it?"

"Opium, bor'alive, opium!"

"But doesn't it ruin their health? I should think it the very worst sort of drunkenness."

"Ow, well, yow moi say that — mak'th 'em cruel thin then, it do; but what can bodies do i' th' ago? Bot it's a bad thing, it is. Harken yow to me. Didst ever know one called Porter, to yowr trade?"

I thought a little, and recollected a man of that name, who had worked with us a year or two before — a great friend of a certain scatter-brained Irish lad, brother of Crossthwaite's wife.

"Well, I did once, but I have lost sight of him twelve months, or more."

The old man faced sharp round on me, swinging the little gig almost over, and then twisted himself back again, and put on a true farmer-like look of dogged, stolid reserve. We rolled on a few minutes in silence.

"Dee yow consider, now, that a mon mought be lost, like, into Lunnon?"

"How lost?"

"Why, yow told o' they sweaters — dee yow think a mon might get in wi' one o' they, and they that mought be looking yor un not to vind un?"

"I do, indeed. There was a friend of that man Porter got turned away from our shop, because he wouldn't pay some tyrannical fine for being saucy, as they called it, to the shopman; and he went to a sweater's — and then to another; and his friends have been tracking him up and down this six months, and can hear no news of him."

"Aw! guide us! And what'n, think yow, be gone wi' un?"

"I am afraid he has got into one of those dens, and has pawned his clothes, as dozens of them do, for food, and so can't get out."

"Pawned his clothes for victuals! To think o' that, noo! But if he had work, can't he get victuals?"

"Oh!" I said, "there's many a man who, after working seventeen or eighteen hours a day, Sundays and all, without even time to take off his clothes, finds himself brought in in debt to his tyrant at the week's end. And if he gets no work, the villain won't let him leave the house; he has to stay there starving, on the chance of an hour's job. I tell you, I've known half a dozen men imprisoned in that way, in a little dungeon of a garret, where they had hardly room to stand upright, and only just space to sit and work between their beds, without breathing the fresh air, or seeing God's sun, for months together, with no victuals but a few slices of breadand-butter, and a little slop of tea, twice a day, till they were starved in the very bone."

"Oh, my God! my God!" said the old man, in a voice which had a deeper tone of feeling than mere sympathy with others' sorrow was likely to have produced. There was evidently something behind all these inquiries of his. I longed to ask him if his name, too, was not Porter.

"Aw yow knawn Billy Porter? What was a like? Tell me, now — what was a like, in the Lord's name! what was a like unto?"

"Very tall and bony," I answered.

"Ay! sax feet, and more? and a yard across? — but a was starved, a was a' thin, though, maybe, when yow sawn un? — and beautiful fine hair, hadn't a, like a lass's?"

"The man I knew had red hair," quoth I.

"Ow, ay, an' that it wor, red as a rising sun, and the curls of un like gowlden guineas! And thou knew'st Billy Porter! To think o' that, noo." —

Another long silence.

"Could you find un, dee yow think, noo, into Lunnon? Suppose, now, there was a mon 'ud gie — may be five pund ten pund — twenty pund, by \*\*\* — twenty pund down, for to ha' him brocht home safe and soun' — Could yow do't, bor'? I zay, could yow do't?"

"I could do it as well without the money as with, if I could do it at all. But have you no guess as to where he is?" He shook his head sadly.

"We — that's to zay, they as wants un — hav'n't heerd tell of un vor this three year — three year coom Whitsuntide as ever was —" And he wiped his eyes with his cuff.

"If you will tell me all about him, and where he was last heard of, I will do all I can to find him."

"Will ye, noo? will ye? The Lord bless ye for zaying that." — And he grasped my hand in his great iron fist, and fairly burst out crying.

"Was he a relation of yours?" I asked, gently.

"My bairn — my bairn — my eldest bairn. Dinnot yow ax me no moor — dinnot then, bor'. Gie on, yow powney, and yow goo leuk vor un."

Another long silence.

"I've a been to Lunnon, looking vor un."

Another silence.

"I went up and down, up and down, day and night, day and night, to all pot-houses as I could zee; vor, says I, he was a'ways a main chap to drink, he was. Oh, deery me! and I never cot zight on un — and noo I be most spent, I be."

And he pulled up at another public-house, and tried this time a glass of brandy. He stopped, I really think, at every inn between that place and Cambridge, and at each tried some fresh compound; but his head seemed, from habit, utterly fire-proof.

• At last, we neared Cambridge, and began to pass groups of gay horsemen, and then those strange caps and gowns — ugly and unmeaning remnant of obsolete fashion.

The old man insisted on driving me up to the gate of \* \* \* College, and there dropped me, after I had given him my address, entreating me to "vind the bairn, and coom to zee him down to Metholl. But dinnot goo ax for Farmer Porter they's all Porters there away. Yow ax for Wooden-house Bob — that's me; and if I barn't to home, ax for Mucky Billy — that's my brawther — we're all gotten our names down to ven; and if he barn't to home, yow ax for Frog-hall — that's where my sister do live; and they'll all veed ye, and lodge ye, and welcome come. We be all like one, doon in the ven; and do ye, do ye, vind my bairn!" And he trundled on, down the narrow street.

I was soon directed, by various smart-looking servants, to my cousin's rooms; and after a few mistakes, and wandering up and down noble courts and cloisters, swarming with gay young men, whose jaunty air and dress seemed strangely out of keeping with the stern antique solemnity of the Gothic buildings around, I espied my cousin's name over a door; and, uncertain how he might receive me, I gave a gentle, halfapologetic knock, which was answered by a loud "Come in!" and I entered on a scene, even more incongruous than anything I had seen outside.

"If we can only keep away from that d \*\*\*\* d Jesus as far as the corner, I don't care."

"If we don't run into that first Trinity before the willows, I shall care with a vengeance."

"If we don't, it's a pity," said my cousin. "Wadham ran up by the side of that first Trinity yesterday, and he said that they were as well gruelled as so many posters, before they got to the stile."

This unintelligible, and, to my inexperienced ears, blasphemous conversation, proceeded from half a dozen powerful young men, in low-crowned sailors' hats and flannel trousers, some in striped jerseys, some in shooting-jackets, some smoking cigars, some beating up eggs in sherry; while my cousin, dressed like "a fancy waterman," sat on the back of a sofa, puffing away at a huge meerschaum.

"Alton! why, what wind on earth has blown you here?"

By the tone, the words seemed rather an inquiry as to what wind would be kind enough to blow me back again. But he recovered his self-possession in a moment.

"Delighted to see you! Where's your portmanteau? Oh — left it at the Bull! Ah! I see. Very well, we'll send the gyp for it in a minute, and order some luncheon. We're just going down to the boat-race. Sorry I can't stop, but we shall all be fined — not a moment to lose. I'll send you in luncheon as I go through the butteries; then, perhaps, you'd like to come down and see the race. Ask the gyp to tell you the way. Now, then, follow your noble captain, gentlemen — to glory and a supper." And he bustled out with his crew.

While I was staring about the room, at the jumble of Greek books, boxing-gloves, and luscious prints of pretty women, a shrewd-faced, smart man entered, much better dressed than myself.

"What would you like, sir? Ox-tail soup, sir, or gravy-

soup, sir? Stilton cheese, sir, or Cheshire, sir? Old Stilton, sir, just now."

Fearing lest many words might betray my rank — and, strange to say, though I should not have been afraid of confessing myself an artisan before the "gentlemen" who had just left the room, I was ashamed to have my low estate discovered, and talked over with his compeers, by the flunkey who waited on them — I answered, "Anything — I really don't care," in as aristocratic and off-hand a tone as I could assume.

"Porter or ale, sir?"

"Water," without a "thank you," I am ashamed to say, for I was not at that time quite sure whether it was well-bred to be civil to servants.

The man vanished, and reappeared with a savoury luncheon, silver forks, snowy napkins, smart plates — I felt really quite a gentleman.

He gave me full directions as to my "way to the boats, sir;" and I started out much refreshed; passed through back streets, dingy, dirty, and profligate-looking enough; out upon wide meadows, fringed with enormous elms; across a ferry; through a pleasant village, with its old grey church and spire; by the side of a sluggish river, alive with wherries; along a towing-path swarming with bold, bedizened women, who jested with the rowers, - of their profession, alas! there could be no doubt. I had walked down some mile or so, and just as I heard a cannon, as I thought, fire at some distance, and wondered at its meaning, I came to a sudden bend of the river, with a church-tower hanging over the stream on the opposite bank, a knot of tall poplars, weeping willows, rich lawns, sloping down to the water's side, gay with bonnets and shawls; while, along the edge of the stream, light, gaudily-painted boats apparently waited for the race, - altogether the most brilliant and graceful group of scenery which I had beheld in my little travels. I stopped to gaze; and among the ladies on the lawn opposite, caught sight of a figure - my heart leapt into my mouth! Was it she at last? It was too far to distinguish features; the dress was altogether different - but was it not she? I saw her move across the lawn, and take the arm of a tall, venerable-looking man; and his dress was the same as that of the Dean, at the Dulwich Gallery - was it? was it not? To have found her, and a river between us! It was ludicrously miserable - miserably ludicrous. Oh, that accursed river, which debarred me from certainty, from bliss! I would have plunged across — but there were three objections — first, that I could not swim; next, what could I do when I had crossed? and thirdly, it might not be she after all.

And yet I was certain — instinctively certain — that it was she, the idol of my imagination for years. If I could not see her features under that little white bonnet, I could imagine them there; they flashed up in my memory as fresh as ever. Did she remember my features, as I did hers? Would she know me again? Had she ever even thought of me, from that day to this? Fool! But there I stood, fascinated, gazing across the river, heedless of the racing-boats, and the crowd, and the roar that was rushing up to me at the rate of ten miles an hour, and in a moment more, had caught me, and swept me away with it, whether I would or not, along the towing-path, by the side of the foremost boats.

Oh, the Babel of horse and foot. young and old! the cheering, and the exhorting, and the objurgations of number this, and number that! and the yelling of the most sacred names, intermingled too often with oaths. - And yet, after a few moments, I ceased to wonder either at the Cambridge passion for boat-racing, or at the excitement of the spectators. "Honi soit qui mal y pense." It was a noble sport - a sight such as could only be seen in England - some hundreds of young men, who might, if they had chosen, been lounging effeminately about the streets, subjecting themselves voluntarily to that intense exertion, for the mere pleasure of toil. The true English stuff came out there; I felt that, in spite of all my prejudices - the stuff which has held Gibraltar and conquered at Waterloo - which has created a Birmingham and a Manchester, and colonised every quarter of the globe that grim, earnest, stubborn energy, which, since the days of the old Romans, the English possess alone of all the nations of the earth. I was as proud of the gallant young fellows as if they had been my brothers - of their courage and endurance (for one could see that it was no child's-play, from the pale faces, and panting lips), their strength and activity, so fierce and yet so cultivated, smooth, harmonious, as oar kept time with oar, and every back rose and fell in concert - and felt my soul stirred up to a sort of sweet madness, not merely by the shouts and cheers of the mob around me, but by the loud fierce pulse of the rowlocks, the swift whispering rush of the long

snake-like eight oars, the swirl and gurgle of the water in their wake, the grim, breathless silence of the straining rowers. My blood boiled over, and fierce tears swelled into my eyes; for I, too, was a man, and an Englishman; and when I caught sight of my cousin, pulling stroke to the second boat in the long line, with set teeth and flashing eyes, the great muscles on his bare arms springing up into knots at every rapid stroke, I ran and shouted among the maddest and the foremost.

But I soon tired, and, footsore as I was, began to find my strength fail me. I tried to drop behind, but found it impossible in the press. At last, quite out of breath, I stopped; and instantly received a heavy blow from behind, which threw me on my face. I looked up, and saw a huge, long-legged grey horse, with his knees upon my back, in the act of falling over me. His rider, a little ferret-visaged boy, dressed in sporting style, threw himself back in the saddle, and recovered the horse in an instant, with a curse at me, as I rolled down the steep bank into the river, among the laughter and shouts of the women, who seemed to think it quite a grand act on the part of the horseman.

"Well saved, upon my word, my lord!" shouted out a rider beside him.

"Confound the snob! — I'm glad he got his ducking. What do the fellows want here, getting in a gentleman's way?"

"For shame, Swindon! the man is hurt," said another rider, a very tall and handsome man, who pulled up his horse, and, letting the crowd pass, sprang off to my assistance.

"Leave him alone, Lord Lynedale," said one of the women; "let him go home and ask his mammy to hang him out to dry."

"Why do you bother yourself with such muffs?" &c., &c., &c., &c.,

But I had scrambled out, and stood there dripping, and shaking with rage and pain.

"I hope you are not much hurt, my man?" asked the nobleman, in a truly gentlemanlike, because truly gentle, voice; and he pulled out half-a-crown. and offered it to me, saying, "I amquite ashamed to see one of my own rank behave in a way so unworthy of it."

But I, in my shame and passion, thrust back at once the coin and the civility.

"I want neither you nor your money," said I, limping off down the bank. "It serves me right, for getting among you cursed aristocrats."

How the nobleman took my answer I did not stay to see, for I was glad to escape the jeers of the bystanding blackguards, male and female, by scrambling over the fences, and making my way across the fields back to Cambridge.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## The Lost Idol Found.

On my return, I found my cousin already at home, in high spirits at having, as he informed me, "bumped the first Trinity." I excused myself for my dripping state, simply by saying that I had slipped into the river. To tell him the whole of the story, while the insult still rankled fresh in me, was really too disagreeable both to my memory and my pride.

Then came the question, "What had brought me to Cambridge?" I told him all, and he seemed honestly to sympathise with my misfortunes.

"Never mind; we'll make it all right somehow. Those poems of yours - you must let me have them and look over them; and I dare say I shall persuade the governor to do something with them. After all, it's no loss for you; you couldn't have got on tailoring - much too sharp a fellow for that; you ought to be at college, if one could only get you there. These sizarships, now, were meant for just such cases as yours --- clever fellows who could not afford to educate themselves; but, like everything in the university, the people for whom they are meant never get them. Do you know what the golden canon is, Alton, for understanding all university questions?"

"No."

"Then I'll tell you. That the employment of any money whatsoever, for any purpose whatsoever, is a certain sign that it was originally meant for some purpose totally different."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Oh! you shall stay here with me a few days, and you'll soon find out. Hush! now; don't come the independent dodge. One cousin may visit another, I hope, without contracting obligations, and all that. I'll find you a bedroom out of college, and you'll live in my rooms all day, and I'll show you a thing or two. How do you like the university?"

"The buildings," I said, "strike me as very noble and reverent."

"They are the only noble and reverent things you'll find here, I can tell you. It's a system of humbug, from one end to the other. But the Dons get their living by it, and their livings too, and their bishoprics, now and then; and I intend to do the same, if I have a chance. Do at Rome as Rome does." And he lighted his pipe, and winked knowingly at me.

I mentioned the profane use of sacred names, which had so disgusted me at the boat-race. He laughed.

"Ah! my dear fellow, it's a very fair specimen of Cambridge — shows what's the matter with us all — putting new wine into old bottles, and into young bottles too, as you'll see at my supper party to-night."

"Really," I said, "I am not fit for presentation at any such aristocratic amusements."

"Oh! I'll lend you clothes till your own are dried; and as for behaviour, hold your tongue, and don't put your knife in your mouth, are quite rules enough to get any man mistaken for a gentleman here." And he laughed again in his peculiar sneering way.

"By-the-by, don't get drunk; for in vino veritas. You know what that means."

"So well," I answered, "that I never intend to touch a drop of fermented liquor."

<sup>1</sup> Capital rule for a poor man. I've got a strong head, luckily. If I hadn't, I should keep sober on principle. It's great fun to have a man taking you into his confidence after the second bottle; and then to see the funk he's in next day, when he recollects he's shown you more of his hand than is good for his own game."

All this sickened me; and I tried to turn the conversation, by asking what he meant by new wine in old bottles?

"Can't you see? The whole is monastic — dress, unmarried fellows, the very names of the colleges. I dare say it did very well for the poor scholars in the middle ages, who, threefourths of them, turned either monks or priests; but it won't do for the young gentlemen of the nineteenth century. Those very names of colleges are of a piece with the rest. The colleges were dedicated to various sacred personages and saints, to secure their interest in heaven for the prosperity of the college; but who believes in all that now? And therefore the names remain only to be desecrated. The men can't help it. They must call the colleges by their names."

"Why don't they alter the names?" I said.

"Because, my dear fellow, they are afraid to alter anything, for fear of bringing the whole rotten old house down about their ears. They say themselves, that the slightest innovation will be a precedent for destroying the whole system, bit by bit. Why should they be afraid of that, if they did not know that the whole system would not bear canvassing an instant? That's why they retain statutes that can't be observed; because they know, if they once began altering the statutes the least, the world would find out how they have themselves been breaking the statutes. That's why they keep up the farce of swearing to the Thirty-Nine Articles, and all that; just because they know, if they attempted to alter the letter of the old forms, it would come out, that half the young men of the university don't believe three words of them They know the majority of us are at heart neither at heart. churchmen nor Christians, nor even decently moral: but the one thing they are afraid of is scandal. So they connive at the young men's ill-doings; they take no real steps to put down profligacy; and, in the mean time, they just keep up the forms of Church of Englandism, and pray devoutly that the whole humbug may last out their time. There isn't one Don in a hundred who has any personal influence over the gownsmen. A man may live here from the time he's a freshman, to the time he's taken his degree, without ever being spoken to as if he had a soul to be saved; unless he happens to be one of the Simeonite party; and they are getting fewer and fewer every year; and in ten years more there won't be one of them left, at the present rate. Besides, they have no influence over the rest of the undergraduates. They are very good, excellent fellows in their way, I do believe; but they are not generally men of talent; and they keep entirely to themselves; and know nothing, and care nothing, for the questions of the day."

And so he rambled on, complaining and sneering, till supper time; when we went out and lounged about the venerable cloisters, while the room was being cleared and the cloth laid.

To describe a Cambridge supper party among gay young men is a business as little suited to my taste as to my powers. The higher classes ought to know pretty well what such things are like; and the working men are not altogether ignorant, seeing that Peter Priggins and other university men have been turning Alma Mater's shame to as lucrative account in their fictions, as the Irish scribblers have that of their mother country. But I must say, that I was utterly disgusted; and when, after the removal of the eatables, the whole party, twelve or fourteen in number, set to work to drink hard and deliberately at milk punch, and bishop, and copus, and grog, and I know not what other inventions of bacchanalian luxury, and to sing, one after another, songs of the most brutal indecency, I was glad to escape into the cool night air, and under pretence of going home, wander up and down the' King's Parade, and watch the tall gables of King's College Chapel, and the classic front of the senate-house, and the stately tower of St. Mary's, as they stood, stern and silent, bathed in the still glory of the moonshine, and seeming to watch, with a steadfast sadness, the scene of frivolity and sin, pharisaism, formalism, hypocrisy, and idleness, below.

Noble buildings! and noble institutions! given freely to the people, by those who loved the people, and the Saviour who died for them. They gave us what they had, those mediæval founders: whatsoever narrowness of mind or superstition defiled their gift was not their fault, but the fault of their whole age. The best they knew they imparted freely, and God will reward them for it. To monopolise those institutions for the rich, as is done now, is to violate both the spirit and the letter of the foundations; to restrict their studies to the limits of middle-aged Romanism,\* their conditions of admission to those fixed at the Reformation, is but a shade less wrongful. The letter is kept — the spirit is thrown away. You refuse to admit any who are not members of the Church of England; say, rather, any who will not sign the dogmas of the Church of England, whether they believe a word of

\* This, like the rest of Mr. Locke's Cambridge reminiscences, may appear to many exaggerated and unfair. But he seems to be speaking of both universities, and at a time when they had not even commenced the process of reformation. We fear, however, that in spite of many noble exceptions, his picture of Cambridge represents, if not the whole truth, still the impression which she leaves on the minds of too many, strangers and, alas! students also. — ED.

them or not. Useless formalism! which lets through the reckless, the profligate, the ignorant, the hypocritical; and only excludes the honest and the conscientious, and the mass of the intellectual working men. And whose fault is it that THEY are not members of the Church of England? Whose fault is it, I ask? Your predecessors neglected the lower orders, till they have ceased to reverence either you or your doctrines, you confess that, among yourselves, freely enough. You throw the blame of the present wide-spread dislike to the Church of England on her sins during "the godless eighteenth century." Be it so. Why are those sins to be visited on us? Why are we to be shut out from the universities, which were founded for us, because you have let us grow up, by millions, heathens and infidels, as you call us? Take away your subterfuge! It is not merely because we are bad churchmen that you exclude us, else you would be crowding your colleges, now, with the talented poor of the agricultural districts, who, as you say, remain faithful to the church of their fathers. But are there six labourers' sons educating in the universities at this moment? No! The real reason for our exclusion, churchmen or not, is, because we are poor - because we cannot pay your exorbitant fees, often, as in the case of bachelors of arts, exacted for tuition which is never given, and residence which is not permitted - because we could not support the extravagance which you not only permit, but encourage, because, by your own unblushing confession, it insures the university "the support of the aristocracy."

"But, on religious points, at least, you must abide by the statutes of the university."

Strange argument, truly, to be urged literally by English Protestants in possession of Roman Catholic bequests! If that be true in the letter, as well as in the spirit, you should have given place long ago to the Dominicans and the Franciscans. In the spirit it is true, and the Reformers acted on it when they rightly converted the universities to the uses of the new faith. They carried out the spirit of the founders' statutes by making the universities as good as they could be, and letting them share in the new light of the Elizabethan age. But was the sum of knowledge, human and divine, perfected at the Reformation? Who gave the Reformers, or you, who call yourselves their representatives, a right to say to the mind of man, and to the teaching of God's Spirit, "Hitherto, and no farther?" Society and mankind, the children of the Supreme, will not stop growing for your dogmas — much less for your vested interests; and the righteous law of mingled development and renovation, applied in the sixteenth century, must be reapplied in the nineteenth; while the spirits of the founders, now purged from the superstitions and ignorances of their age, shall smile from heaven, and say, "So would we have had it, if we had lived in the great nineteenth century, into which it has been your privilege to be born."

But such thoughts soon passed away. The image which I had seen that afternoon upon the river banks had awakened imperiously the frantic longings of past years; and now it reascended its ancient throne, and tyrannously drove forth every other object, to keep me alone with its own tantalising and torturing beauty. I did not think about her - No; I only stupidly and steadfastly stared at her with my whole soul and imagination, through that long sleepless night; and in spite of the fatigue of my journey, and the stiffness proceeding from my fall and wetting, I lay tossing till the early sun poured into my bedroom window. Then I arose, dressed myself, and went out to wander up and down the streets, gazing at one splendid building after another, till I found the gates of King's College open. I entered eagerly, through a porch which, to my untutored taste, seemed gorgeous enough to form the entrance to a fairy palace, and stood in the qua-drangle, riveted to the spot by the magnificence of the huge chapel on the right.

If I had admired it the night before, I felt inclined to worship it this morning, as I saw the lofty buttresses and spires, fretted with all their gorgeous carving, and "storied windows richly dight," sleeping in the glare of the newly-risen sun, and throwing their long shadows due westward down the sloping lawn, and across the river which dimpled and gleamed below, till it was lost among the towering masses of crisp elms and rose-garlanded chestnuts in the rich gardens beyond. Was I delighted? Yes — and yet no. There is a painful feeling in seeing anything magnificent which one cannot understand. And perhaps it was a morbid sensitiveness, but the

feeling was strong upon me that I was an interloper there — out of harmony with the scene and the system which had created it; that I might be an object of unpleasant curiosity, perhaps of scorn (for I had not forgotten the nobleman at the boat-race), amid those monuments of learned luxury. Perhaps, on the other hand, it was only from the instinct which makes us seek for solitude under the pressure of intense emotions, when we have neither language to express them to ourselves, nor loved one in whose silent eyes we may read kindred feelings — a sympathy which wants no words. Whatever the cause was, when a party of men, in their caps and gowns, approached me down the dark avenue which led into the country, I was glad to shrink for concealment behind the weeping-willow at the foot of the bridge, and slink off unobserved to breakfast with my cousin.

We had just finished breakfast, my cousin was lighting his meerschaum, when a tall figure passed the window, and the taller of the noblemen, whom I had seen at the boat-race, entered the room with a packet of papers in his hand.

"Here, Locule mi! my pocket-book — or rather, to stretch a bad pun till it bursts, my pocket-dictionary — I require the aid of your benevolently-squandered talents for the correction of these proofs. I am, as usual, both idle and busy this morning; so draw pen, and set to work for me."

"I am exceedingly sorry, my lord," answered George, in his most obsequious tone, "but I must work this morning with all my might. Last night, recollect, was given to triumph, Bacchus, and idleness."

"Then find some one who will do them for me, my Ulysses polumechane, polutrope, panurge."

"I shall be most happy (with a half-frown and a wince) to play Panurge to your lordship's Pantagruel, on board the new yacht."

"Oh, I am perfect in that character, I suppose? And is she, after all, like Pantagruel's ship, to be loaded with hemp? Well, we must try two or three milder cargoes first. But come, find me some starving genius — some græculus esuriens —"

"Who will ascend to the heaven of your lordship's eloquence for the bidding?"

"Five shillings a sheet — there will be about two of them, I think, in the pamphlet."

"May I take the liberty of recommending my cousin here?"

"Your cousin?" And he turned to me, who had been examining with a sad and envious eye the contents of the Alton Locke.

## ALTON LOCKE,

bookshelves. Our eyes met, and first a faint blush, and then a smile of recognition, passed over his magnificent countenance.

"I think I had — I am ashamed that I cannot say the pleasure, of meeting him at the boat-race yesterday."

My cousin looked inquiringly and vexed at us both. The nobleman smiled.

"Oh, the shame was ours, not his."

"I cannot think," I answered, "that you have any reasons to remember with shame your own kindness and courtesy. As for me," I went on bitterly, "I suppose a poor journeyman tailor, who ventures to look on at the sports of gentlemen, only deserves to be ridden over."

"Sir," he said, looking at me with a severe and searching glance, "your bitterness is pardonable — but not your sneer. You do not yourself think what you say, and you ought to know that I think it still less than yourself. If you intend your irony to be useful, you should keep it till you can use it courageously against the true offenders."

I looked up at him fiercely enough, but the placid smile which had returned to his face disarmed me.

"Your class," he went on, "blind yourselves and our class as much by wholesale denunciations of us, as we, alas! who should know better, do by wholesale denunciations of you. As you grow older, you will learn that there are exceptions to every rule."

"And yet the exception proves the rule."

"Most painfully true, sir. But that argument is two-edged. For instance, am I to consider it the exception or the rule, when I am told that you, a journeyman tailor, are able to correct these proofs for me?"

"Nearer the rule, I think, than you yet fancy."

"You speak out boldly and well; but how can you judge what I may please to fancy? At all events, I will make trial of you. There are the proofs. Bring them to me by four o'clock this afternoon, and if they are well done, I will pay you more than I should do to the average hack-writer, for you will deserve more."

I took the proofs; he turned to go, and by a side-look at George beckoned him out of the room. I heard a whispering in the passage; and I do not deny that my heart beat high with new hopes, as I caught unwillingly the words — "Such a forehead! — such an eye! — such a contour of feature as that! — Locule mi — that boy ought not to be mending trousers."

My cousin returned, half laughing, half angry.

"Alton, you fool, why did you let out that you were a snip?"

"I am not ashamed of my trade."

"I am, then. However, you've done with it now; and if you can't come the gentleman, you may as well come the rising genius. The self-educated dodge pays well just now; and after all, you've hooked his lordship — thank me for that. But you'll never hold him, you impudent dog, if you pull so hard on him" — He went on, putting his hands into his coattail pockets, and sticking himself in front of the fire, like the Delphic Pythoness upon the sacred tripod, in hopes, I suppose, of some oracular afflatus — "You will never hold him, I say, if you pull so hard on him. You ought to 'My lord' him for months yet, at least. You know, my good fellow, you must take every possible care to pick up what goodbreeding you can, if I take the trouble to put you in the way of good society, and tell you where my private birds'-nests are, like the green schoolboy some poet or other talks of."

"He is no lord of mine," I answered, "in any sense of the word, and therefore I shall not call him so."

"Upon my honour! here is a young gentleman who intends to rise in the world, and then commences by trying to walk through the first post he meets! Noodle! can't you do like me, and get out of the carts' way when they come by? If you intend to go ahead, you must just dodge in and out like a dog at a fair. 'She stoops to conquer' is my motto, and a precious good one too."

"I have no wish to conquer Lord Lynedale, and so I shall not stoop to him."

"I have, then; and to very good purpose, too. I am his whetstone, for polishing up that classical wit of his on, till he carries it into Parliament to astonish the country squires. He fancies himself a second Goethe; I hav'n't forgot his hitting at me, before a large supper party, with a certain epigram of that old turkeycock's about the whale having his unmentionable parasite — and the great man likewise. Whale, indeed! I bide my time, Alton, my boy — I bide my time; and then let your grand aristocrat look out! If he does not

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find the supposed whale-unmentionable a good stout holding harpoon, with a tough line to it, and a long one, it's a pity, Alton, my boy!"

And he burst into a coarse laugh, tossed himself down on the sofa, and relighted his meerschaum.

"He seemed to me," I answered, "to have a peculiar courtesy and liberality of mind towards those below him in rank."

"Oh! he had, had he? Now, I'll just put you up to a dodge. He intends to come the Mirabeau — fancies his mantle has fallen on him — prays before the fellow's bust, I believe, if one knew the truth, for a double portion of his spirit; and therefore it is a part of his game to ingratiate himself with all pot-boy-dom, while at heart he is as proud, exclusive an aristocrat, as ever wore nobleman's hat. At all events, you may get something out of him, if you play your cards well — or, rather, help me to play mine; for I consider him as my property, and you only as my aide-de-camp." "I shall play no one's cards," I answered, sulkily. "I am

"I shall play no one's cards," I answered, sulkily. "I am doing work fairly, and shall be fairly paid for it, and keep my own independence."

"Independence! hey-day! Have you forgotten that, after all, you are my — guest, to call it by the mildest term?"

"Do you upbraid me with that?" I said, starting up. "Do you expect me to live on your charity, on condition of doing your dirty work? You do not know me, sir. I leave your roof this instant!"

"You do not!" answered he, laughing loudly, as he sprang over the sofa, and set his back against the door. "Come, come, you Will-o'-the-wisp, as full of flights, and fancies, and vagaries, as a sick old maid! can't you see which side your bread is buttered? Sit down, I say! Don't you know that I'm as good-natured a fellow as ever lived, although I do parade a little Gil Blas morality now and then, just for fun's sake? Do you think I should be so open with it, if I meant anything very diabolic? There — sit down, and don't go into King Cambyses' vein, or Queen Hecuba's tears, either, which you seem inclined to do."

"I know you have been very generous to me," said I, penitently; "but a kindness becomes none when you are upbraided with it."

"So say the copybooks - I deny it. At all events, I'll say

# no more; and you shall sit down there, and write as still as a mouse, till two, while I tackle this never-to-be-enough-by-unhappy-third-years'-men-execrated Griffin's Optics."

At four that afternoon, I knocked, proofs in hand, at the door of Lord Lynedale's rooms in the King's Parade. The door was opened by a little elderly groom, grey-coated, greygaitered, grey-haired, grey-visaged. He had the look of a respectable old family retainer, and his exquisitely neat groom's dress gave him a sort of interest in my eyes. Class costumes, relics though they are of feudalism, carry a charm with them. They are symbolic, definitive; they bestow a personality on the wearer, which satisfies the mind, by enabling it instantly to classify him, to connect him with a thousand stories and associations; and to my young mind, the wiry, shrewd, honest, grim old serving-man seemed the incarnation of all the wonders of Newmarket, and the huntingkennel, and the steeple-chase, of which I had read, with alternate admiration and contempt, in the newspapers.

From between his legs peeped out a mass of shaggy grizzled hair, containing a Skye-terrier's eyes, and a long snout, which, by its twisting and sniffing, seemed investigating whether my trousers came within the biting degree of shabbiness.

"And what do you want here, young man?"

"I was bidden by Lord Lynedale to come here at four with these papers."

"Oh, yes! very likely! that's an old story; and to be paid money, I guess?"

"And to be paid money."

"Not a doubt on't. Then you must wait a little longer, like the rest of you bloodsuckers. Go back, and tell your master that he needn't send your sort here any more, with his post obits, and post mortems, and the like devilry. The old earl's good to last these three months more, the Lord be praised. Therefore, come, sir — you go back to your master, and take him my compliments, and \*\*\*\*\*\*."

"I have no master," quoth I, puzzled, but half laughing; for I liked the old fellow's iron, honest visage.

"No master, eh? then darned if you shall come in. Comes on your own account, eh? Got a little bit of paper for his lordship in that bundle?" "I told you already that I had," said I, peevishly.

"Werry good; but you didn't tell me whether they come from the bayleaves or not."

"Nonsense! Take the papers in yourself, if you like."

"Oh, you young vagabond! Do you take me for Judas Iscariot? And what do you expect — to set a man on serving a writ on a man's own master? Wait a bit, till I gets the hors'up, that's all, and I'll show you what's what."

If I could not understand him, the dog did; for he ran instantly at my legs, secured a large piece of my best trousers, and was returning for a second, if I had not, literally, in my perplexity, thrust the clean proofs into his mouth, which he worried and shook, as if they had been the grandfather of all white mice. At this moment, the inner door opened, and Lord Lynedale appeared. There was an explanation, and a laugh, in which I could not but join, in spite of the torn trousers, at the expense of the groom. The old man retired, mingling his growls with those of the terrier, and evidently quite disappointed at my not being a dun — an honest, douce barn-door fowl, and not *fera naturæ*, and fair game for his sporting propensities.

Lord Lynedale took me into the inner room, and bade me sit down while he examined the proofs. I looked round the low-wainscoted apartment, with its narrow mullioned windows, in extreme curiosity. What a real nobleman's abode could be like, was naturally worth examining, to one who had, all his life, heard of the aristocracy as of some mythic Titans whether fiends or gods, being yet a doubtful point - altogether enshrined on "cloudy Olympus," invisible to mortal ken. The shelves were gay with morocco, Russia leather, and gilding - not much used, as I thought, till my eye caught one of the gorgeously-bound volumes lying on the table in a loose cover of polished leather - a refinement of which poor I should never have dreamt. The walls were covered with prints, which soon turned my eyes from everything else, to range delighted over Landseers, Turners, Roberts's Eastern sketches, the ancient Italian masters; and I recognised, with a sort of friendly affection, an old print of my favourite St. Sebastian, in the Dulwich Gallery. brought back to my mind a thousand dreams, and a thousand sorrows. Would those dreams be ever realised? Might this new acquaintance possibly open some pathway towards their

fulfilment? - some vista towards the attainment of a station where they would, at least, be less chimerical? And at that thought, my heart beat loud with hope. The room was choked up with chairs and tables, of all sorts of strange shapes and problematical uses. The floor was strewed with skins of bear, deer, and seal. In a corner lay hunting-whips and fishing-rods, foils, boxing-gloves, and gun-cases; while over the chimney-piece, an array of rich Turkish pipes, all amber and enamel, contrasted curiously with quaint old swords and daggers - bronze classic casts, upon Gothic oak brackets, and fantastic scraps of continental carving. On the centre-table, too, reigned the same rich profusion, or, if you will, confusion - MSS., "Notes in Egypt," "Goethe's Wahlverwandtschaften," Murray's Hand-books, and "Plato's Republic." What was there not there? And I chuckled inwardly, to see how Bell's Life in London and the Ecclesiologist had, between them, got down "McCulloch on Taxation," and were sitting, arm-in-arm, triumphantly astride of him. Everything in the room, even to the fragrant flowers in a German glass, spoke of a travelled and cultivated luxury manifold tastes and powers of self-enjoyment and self-improvement, which Heaven forgive me if I envied, as I looked upon them. If I, now, had had one-twentieth part of those books, prints, that experience of life, not to mention that physical strength and beauty, which stood towering there before the fire — so simple — so utterly unconscious of the innate nobleness and grace which shone out from every motion of those stately limbs and features - all the delicacy which blood can give, combined, as one does sometimes see, with the broad strength of the proletarian - so different from poor me! - and so different, too, as I recollected with perhaps a savage pleasure, from the miserable, stunted specimen of over-bred imbecility which had ridden over me the day before! A strange question that of birth! and one in which the philosopher, in spite of himself, must come to democratic conclusions. For, after all, the physical and intellectual superiority of the high-born is only preserved, as it was in the old Norman times, by the continual practical abnegation of the very caste-lie on which they pride themselves - by continual renovation of their race, by intermarriage with the ranks below them. The blood of Odin flowed in the veins of Norman William; true - and so did the tanner's of Falaise!

At last he looked up, and spoke courteously -

"I'm afraid I have kept you long; but now, here is for your corrections, which are capital. I have really to thank you for a lesson in writing English." And he put a sovereign into my hand.

"I am very sorry," said I, "but I have no change."

"Never mind that. Your work is well worth the money." "But," I said, "you agreed with me for five shillings a sheet, and — I do not wish to be rude, but I cannot accept your kindness. We working men make a rule of abiding by

our wages, and taking nothing which looks like -"

"Well, well — and a very good rule it is. I suppose, then, I,must find out some way for you to earn more. Good afternoon." And he motioned me out of the room, followed me down stairs, and turned off towards the College Gardens.

I wandered up and down, feeding my greedy eyes, till I found myself again upon the bridge where I had stood that morning, gazing with admiration and astonishment at a scene which I have often expected to see painted or described, and which, nevertheless, in spite of its unique magnificence, seems strangely overlooked by those who cater for the public taste, with pen and pencil. The vista of bridges, one after another, spanning the stream; the long line of great monastic palaces, all unlike, and yet all in harmony, sloping down to the stream, with their trim lawns and ivied walls, their towers and buttresses; and opposite them, the range of rich gardens and noble timber-trees, dimly seen through which, at the end of the gorgeous river avenue, towered the lofty buildings of St. John's. The whole scene, under the glow of a rich May afternoon, seemed to me a fragment out of the "Arabian Nights" or Spenser's "Fairy Queen." I leaned upon the parapet, and gazed, and gazed, so absorbed in wonder and enjoyment, that I was quite unconscious, for some time, that Lord Lynedale was standing by my side, engaged in the same employment. He was not alone. Hanging on his arm was a lady, whose face, it seemed to me, I ought to know. If certainly was one not to be easily forgotten. She was beautiful, but with the face and figure rather of a Juno than a Venus - dark, imperious, restless - the lips almost too firmly set, the brow almost too massive and projecting - a queen, rather to be feared than loved - but a queen still, as truly royal as the man into whose face she was looking up

with eager admiration and delight, as he pointed out to her eloquently the several beauties of the landscape. Her dress was as plain as that of any Quaker; but the grace of its arrangement, of every line and fold, was enough, without the help of the heavy gold bracelet on her wrist, to proclaim her a fine lady; by which term, I wish to express the result of that perfect education in taste and manner, down to every gesture, which Heaven forbid that I, professing to be a poet, should undervalue. It is beautiful; and therefore I welcome it, in the name of the Author of all beauty. I value it so highly, that I would fain see it extend, not merely from Belgravia to the tradesman's villa, but thence, as I believe it one day will, to the labourer's hovel, and the needlewoman's garret.

Half in bashfulness, half in the pride which shrinks from anything like intrusion, I was moving away; but the nobleman, recognising me with a smile and a nod, made some observation on the beauty of the scene before us. Before I could answer, however, I saw that his companion's eyes were fixed intently on my face.

"Is this," she said to Lord Lynedale, "the young person of whom you were speaking to me just now? I fancy that I recollect him, though, I dare say, he has forgotten me."

If I had forgotten the face, that voice, so peculiarly rich, deep, and marked in its pronunciation of every syllable, recalled her instantly to my mind. It was the dark lady of the Dulwich Gallery!

"I met you, I think," I said, "at the picture gallery at Dulwich, and you were kind enough, and — and some persons who were with you, to talk to me about a picture there."

"Yes; Guido's St. Sebastian. You seemed fond of reading then. I am glad to see you at college."

I explained that I was not at college. That led to fresh gentle questions on her part, till I had given her all the leading points of my history. There was nothing in it of which I ought to have been ashamed.

She seemed to become more and more interested in my story, and her companion also.

"And have you tried to write? I recollect my uncle advising you to try a poem on St. Sebastian. It was spoken, perhaps, in jest; but it will not, I hope, have been labour lost, if you have taken it in earnest." "Yes - I have written on that and on other subjects, during the last few years."

"Then, you must let us see them, if you have them with you. I think my uncle, Arthur, might like to look over them; and if they were fit for publication, he might be able to do something towards it."

"At all events," said Lord Lynedale, "a self-educated author is always interesting. Bring any of your poems, that you have with you, to the Eagle this afternoon, and leave them there for Dean Winnstay; and to-morrow morning, if you have nothing better to do, call there between ten and eleven o'clock."

He wrote me down the dean's address, and nodding a civil good morning, turned away with his queenly companion, while I stood gazing after him, wondering whether all noblemen and high-born ladies were like them in person and in spirit — a question, which, in spite of many noble exceptions, some of them well known and appreciated by the working men, I am afraid must be answered in the negative.

I took my MSS. to the Eagle, and wandered out once more, instinctively, among those same magnificent trees at the back of the colleges, to enjoy the pleasing torment of expectation. "My uncle!" was he the same old man whom I had seen at the gallery; and if so, was Lillian with him? Delicious hope! And yet, what if she was with him — what to me? But yet I sat silent, dreaming, all the evening, and hurried early to bed — not to sleep, but to lie and dream on and on, and rise almost before light, eat no breakfast, and pace up and down, waiting impatiently for the hour at which I was to find out whether my dream was true.

And it was true! The first object I saw, when I entered the room, was Lillian, looking more beautiful than ever. The child of sixteen had blossomed into the woman of twenty. The ivory and vermilion of the complexion had toned down together into still richer hues. The dark hazel eyes shone with a more liquid lustre. The figure had become more rounded, without losing a line of that fairy lightness, with which her light morning-dress, with its delicate French semitones of colour, gay and yet not gaudy, seemed to harmonise. The little plump jewelled hands — the transparent chestnut hair, banded round the beautiful oval masque — the tiny feet, which, as Suckling has it,

#### Underneath her petticoat Like little mice peeped in and out ---

1 could have fallen down, fool that I was! and worshipped — what? I could not tell then, for I cannot tell even now.

The dean smiled recognition, bade me sit down, and disposed my papers, meditatively, on his knee. I obeyed him, trembling, choking — my eyes devouring my idol — forgetting why I had come — seeing nothing but her — listening for nothing but the opening of those lips. I believe the dean was some sentences deep in his oration, before I became conscious thereof.

"- And I think I may tell you, at once, that I have been very much susprised and gratified with them. They evince, on the whole, a far greater acquaintance with the English classic-models, and with the laws of rhyme and melody, than could have been expected from a young man of your class macte virtute, puer. Have you read any Latin?"

"A little." And I went on staring at Lillian, who looked up, furtively, from her work, every now and then, to steal a glance at me, and set my poor heart thumping still more fiercely against my side.

"Very good; you will have the less trouble, then, in the preparation for college. You will find out for yourself, of course, the immense disadvantages of self-education. The fact is, my dear lord" (turning to Lord Lynedale), "it is only useful as an indication of a capability of being educated by others. One never opens a book written by working men, without shuddering at a hundred faults of style. However, there are some very tolerable attempts among these — especially the imitations of Milton's 'Comus.'"

Poor I had by no means intended them as imitations; but such, no doubt, they were.

"I am sorry to see that Shelley has had so much influence on your writing. He is a guide as irregular in taste, as unorthodox in doctrine; though there are some pretty things in him now and then. And you have caught his melody tolerably here, now —"

"Oh, that is such a sweet thing!" said Lillian. "Do you know, I read it over and over last night, and took it up-stairs with me. How very fond of beautiful things you must be, Mr. Locke, to be able to describe so passionately the longing after them." That voice once more! It intoxicated me, so that I hardly knew what I stammered out — something about working men having very few opportunities of indulging the taste for — I forget what. I believe I was on the point of running off into some absurd compliment, but I caught the dark lady's warning eye on me.

"Ah, yes! I forgot. I dare say it must be a very stupid life. So little opportunity, as he says. What a pity he is a tailor, papa! Such an unimaginative employment! How delightful it would be to send him to college and make him a clergyman!"

Fool that I was! I fancied — what did I not fancy? never seeing how that very "he" bespoke the indifference the gulf between us. I was not a man — an equal; but a thing — a subject, who was to be talked over, and examined, and made into something like themselves, of their supreme and undeserved benevolence.

"Gently, gently, fair lady! We must not be as headlong as some people would kindly wish to be. If this young man really has a proper desire to rise into a higher station, and I find him a fit object to be assisted in that praiseworthy ambition, why, I think he ought to go to some training college; St. Mark's, I should say, on the whole, might, by its strong Church principles, give the best antidote to any little remaining taint of sans-culottism. You understand me, my lord? And, then, if he distinguished himself there, it would be time to think of getting him a sizarship."

"Poor Pegasus in harness!" half smiled, half sighed, the dark lady.

"Just the sort of youth," whispered Lord Lynedale, loud enough for me to hear, "to take out with us to the Mediterranean as secretary—s'il y avait là de la morale, of course—"

Yes — and of course, too, the tailor's boy was not expected to understand French. But the most absurd thing was, how everybody, except perhaps the dark lady, seemed to take for granted that I felt myself exceedingly honoured, and must consider it, as a matter of course, the greatest possible stretch of kindness thus to talk me over, and settle everything for me, as if I was not a living soul, but a plant in a pot. Perhaps they were not unsupported by experience. I suppose too many of us would have thought it so; there are flunkeys in all ranks, and to spare. Perhaps the true absurdity was the way in which I sat, demented, inarticulate, staring at Lillian, and only caring for any word which seemed to augur a chance of seeing her again; instead of saying, as I felt, that I had no wish whatever to rise above my station; no intention whatever of being sent to training schools or colleges, or anywhere else at the expense of other people. And therefore it was that I submitted blindly, when the dean, who looked as kind, and was really, I believe, as kind as ever was human being, turned to me with a solemn authoritative voice —

"Well, my young friend, I must say that I am, on the whole, very much pleased with your performance. It corroborates, my dear lord, the assertion, for which I have been so often ridiculed, that there are many real men, capable of higher things, scattered up and down among the masses. Attend to me, sir!" (a hint which I suspect I very much wanted). "Now, recollect; if it should be hereafter in our power to assist your prospects in life, you must give up, once and for all, the bitter tone against the higher classes, which I am sorry to see in your MSS. As you know more of the world, you will find that the poor are not by any means as ill used as they are taught, in these days, to believe. The rich have their sorrows too - no one knows it better than I" - (and he played pensively with his gold pencil-case) - "and good and evil are pretty equally distributed among all ranks, by a just and merciful God. I advise you most earnestly, as you value your future success in life, to give up reading those unprincipled authors, whose aim is to excite the evil passions of the multitude; and to shut your ears betimes to the extravagant calumnies of demagogues, who make tools of enthusiastic and imaginative minds, for their own selfish aggrandisement. Avoid politics; the workman has no more to do with them than the clergyman. We are told, on divine authority, to fear God and the king, and meddle not with those who are given to change. Rather put before yourself the example of such a man as the excellent Dr. Brown, one of the richest and most respected men of the university, with whom I hope to have the pleasure of dining this evening - and yet that man actually, for several years of his life, worked at a carpenter's bench!"

I too had something to say about all that. I too knew something about demagogues and working men: but the sight of Lillian made me a coward; and I only sat silent as the thought flashed across me, half ludicrous, half painful, by its contrast, of another who once worked at a carpenter's bench, and fulfilled his mission — not by an old age of wealth, respectability, and port wine; but on the Cross of Calvary. After all, the worthy old gentleman gave me no time to answer.

"Next - I think of showing these MSS. to my publisher, to get his opinion as to whether they are worth printing just now. Not that I wish you to build much on the chance. It is not necessary that you should be a poet. I should prefer mathematics for you, as a methodic discipline of the intellect. Most active minds write poetry, at a certain age - I wrote a good deal, I recollect, myself. But that is no reason for publishing. This haste to rush into print is one of the bad signs of the times — a symptom of the unhealthy activity which was first called out by the French revolution. In the Elizabethan age, every decently-educated gentleman was able, as a matter of course, to indite a sonnet to his mistress's eyebrow, or an epigram on his enemy; and yet he never dreamt of printing them. One of the few rational things I have met with, Eleanor, in the works of your very objectionable pet Mr. Carlyle - though indeed his style is too intolerable to have allowed me to read much - is the remark that 'speech is silver' - 'silvern' he calls it, pedantically - 'while silence is golden.'"

At this point of the sermon, Lillian fled from the room, to my extreme disgust. But still the old man prosed —

"I think, therefore, that you had better stay with your cousin for the next week. I hear from Lord Lynedale that he is a very studious, moral, rising young man; and I only hope that you will follow his good example. At the end of the week I shall return home, and then I shall be glad to see more of you at my house at D \* \* \* \*, about \* \* \* \* miles from this place. Good morning."

I went, in rapture at the last announcement — and yet my conscience smote me. I had not stood up for the working men. I had heard them calumniated, and held my tongue — but I was to see Lillian. I had let the dean fancy I was willing to become a pensioner on his bounty — that I was a member of the Church of England, and willing to go to a Church Training School — but I was to see Lillian. I had lowered myself in my own eyes — but I had seen Lillian. Perhaps I exaggerated

## TAILOR AND POET.

my own offences: however that may be, love soon silenced conscience, and I almost danced into my cousin's rooms on my return.

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That week passed rapidly and happily. I was half amused with the change in my cousin's demeanour. I had evidently risen immensely in his eyes; and I could not help applying, in my heart, to him, Mr. Carlyle's dictum about the valet species - how they never honour the unaccredited hero, having no eye to find him out till properly accredited, and accoutred with full uniform and diploma by that great God, Public Opinion. I saw through the motive of his new-fledged respect for me - and yet I encouraged it; for it flattered my vanity. The world must forgive me. It was something for the poor tailor to find himself somewhat appreciated at last, even outwardly. And besides, this said respect took a form which was very tempting to me now - though the week before it was just the one which I should have repelled with scorn. George became very anxious to lend me money, to order me clothes at his own tailor's, and set me up in various little toilette refinements, that I might make a respectable appearance at the dean's. I knew that he consulted rather the honour of the family, than my good; but I did not know that his aim was also to get me into his power; and I refused more and more weakly at each fresh offer, and at last consented, in an evil hour, to sell my own independence, for the sake of indulging my love-dream, and appearing to be what I was not.

I saw a good deal more of the young university men that week. I cannot say that my recollectians of them were pleasant. A few of them were very bigoted Tractarians — some of whom seemed to fancy that a dilettante admiration for crucifixes and Gothic architecture was a form of religion which, by its extreme perfection, made the virtues of chastity and sobriety quite unnecessary — and the rest, of a more ascetic and moral turn, seemed as narrow, bitter, flippant, and unearnest young men as I had ever met, dealing in second-hand party statements, gathered, as I could discover, entirely from periodicals of their own party — taking pride in reading nothing but what was made for them, indulging in the most violent nicknames and railing, and escaping from anything like severe argument by a sneer or an expression of theatrical horror at so "painful" a notion. I had good opportunities of seeing what they were really like; for my cousin seemed to take delight in tormenting them - making them contradict themselves, getting them into dilemmas, and putting them into passions, - while the whole time he professed to be of their party, as indeed he was. But his consciousness of power, and his natural craft, seemed to make him consider his own party as his private preserve for sporting over; and when he was tired with the amusement, he used to try to call me in, and set me by the ears with his guests, which he had no great trouble in doing. And then, when he saw me at all confused, or borne down by statements from authors, of whose very names I had never heard, or by expressions of horror and surprise which made me suspect that I had unconsciously committed myself to an absurdity, he used to come "hurling into the midst of the press," like some knight at a tournament, or Socrates when he saved Alcibiades at Delium, and, by a dexterous repartee, turn the tide of battle, and get me off safe - taking care, by-the-by, to hint to me the obligation which he considered himself to have conferred upon me.

But the great majority of the young men whom I met were even of a lower stamp. I was utterly shocked and disappointed at the contempt and unbelief with which they seemed to regard everything beyond mere animal enjoyment, and here and there the selfish advantage of a good degree. They seemed, if one could judge from appearances, to despise and disbelieve everything generous, enthusiastic, enlarged. Thoughtfulness was a "bore;" — earnestness, "romance." Above all, they seemed to despise the university itself. The "Dons" were "idle, fat old humbugs;" chapel, "humbug too;" tutors, "humbugs" too, who played into the tradesmen's hands, and charged men high fees for lectures not worth attending - so that any man who wanted to get on, was forced to have a private tutor, besides his college one. The university-studies were "a humbug" - no use to man in after-life. The masters of arts were "humbugs" too; for "they knew all the evils, and clamoured for reform till they became Dons themselves; and then, as soon as they found the old system pay, they settled down on their lees, and grew fat on port wine, like those before them." They seemed to consider themselves in an atmosphere of humbug — living in a lie — out of which lie-element those who chose were very right in making the most, for the gaining of fame or money. And the tone which they took about everything — the coarseness, hollowness, Gil Blas selfishness — was just what might have been expected. Whether they were right or wrong in their complaints, I, of course, have no means of accurately knowing. But it did seem strange to me, as it has to others, to find in the mouths of almost all the gownsmen, those very same charges against the universities which, when working men dare to make them, excite outcries of "calumny," "sedition," "vulgar radicalism," "attacks on our time-honoured institutions," &c., &c.

# CHAPTER XIV.

## A Cathedral Town.

AT length, the wished-for day had arrived; and, with my cousin, I was whirling along, full of hope and desire, towards the cathedral town of D \* \* \* \* - through a flat fen country, which, though I had often heard it described as ugly, struck my imagination much. The vast height and width of the sky-arch, as seen from those flats as from an ocean - the grey haze shrouding the horizon of our narrow land-view, and closing us in, till we seemed to be floating through infinite space, on a little platform of earth; the rich poplar-fringed farms, with their herds of dappled oxen - the luxuriant crops of oats and beans - the tender green of the tall rape, a plant till then unknown to me - the long, straight, silver dykes, with their gaudy carpets of strange floating water-plants, and their black banks, studded with the remains of buried forests - the innumerable draining-mills, with their creaking sails and groaning wheels - the endless rows of pollard willows, through which the breeze moaned and rung, as through the strings of some vast Æolian harp; the little island knolls in that vast sea of fen, each with its long village street, and delicately taper spire; all this seemed to me to contain an element of new and peculiar beauty.

"Why!" exclaims the reading public, if perchance it ever sees this tale of mine, in its usual prurient longing after anything like personal gossip, or scandalous anecdote — Alton Locke. "why, there is no cathedral town which begins with a D! Through the fen, too! He must mean either Ely, Lincoln, or Peterborough; that's certain." Then, at one of those places, they find there is a dean - not of the name of Winnstay, true - "but his name begins with a W; and he has a pretty daughter - no, a niece; well, that's very near it; it must be him. No; at another place - there is not a dean, true - but a canon, or an archdeacon - something of that kind; and he has a pretty daughter, really; and his name begins - not with W, but with Y; well, that's the last letter of Winnstay, if it is not the first: that must be the poor man! What a shame to have exposed his family secrets in that way!" And then a whole circle of myths grow up round the man's story. It is credibly ascertained that I am the man who broke into his house last year, after having made love to his housemaid, and stole his writing-desk and plate - else, why should a burglar steal family-letters, if he had not some interest in them? ...... And before the matter dies away, some worthy old gentleman, who has not spoken to a working man since he left his living, thirty years ago, and hates a radical as he does the Pope, receives two or three anonymous letters, condoling with him on the cruel betrayal of his confidence - base ingratitude for undeserved condescension, &c., &c.; and, perhaps, with an enclosure of good advice for his lovely daughter.

But, wherever D\*\*\*\* is, we arrived there; and with a beating heart, I — and I now suspect my cousin also walked up the sunny slopes, where the old convent had stood, now covered with walled gardens and noble timber-trees, and crowned by the richly-fretted towers of the cathedral, which we had seen, for the last twenty miles, growing gradually larger and more distinct across the level flat. "Ely?" "No; Lincoln!" "Oh! but really, it's just as much like Peterborough!" Never mind, my dear reader; the essence of the fact, as I think, lies not quite so much in the name of the place, as in what was done there — to which I, with all the little respect which I can muster, entreat your attention.

It is not from false shame at my necessary ignorance, but from a fear lest I should bore my readers with what seems to them trivial, that I refrain from dilating on many a thing which struck me as curious in this my first visit to the house of an English gentleman. I must say, however, though I suppose

that it will be numbered, at least, among trite remarks, if not among trivial ones, that the wealth around me certainly struck me, as it has others, as not very much in keeping with the office of one who professed to be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth. But I salved over that feeling, being desirous to see everything in the brightest light, with the recollection that the dean had a private fortune of his own; though it did seem at moments, that if a man has solemnly sworn to devote himself, body and soul, to the cause of the spiritual welfare of the nation, that vow might be not unfairly construed to include his money as well as his talents, time, and health: unless, perhaps, money is considered by spiritual persons as so worthless a thing, that it is not fit to be given to God - a notion which might seem to explain how a really pious and universally-respected archbishop, living within a quarter of a mile of one of the worst infernos of destitution, disease, filth, and profligacy - can yet find it in his heart to save 120,000%. out of church revenues, and leave it to his family; though it will not explain how Irish bishops can reconcile it to their consciences to leave behind them, one and all, large fortunes — for I suppose from fifty to a hundred thousand pounds is something — saved from fees and tithes, taken from the pockets of a Roman Catholic population, whom they have been put there to convert to Protestantism for the last three hundred years - with what success, all the world knows. Of course, it is a most impertinent, and almost a blasphemous thing, for a working man to dare to mention such subjects. Is it not "speaking evil of dignities?" Strange, by-the-by, that merely to mention facts, without note or comment, should be always called "speaking evil!" Does not that argue ill for the facts themselves? Working men think so; but what matter what "the swinish multitude" think?

When I speak of wealth, I do not mean that the dean's household would have been considered by his own class at all too luxurious. He would have been said, I suppose, to live in a "quiet, comfortable, gentlemanlike way" — "everything very plain and very good." It included a butler — a quiet, good-natured old man — who ushered us into our bedrooms; a footman, who opened the door — a sort of animal for which I have an extreme aversion — young, silly, conceited, overfed, florid — who looked just the man to sell his soul for a

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livery, twice as much food as he needed, and the opportunity of unlimited flirtations with the maids; and a coachman, very like other coachmen, whom I saw taking a pair of handsome carriage-horses out to exercise, as we opened the gate.

The old man, silently and as a matter of course, unpacked for me my little portmanteau (lent me by my cousin), and placed my things neatly in various drawers — went down, brought up a jug of hot water, put it on the washing-table told me that dinner was at six — that the half-hour bell rang at half-past five - and that, if I wanted anything, the footman would answer the bell (bells seeming a prominent idea in his theory of the universe) - and so left me, wondering at the strange fact that free men, with free wills, do sell themselves, by the hundred thousand, to perform menial offices for other men, not for love, but for money; becoming, to define them strictly, bell-answering animals; and are honest, happy, contented, in such a life. A man-servant, a soldier, and a Jesuit, are to me the three great wonders of humanity - three forms of moral suicide, for which I never had the slightest gleam of sympathy, or even comprehension.

At last we went down to dinner, after my personal adornments had been carefully superintended by my cousin, who gave me, over-and-above, various warnings and exhortations as to my behaviour; which, of course, took due effect, in making me as nervous, constrained, and affected, as possible. When I appeared in the drawing-room, I was kindly welcomed by the dean, the two ladies, and Lord Lynedale.

But as I stood fidgeting and blushing, sticking my arms, and legs, and head, into all sorts of quaint positions — trying one attitude, and thinking it looked awkward, and so exchanging it for another, more awkward still — my eye fell suddenly on a slip of paper, which had conveyed itself, I never knew how, upon the pages of the Illustrated Book of Ballads, which I was turning over: —

"Be natural, and you will be gentlemanlike. If you wish others to forget your rank, do not forget it yourself. If you wish others to remember you with pleasure, forget yourself; and be just what God has made you."

I could not help fancying that the lesson, whether intentionally or not, was meant for me; and a passing impulse made me take up the slip, fold it together, and put it into my bosom. Perhaps it was Lillian's handwriting! I looked round at the ladies; but their faces were each buried behind a book.

We went in to dinner; and, to my delight, I sat next to my goddess, while opposite me was my cousin. Luckily, I had got some directions from him as to what to say and do, when my wonders, the servants, thrust eatables and drinkables over my shoulders.

Lillian and my cousin chatted away about church-architecture, and the restorations which were going on at the cathedral; while I, for the first half of dinner, feasted my eyes with the sight of a beauty, in which I seemed to discover every moment some new excellence. Every time I looked up at her, my eyes dazzled, my face burnt, my heart sank, and soft thrills ran through every nerve. And yet, Heaven knows, my emotions were as pure as those of an infant. It was beauty, longed for, and found at last, which I adored as a thing not to be possessed, but worshipped. The desire, even the thought, of calling her my own, never crossed my mind. I felt that I could gladly die, if by death I could purchase the permission to watch her. I understood, then, and for ever after, the pure devotion of the old knights and troubadours of chivalry. I seemed to myself to be their brother - one of the holy guild of poet-lovers. I was a new Petrarch, basking in the lightrays of a new Laura. I gazed, and gazed, and found new life in gazing, and was content.

But my simple bliss was perfected, when she suddenly turned to me, and began asking me questions on the very points on which I was best able to answer. She talked about poetry, Tennyson and Wordsworth; asked me if I understood Browning's Sordello; and then comforted me, after my stammering confession that I did not, by telling me she was delighted to hear that; for she did not understand it either, and it was so pleasant to have a companion in ignorance. Then she asked me, if I was much struck with the buildings in Cambridge? — had they inspired me with any verses yet? — I was bound to write something about them — and so on; making the most commonplace remarks look brilliant, from the ease and liveliness with which they were spoken, and the tact with which they were made pleasant to the listener: while I wondered at myself, for enjoying from her lips the flippant, sparkling tattle, which had hitherto made young women to me objects of unspeakable dread, to be escaped by crossing the street, hiding behind doors, and rushing blindly into back-yards and coal-holes.

The ladies left the room; and I, with Lillian's face glowing bright in my imagination, as the crimson orb remains on the retina of the closed eye, after looking intently at the sun, sat listening to a pleasant discussion between the dean and the nobleman, about some country in the East, which they had both visited, and greedily devouring all the new facts which they incidentally brought forth out of the treasures of their highly-cultivated minds.

I was agreeably surprised (don't laugh, reader) to find that I was allowed to drink water; and that the other men drank not more than a glass or two of wine, after the ladies had retired. I had, somehow, got both lords and deans associated in my mind with infinite swillings of port wine, and bacchanalian orgies, and sat down, at first, in much fear and trembling, lest I should be compelled to join, under penalties of salt-and-water; but I had made up my mind, stoutly, to bear anything rather than get drunk; and so I had all the merit of a temperance-martyr, without any of its disagreeables.

"Well," said I to myself, smiling in spirit, "what would my Chartist friends say if they saw me here? Not even Crossthwaite himself could find a flaw in the appreciation of merit for its own sake, the courtesy and condescension - ah! but he would complain of it, simply for being condescension." But, after all, what else could it be? Were not these men more experienced, more learned, older than myself? They were my superiors; it was in vain for me to attempt to hide it from myself. But the wonder was, that they themselves were the ones to appear utterly unconscious of it. They treated me as an equal; they welcomed me - the young viscount and the learned dean - on the broad ground of a common humanity; as I believe hundreds more of their class would do, if we did not ourselves take a pride in estranging them from us telling them that fraternisation between our classes is impossible, and then cursing them for not fraternising with us. But of that, more hereafter.

At all events, now my bliss was perfect. No! I was wrong - a higher enjoyment than all awaited me, when, going into the drawing-room, I found Lillian singing at the piano. I had no idea that music was capable of expressing and conveying emotions so intense and ennobling. My experience was confined to street-music, and to the bawling at the chapel. And, as yet, Mr. Hullah had not risen into a power more enviable than that of kings, and given to every workman a free entrance into the magic world of harmony and melody, where he may prove his brotherhood with Mozart and Weber, Beethoven and Mendelssohn. Great unconscious demagogue! — leader of the people, and labourer in the cause of divine equality! thy reward is with the Father of the people!

The luscious softness of the Italian airs overcame me with a delicious enervation. Every note, every interval, each shade of expression spoke to me — I knew not what: and yet they spoke to my heart of hearts. A spirit out of the infinite heaven seemed calling to my spirit, which longed to answer and was dumb — could only vent itself in tears, which welled unconsciously forth, and eased my heart from the painful tension of excitement.

> Her voice is hovering o'er my soul — it lingers, O'ershadowing it with soft and thrilling wings;

The blood and life within those snowy fingers

Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings. My brain is wild, my breath comes quick,

The blood is listening in my frame;

And thronging shadows, fast and thick, Fall on my overflowing eyes.

My heart is quivering like a flame;

As morning-dew that in the sunbeam dies,

I am dissolved in these consuming ecstasies.

The dark lady, Miss Staunton, as I ought to call her, saw my emotion, and, as I thought unkindly, checked the cause of it at once.

"Pray do not give us any more of those die-away Italian airs, Lillian. Sing something manful, German or English, or anything you like, except those sentimental wailings."

Lillian stopped, took another book, and commenced, after a short prelude, one of my own songs. Surprise and pleasure overpowered me more utterly than the soft southern melodies had done. I was on the point of springing up and leaving the room, when my raptures were checked by our host, who turned round, and stopped short in an oration on the geology of Upper Egypt. "What's that about brotherhood and freedom, Lillian? We don't want anything of that kind here."

"It's only a popular London song, papa," answered she, with an arch smile.

"Or likely to become so," added Miss Staunton, in her marked dogmatic tone.

"I am very sorry for London, then." And he returned to the deserts.

## CHAPTER XV.

## The Man of Science.

AFTER breakfast the next morning, Lillian retired, saying laughingly, that she must go and see after her clothing-club and her dear old women at the almshouse, which, of course, made me look on her as more an angel than ever. And while George was left with Lord Lynedale, I was summoned to a private conference with the dean, in his study.

I found him in a room lined with cabinets of curiosities, and hung all over with strange horns, bones, and slabs of fossils. But I was not allowed much time to look about me; for he commenced at once on the subject of my studies, by asking me whether I was willing to prepare myself for the university by entering on the study of mathematics?

I felt so intense a repugnance to them, that at the risk of offending him — perhaps, for aught I knew, fatally — I dared to demur. He smiled —

"I am convinced, young man, that even if you intended to follow poetry as a profession — and a very poor one you will find it — yet you will never attain to any excellence therein, without far stricter mental discipline than any to which you have been accustomed. That is why I abominate our modern poets. They talk about the glory of the poetic vocation, as if they intended to be kings and world-makers, and all the while they indulge themselves in the most loose and desultory habits of thought. Sir, if they really believed their own grandiloquent assumptions, they would feel that the responsibility of their mental training was greater, not less, than any one's else. Like the Quakers, they fancy that they honour inspiration by supposing it to be only extraordinary and paroxysmic: the true poet, like the rational Christian, believing that inspiration is continual and orderly, that it reveals harmonious laws, not merely excites sudden emotions. You understand me?"

I did, tolerably; and subsequent conversations with him fixed the thoughts sufficiently in my mind, to make me pretty sure that I am giving a faithful verbal transcript of them.

"You must study some science. Have you read any logic?"

I mentioned Watts' "Logic," and Locke "On the Use of the Understanding" — two books well known to reading artisans.

"Ah," he said; "such books are very well, but they are merely popular. 'Aristotle,' 'Ritter on Induction,' and Kant's 'Prolegomena' and 'Logic' — when you had read them some seven or eight times over, you might consider yourself as knowing somewhat about the matter."

"I have read a little about induction in Whately."

"Ah, very good book, but popular. Did you find that your method of thought received any benefit from it?"

"The truth is — I do not know whether I can quite express myself clearly — but logic, like mathematics, seems to tell me too little about things. It does not enlarge my knowledge of man or nature; and those are what I thirst for. And you must remember — I hope I am not wrong in saying it — that the case of a man of your class, who has the power of travelling, of reading what he will, and seeing what he will, is very different from that of an artisan, whose chances of observation are so sadly limited. You must forgive us, if we are unwilling to spend our time over books which tell us nothing about the great universe outside the shop-windows."

He smiled compassionately. "Very true, my boy. There are two branches of study, then, before you, and by either of them a competent subsistence is possible, with good interest. Philology is one. But before you could arrive at those depths in it which connect with ethnology, history, and geography, you would require a lifetime of study. There remains yet another. I see you stealing glances at those natural curiosities. In the study of them, you would find, as I believe, more and more daily, a mental discipline superior even to that which language or mathematics give. If I had been blest with a son — but that is neither here nor there — it was my intention to have educated him almost entirely as a naturalist. I think I should like to try the experiment on a young man like yourself."

Sandy Mackaye's definition of legislation for the masses, "Fiat experimentum in corpore vili," rose up in my thoughts, and, half unconsciously, passed my lips. The good old man only smiled.

"That is not my reason, Mr. Locke. I should choose, by preference, a man of your class for experiments, not because the nature is coarser, or less precious in the scale of creation, but because I have a notion, for which, like many others, I have been very much laughed at, that you are less sophisticated, more simple and fresh from nature's laboratory, than the young persons of the upper classes, who begin from the nursery to be more or less trimmed up, and painted over by the artificial state of society — a very excellent state, mind, Mr. Locke. Civilisation is, next to Christianity of course, the highest blessing; but not so good a state for trying anthropological experiments on."

I assured him of my great desire to be the subject of such an experiment; and was encouraged by his smile to tell him something about my intense love for natural objects, the mysterious pleasure which I had taken, from my boyhood, in trying to classify them, and my visits to the British Museum, for the purpose of getting at some general knowledge of the natural groups.

"Excellent," he said, "young man; the very best sign I have yet seen in you. And what have you read on these subjects?"

I mentioned several books: Bingley, Bewick, "Humboldt's Travels," "The voyage of the Beagle," various scattered articles in the Penny and Saturday Magazines, &c., &c.

"Ah!" he said, "popular — you will find, if you will allow me to give you my experience —"

I assured him that I was only too much honoured — and I truly felt so. I knew myself to be in the presence of my rightful superior — my master on that very point of education which I idolised. Every sentence which he spoke gave me fresh light on some matter or other; and I felt a worship for him, totally irrespective of any vulgar and slavish respect for his rank or wealth. The working man has no want for real reverence. My Carlyle's being a "gentleman," has not injured his influence with the people. On the contrary, it is the artisan's intense longing to find his real *lords* and guides, which makes him despise and execrate his sham ones. Whereof let society take note.

"Then," continued he, "your plan is to take up some one section of the subject, and thoroughly exhaust that. Universal laws manifest themselves only by particular instances. They say, man is the microcosm, Mr. Locke; but the man of science finds every worm and beetle a microcosm in its way. It exemplifies, directly or indirectly, every physical law in the universe, though it may not be two lines long. It is not only a part, but a mirror, of the great whole. It has a definite relation to the whole world, and the whole world has a relation to it. Really, by-the-by, I cannot give you a better instance of what I mean, than in my little diatribe on the Geryon Trifurcifer, a small reptile which I found, some years ago, inhabiting the mud of the salt lakes of Balkhan, which fills up a long-desired link between the Chelonia and the Perenni branchiate Batrachians, and, as I think, though Professor Brown differs from me, connects both with the Herbivorous Cetacea. — Professor Brown is an exceedingly talented man, but a little too cautious in accepting any one's theories but his own. There it is," he said, as he drew out of a drawer a little pamphlet of some thirty pages - "an old man's darling. I consider that book the outcome of thirteen vears' labour.'

"It must be very deep," I replied, "to have been worth such long-continued study."

"Oh! science is her own reward. There is hardly a great physical law which I have not brought to bear on the subject of that one small animal; and above all — what is in itself worth a life's labour — I have, I believe, discovered two entirely new laws of my own, though one of them, by-the-by, has been broached by Professor Brown since, in his lectures. He might have mentioned my name in connexion with the subject, for I certainly imparted my ideas to him, two years at least before the delivery of those lectures of his. Professor Brown is a very great man, certainly, and a very good man, but not quite so original as is generally supposed. Still, a scientific man must expect his little disappointments and injustices. If you were behind the scenes in the scientific world, I can assure you, you would find as much party-spirit, and unfairness, and jealousy, and emulation there, as anywhere else. Human nature, human nature, everywhere!"

I said nothing, but thought the more; and took the book, promising to study it carefully.

"There is Cuvier's 'Animal Kingdom,' and a dictionary of scientific terms to help you; and mind, it must be got up thoroughly, for I purpose to set you an examination or two in it, a few days hence. Then I shall find out whether you know what is worth all the information the world."

"What is that, sir?"

"The art of getting information — artem discendi, Mr. Locke, wherewith the world is badly provided just now, as it is overstocked with the artem legendi — the knack of running the eye over books, and fancying that it understands them, because it can talk about them. You cannot play that trick with my Geryon Trifurcifer, I assure you; he is as dry and tough as his name. But, believe me, he is worth mastering, not because he is mine, but simply because he is tough."

I promised all diligence.

"Very good. And be sure, if you intend to be a poet for these days (and I really think you have some faculty for it), you must become a scientific man. Science has made vast strides, and introduced entirely new modes of looking at nature, and poets must live up to the age. I never read a word of Goethe's verse, but I am convinced that he must be the great poet of the day; just because he is the only one who has taken the trouble to go into the details of practical science. And, in the mean time, I will give you a lesson myself. I see you are longing to know the contents of these cabinets. You shall assist me, by writing out the names of this lot of shells, just come from Australia, which I am now going to arrange."

I set to work at once, under his directions; and passed that morning, and the two or three following, delightfully, But I question whether the good dean would have been well satisfied, had he known how all his scientific teaching confirmed my democratic opinions. The mere fact, that I could understand these things when they were set before me, as well as any one else, was to me a simple demonstration of the equality in worth, and therefore in privilege, of all classes. It may be answered, that I had no right to argue from myself to the mob; and that other working geniuses have no right to demand universal enfranchisement for their whole class, just because they, the exceptions, are fit for it. But surely it is hard to call such an error, if it be one, "the insolent assumption of democratic conceit," &c., &c. Does it not look more like the humility of men who are unwilling to assert for themselves peculiar excellence, peculiar privileges; who, like the apostles of old, want no glory, save that which they cannot share with the outcast and the slave? Let society, among other matters, take note of that.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## Cultivated Women.

I was thus brought in contact, for the first time in my life, with two exquisite specimens of cultivated womanhood; and they naturally, as the reader may well suppose, almost entirely engrossed my thoughts and interest.

Lillian, for so I must call her, became daily more and more agreeable; and tried, as I fancied, to draw me out, and show me off to the best advantage; whether from the desire of pleasing herself, or pleasing me, I know not, and do not wish to know — but the consequences to my boyish vanity were such as are more easy to imagine, than pleasant to describe. Miss Staunton, on the other hand, became, I thought, more and more unpleasant; not that she ever, for a moment, outstepped the bounds of the most perfect courtesy; but her manner, which was soft to no one except to Lord Lynedale, was, when she spoke to me, especially dictatorial and abrupt. She seemed to make a point of carping at chance words of mine, and of setting me down suddenly, by breaking in with some severe, pithy observation, on conversations to which she had been listening unobserved. She seemed, too, to view with dislike anything like cordiality between me and Lillian - a dislike, which I was actually at moments vain enough (such a creature is man!) to attribute to - jealousy !!! till I began to suspect and hate her, as a proud, harsh, and exclusive aristocrat. And my suspicion and hatred received their confirmation, when, one morning, after an evening even more charming than usual, Lillian came down, reserved, peevish, all but sulky, and showed that that bright heaven of sunny features had room in it for a cloud, and that

an ugly one. But I, poor fool, only pitied her; made up my mind that some one had ill-used her; and looked on her as a martyr — perhaps to that harsh cousin of hers.

That day was taken up with writing out answers to the dean's searching questions on his pamphlet, in which, I believe, I acquitted myself tolerably; and he seemed far more satisfied with my commentary, than I was with his text. He seemed to ignore utterly anything like religion, or even the very notion of God, in his chains of argument. Nature was spoken of as the willer and producer of all the marvels which he describes; and every word in the book, to my astonishment, might have been written just as easily by an Atheist as by a dignitary of the Church of England.

I could not help, that evening, hinting this defect, as delicately as I could, to my good host, and was somewhat surprised to find that he did not consider it a defect at all.

"I am in nowise anxious to weaken the antithesis between natural and revealed religion. Science may help the former, but it has absolutely nothing to do with the latter. She stands on her own ground, has her own laws, and is her own reward. Christianity is a matter of faith and of the teaching of the Church. It must not go out of its way for science, and science must not go out of her way for it; and where they seem to differ, it is our duty to believe that they are reconcilable by fuller knowledge, but not to clip truth in order to make it match with doctrine."

"Mr. Carlyle," said Miss Staunton, in her abrupt way, "can see that the God of Nature is the God of man."

"Nobody denies that, my dear."

"Except in every word and action; else why do they not write about Nature as if it was the expression of a living, loving spirit, not merely a dead machine?"

"It may be very easy, my dear, for a Deist like Mr. Carlyle to see his God in Nature; but if he would accept the truths of Christianity, he would find that there were deeper mysteries in them than trees and animals can explain."

"Pardon me, sir," I said, "but I think that a very large portion of thoughtful working men agree with you, though, in their case, that opinion has only increased their difficulties about Christianity. They complain that they cannot identify the God of the Bible with the God of the world around them; and one of their great complaints against Christianity is, that it demands assent to mysteries which are independent of, and even contradictory to, the laws of Nature."

The old man was silent.

"Mr. Carlyle is no Deist," said Miss Staunton; "and I am sure, that unless the truths of Christianity contrive soon to get themselves justified by the laws of science, the higher orders will believe in them as little as Mr. Locke informs us that the working classes do."

"You prophesy confidently, my darling."

"Oh, Eleanor is in one of her prophetic moods to-night," said Lillian, slyly. "She has been foretelling me I know not what misery and misfortune, just because I choose to amuse myself in my own way."

And she gave another sly pouting look at Eleanor, and then called me to look over some engravings, chatting over them so charmingly! — and stealing, every now and then, a pretty, saucy look at her cousin, which seemed to say, "I shall do what I like, in spite of your predictions."

This confirmed my suspicions that Eleanor had been trying to separate us; and the suspicion received a further corroboration, indirect, and perhaps very unfair, from the lecture which I got from my cousin after I went up-stairs.

He had been flattering me very much lately about "the impression" I was making on the family, and tormenting me by compliments on the clever way in which I "played my cards;" and when I denied indignantly any such intention, patting me on the back, and laughing me down in a knowing way, as much as to say that he was not to be taken in by my professions of simplicity. He seemed to judge every one by himself, and to have no notion of any middle characters between the mere green-horn and the deliberate schemer. But to-night, after commencing with the usual compliments, he went on :

"Now, first let me give you one hint, and be thankful for it. Mind your game with that Eleanor — Miss Staunton. She is a regular tyrant, I happen to know: a strong-minded woman, with a vengeance. She manages every one here; and unless you are in her good books, don't expect to keep your footing in this house, my boy. So just mind and pay her a little more attention, and Miss Lillian a little less. After all, it is worth the trouble. She is uncommonly well read; and says confounded clever things, too, when she wakes up out of the sulks; and you may pick up a wrinkle or two from her, worth pocketing. You mind what she says to you. You know she is going to be married to Lord Lynedale."

I nodded assent.

"Well, then, if you want to hook him, you must secure her first."

"I want to hook no one, George; I have told you that a thousand times."

"Oh, no! certainly not—by no means! Why should you?" said the artful dodger. And he swung, laughing, out of the room, leaving in my mind a strange suspicion, of which I was ashamed, though I could not shake it off, that he had remarked Eleanor's wish to cool my admiration for Lillian, and was willing, for some purpose of his own, to further that wish. The truth is, I had very little respect for him, or trust in him; and I was learning to look, habitually, for some selfish motive in all he said or did. Perhaps, if I had acted more boldly upon what I did see, I should not have been here now.

## CHAPTER XVII.

#### Sermons in Stones.

THE next afternoon was the last but one of my stay at D \*\*\*. We were to dine late, after sunset, and, before dinner, we went into the cathedral. The choir had just finished practising. Certain exceedingly ill-looking men, whose faces bespoke principally sensuality and self-conceit, and whose function was that of praising God, on the sole qualification of good bass and tenor voices, were coming chattering through the choir gates; and behind them, a group of small boys were suddenly transforming themselves from angels into sinners, by tearing off their white surplices, and pinching and poking each other noisily as they passed us, with as little reverence as Voltaire himself could have desired.

I had often been in the cathedral before — indeed, we attended the service daily, and I had been appalled, rather than astonished, by what I saw and heard: the unintelligible service — the irreverent gabble of the choristers and readers — the scanty congregation — the meagre portion of the vast building which seemed to be turned to any use: but never more than that evening, did I feel the desolateness, the doleful inutility, of that vast desert nave, with its aisles and transepts - built for some purpose or other now extinct. The whole place seemed to crush and sadden me; and I could not re-echo Lillian's remark:

"How those pillars, rising story above story, and those lines of pointed arches, all lead the eye heavenward! It is a beautiful notion, that about pointed architecture being symbolic of Christianity."

"I ought to be very much ashamed of my stupidity," I answered; "but I cannot feel that, though I believe I ought to do so. That vast groined roof, with its enormous weight of hanging stone, seems to crush one - to bar out the free sky above. Those pointed windows, too - how gloriously the western sun is streaming through them! but their rich hues only dim and deface his light. I can feel what you say, when I look at the cathedral on the outside; there, indeed, every line sweeps the eye upward - carries it from one pinnacle to another, each with less and less standing-ground, till at the summit the building gradually vanishes in a point, and leaves the spirit to wing its way, unsupported and alone, into the ether. Perhaps," I added, half bitterly, "these cathedrals may be true symbols of the superstition which created them on the outside, offering to enfranchise the soul and raise it up to heaven; but when the dupes had entered, giving them only a dark prison, and a crushing bondage, which neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear."

"You may sneer at them, if you will, Mr. Locke," said Eleanor, in her severe, abrupt way. "The working classes would have been badly off without them. They were, in their day, the only democratic institution in the world; and the only socialist one too. The only chance a poor man had of rising by his worth, was by coming to the monastery. And bitterly the working classes felt the want of them, when they fell. Your own Cobbett can tell you that."

"Ah!" said Lillian, "how different it must have been four hundred years ago! — how solemn and picturesque those old monks must have looked, gliding about the aisles! — and how magnificent the choir must have been, before all the glass and carving, and that beautiful shrine of St. \*\*\*\*, blazing with gold and jewels, were all plundered and defaced by those horrid Puritans!"

"Say, reformer-squires," answered Eleanor; "for it was they who did the thing; only it was found convenient, at the Alton Locke, 11 Restoration, to lay on the people of the 17th century the iniquities which the country-gentlemen committed in the 16th."

"Surely," I added, emboldened by her words, "if the monasteries were what their admirers say, some method of restoring the good of the old system, without its evil, ought to be found; and would be found, if it were not — " I paused, recollecting whose guest I was.

"If it were not, I suppose," said Eleanor, "for those lazy, over-fed, bigoted hypocrites, the clergy. That, I presume, is the description of them to which you have been most accustomed. Now, let me ask you one question. Do you mean to condemn, just now, the Church as it was, or the Church as it is, or the Church as it ought to be? Radicals have a habit of confusing those three questions, as they have of confusing other things when it suits them."

"Really," I said — for my blood was rising — "I do think that, with the confessed enormous wealth of the clergy, the cathedral establishments especially, they might do more for the people."

"Listen to me a little, Mr. Locke. The laity now-a-days take a pride in speaking evil of the clergy, never seeing that if they are bad, the laity have made them so. Why, what do you impute to them? Their worldliness, their being like the world, like the laity round them - like you, in short? Improve yourselves, and by so doing, if there is this sad tendency in the clergy to imitate you, you will mend them; if you do not find that after all, it is they who will have to mend you. 'As with the people so with the priest,' is the everlasting law. When, fifty years ago, all classes were drunkards, from the statesman to the peasant, the clergy were drunken also, but not half so bad as the laity. Now the laity are eaten up with covetousness and ambition; and the clergy are covetous and ambitious, but not half so bad as the laity. The laity, and you working men especially, are the dupes of frothy, insincere, official rant, as Mr. Carlyle would call it, in Parliament, on the hustings, at every debating society and Chartist meeting; and therefore the clergyman's sermons are apt to be just what people like elsewhere, and what, therefore, they suppose people will like there."

"If, then," I answered, "in spite of your opinions, you confess the clergy to be so bad, why are you so angry with

men of our opinions, if we do plot sometimes a little against the Church?"

"I do not think you know what my opinions are, Mr. Locke. Did you not hear me just now praising the monasteries, because they were socialist and democratic? But why is the badness of the clergy any reason for pulling down the Church? That is another of the confused irrationalities into which you all allow yourselves to fall. What do you mean by crying shame on a man for being a bad clergyman, if a good clergyman is not a good thing? If the very idea of a clergyman was abominable, as your Church-destroyers ought to say, you ought to praise a man for being a bad one, and not acting out this same abominable idea of priesthood. Your very outcry against the sins of the clergy, shows that, even in your minds, a dim notion lies somewhere that a clergyman's vocation is, in itself, a divine, a holy, a beneficent one."

"I never looked at it in that light, certainly," said I, somewhat staggered.

"Very likely not. One word more, for I may not have another opportunity of speaking to you as I would on these matters. You working men complain of the clergy for being bigoted and obscurantist, and hating the cause of the people. Does not ninetenths of the blame of that lie at your door? I took up, the other day, at hazard, one of your favourite liberty-preaching newspapers; and I saw books advertised in it, whose names no modest woman should ever behold; doctrines and practices advocated in it from which all the honesty, the decency, the common human feeling which is left in the English mind, ought to revolt, and does revolt. You cannot deny it. Your class has told the world that the cause of liberty, equality, and fraternity, the cause which the working masses claims as theirs, identifies itself with blasphemy and indecency, with the tyrannous persecutions of tradesunions, with robbery, assassination, vitriol-bottles, and midnight incendiarism. And then you curse the clergy for taking you at your word! Whatsoever they do, you attack them. If they believe you, and stand up for common morality, and for the truths which they know are all-important to poor as well as rich, you call them bigots and persecutors; while if they neglect, in any way, the very Christianity for believing which you insult them, you turn round and call them hypocrites. Mark my words, Mr. Locke, till you gain the respect

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and confidence of the clergy, you will never rise. The day will come when you will find that the clergy are the only class who can help you. Ah, you may shake your head. I warn you of it. They were the only bulwark of the poor against the mediæval tyranny of Rank; you will find them the only bulwark against the modern tyranny of Mammon."

I was on the point of entreating her to explain herself further but at that critical moment Lillian interposed.

"Now, stay your prophetic glances into the future; here come Lynedale and papa." And in a moment, Eleanor's whole manner and countenance altered — the petulant, wild unrest, the harsh, dictatorial tone vanished; and she turned to meet her lover, with a look of tender, satisfied devotion, which transfigured her whole face. It was most strange, the power he had over her. His presence, even at a distance, seemed to fill her whole being with rich quiet life. She watched him with folded hands, like a mystic worshipper, waiting for the afflatus of the spirit; and, suspicious and angry as I felt towards her, I could not help being drawn to her by this revelation of strong healthy feeling, of which her usual manner gave so little sign.

This conversation thoroughly puzzled me; it showed me that there might me two sides to the question of the people's cause, as well as to that of others. It shook a little my faith in the infallibility of my own class, to hear such severe animadversions on them, from a person who professed herself as much a disciple of Carlyle as any working man; and who evidently had no lack either of intellect to comprehend or boldness to speak out his doctrines; who could praise the old monasteries for being democratic and socialist, and spoke far more severely of the clergy than I could have done — because she did not deal merely in trite words of abuse, but showed a real analytic insight into the causes of their short-coming.

That same evening the conversation happened to turn on dress, of which Miss Staunton spoke scornfully and disparagingly, as mere useless vanity and frippery — an empty substitute for real beauty of person as well as the higher beauty of mind. And I, emboldened by the courtesy with which I was always called on to take my share in everything that was said or done, ventured to object, humbly enough, to her notions. "But is not beauty," I said, "in itself a good and blessed thing, softening, refining, rejoicing the eyes of all who behold?" (And my eyes, as I spoke, involuntarily rested on Lillian's face — who saw it, and blushed.) "Surely nothing which helps beauty is to be despised. And, without the charm of dress, beauty, even that of expression, does not really do itself justice. How many lovely and lovable faces there are, for instance, among the working classes, which, if they had but the advantages which ladies possess, might create delight, respect, chivalrous worship in the beholder — but are now never appreciated, because they have not the same fair means of displaying themselves which even the savage girl of the South Sea Islands possesses!"

Lillian said it was so very true — she had really never thought of it before — and somehow I gained courage to go on.

"Besides, dress is a sort of sacrament, if I may use the word — a sure sign of the wearer's character; according as any one is orderly, or modest, or tasteful, or joyous, or brilliant" — and I glanced again at Lillian — "those excellences, or the want of them, are sure to show themselves, in the colours they choose, and the cut of their garments. In the workroom, I and a friend of mine used often to amuse ourselves over the cloths we were making, by speculating from them on the sort of people the wearers were to be; and I fancy we were not often wrong."

My cousin looked daggers at me, and for a moment I fancied I had committed a dreadful mistake in mentioning my tailor-life. So I had in his eyes, but not in those of the really well-bred persons round me.

"Oh, how very amusing it must have been! I think I shall turn milliner, Eleanor, for the fun of divining every one's little failings from their caps and gowns!"

"Go on, Mr. Locke," said the dean, who had seemed buried in the "Transactions of the Royal Society." "The fact is novel, and I am more obliged to any one who gives me that, than if he gave me a bank-note. The money gets spent and done with; but I cannot spend the fact: it remains for life as permanent capital, returning interest and compound interest ad infinitum. By-the-by, tell me about those same workshops. I have heard more about them than I like to believe true." And I did tell him all about them; and spoke, my blood rising as I went on, long and earnestly, perhaps eloquently. Now and then I got abashed, and tried to stop; and then the dean informed me that I was speaking well and sensibly, while Lillian entreated me to go on. She had never conceived such things possible — it was as interesting as a novel, &c., &c.; and Miss Staunton sat with compressed lips and frowning brow, apparently thinking of nothing but her book, till I felt quite angry at her apathy — for such it seemed to me to be.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

#### My Fall.

AND now the last day of our stay at D\*\*\* had arrived, and I had as yet heard nothing of the prospects of my book; though, indeed, the company in which I had found myself had driven literary ambition, for the time being, out of my head, and bewitched me to float down the stream of daily circumstance, satisfied to snatch the enjoyment of each present moment. That morning, however, after I had fulfilled my daily task of arranging and naming objects of natural history, the dean settled himself back in his arm-chair, and bidding me sit down, evidently meditated a business-conversation.

He had heard from his publisher, and read his letter to me. "The poems were on the whole much liked. The most satisfactory method of publishing for all parties, would be by procuring so many subscribers, each agreeing to take so many copies. In consideration of the dean's known literary judgment and great influence, the publisher would, as a private favour, not object to take the risk of any further expenses."

So far everything sounded charming. The method was not a very independent one, but it was the only one; and I should actually have the delight of having published a volume. But, alas! "he thought that the sale of the book might be greatly facilitated, if certain passages of a strong political tendency were omitted. He did not wish personally to object to them as statements of facts, or to the pictorial vigour with which they were expressed; but he thought that they were somewhat too strong for the present state of the public taste; and though he should be the last to allow any private considerations to influence his weak patronage of rising talent, yet, considering his present connexion, he should hardly wish to take on himself the responsibility of publishing such passages, unless with great modifications."

"You see," said the good old man, "the opinion of respectable practical men, who know the world, exactly coincides with mine. I did not like to tell you that I could not help in the publication of your MSS. in their present state; but I am sure, from the modesty and gentleness which I have remarked in you, your readiness to listen to reason, and your pleasing freedom from all violence or coarseness in expressing your opinions, that you will not object to so exceedingly reasonable a request, which, after all, is only for your good. Ah! young man," he went on, in a more feeling tone than I had yet heard from him, "if you were once embroiled in that political world, of which you know so little, you would soon be crying like David, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest!' Do you fancy that you can alter a fallen world? What it is, it always has been, and will be to the end. Every age has its political and social nostrums, my dear young man, and fancies them infallible; and the next generation arises to curse them as failures in practice, and superstitious in theory, and try some new nostrum of its own."

I sighed.

"Ah! you may sigh. But we have each of us to be disen-chanted of our dream. There was a time once when I talked republicanism as loudly as raw youth ever did - when I had an excuse for it, too; for when I was a boy, I saw the French Revolution; and it was no wonder if young, enthusiastic brains were excited by all sorts of wild hopes - 'perfectibility of the species,' 'rights of man,' 'universal liberty, equality, and brotherhood.' - My dear sir, there is nothing new under the sun; all that is stale and trite to a septuagenarian, who has seen where it all ends. I speak to you freely, because I am deeply interested in you. I feel that this is the important question of your life, and that you have talents, the possession of which is a heavy responsibility. Eschew politics, once and for all, as I have done. I might have been, I may tell you, a bishop at this moment, if I had condescended to meddle again in those party questions of which my youthful experience sickened me. But I knew that I should only weaken my own

influence, as that most noble and excellent man, Dr. Arnold, did, by interfering in politics. The poet, like the clergyman and the philosopher, has nothing to do with politics. Let them choose the better part, and it shall not be taken from them. The world may rave," he continued, waxing eloquent as he approached his favourite subject - "the world may rave, but in the study there is quiet. The world may change, Mr. Locke, and will; but 'the earth abideth for ever.' Solomon had seen somewhat of politics, and social improvement, and so on; and behold, then, as now, 'all was vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? The thing which hath been, it is that which shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun. One generation passeth away, and another cometh; but the earth abideth for ever.' No wonder that the wisest of men took refuge from such experience, as I have tried to do, in talking of all herbs, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that groweth on the wall!

"Ah! Mr. Locke," he went on, in a soft, melancholy, halfabstracted tone -- "ah! Mr. Locke, I have felt deeply, and you will feel some day, the truth of Jarno's saying in 'Wilhelm Meister,' when he was wandering alone in the Alps, with his geological hammer, 'These rocks, at least, tell me no lies, as men do.' Ay! there is no lie in Nature, no discord in the revelations of science, in the laws of the universe. Infinite, pure, unfallen, earth-supporting Titans, fresh as on the morning of creation, those great laws endure; your only true democrats, too - for nothing is too great or too small for them to take note of. No tiniest gnat, or speck of dust, but they feed it, guide it, and preserve it. - Hail and snow, wind and vapour, fulfilling their Maker's word; and like him, too, hiding themselves from the wise and prudent, and revealing themselves unto babes. Yes, Mr. Locke; it is the childlike, simple, patient, reverent heart, which science at once demands and cultivates. To prejudice or haste, to self-conceit or ambition, she proudly shuts her treasuries - to open them to men of humble heart, whom this world thinks simple dreamers - her Newtons, and Owens, and Faradays. Why should you not become such a man as they? You have the talents - you have the love for nature, you seem to have the gentle and

patient spirit, which, indeed, will grow up more and more in you, if you become a real student of science. Or, if you must be a poet, why not sing of Nature, and leave those to sing political squabbles, who have no eye for the beauty of her repose? How few great poets have been politicians!"

I gently suggested Milton.

"Ay! he became a great poet only when he had deserted politics, because they had deserted him. In blindness and poverty, in the utter failure of all his national theories, he wrote the works which have made him immortal. Was Shakspeare a politician? or any one of the great poets who have arisen during the last thirty years? Have they not all seemed to consider it a sacred duty to keep themselves, as far as they could, out of party-strife?"

I quoted Southey, Shelley, and Burns, as instances to the contrary; but his induction was completed already, to his own satisfaction.

"Poor dear Southey was a great verse-maker, rather than a great poet; and I always consider that his party-prejudices and party-writing narrowed and harshened a mind which ought to have been flowing forth freely and lovingly towards all forms of life. And as for Shelley and Burns, their politics dictated to them at once the worst portions of their poetry and of their practice. Shelley, what little I have read of him, only seems himself when he forgets radicalism for nature; and you would not set Burns' life or death, either, as a model for imitation in any class. Now, do you know, I must ask you to leave me a little. I am somewhat fatigued with this long discussion" (in which, certainly, I had borne no great share); "and I am sure, that after all I have said, you will see the propriety of acceding to the publisher's advice. Go and think over it, and let me have your answer by post-time."

I did go and think over it — too long for my good. If I had acted on the first impulse, I should have refused, and been safe. These passages were the very pith and marrow of the poems. They were the very words which I had felt it my duty, my glory, to utter. I, who had been a working man, who had experienced all their sorrows and temptations — I, seemed called by every circumstance of my life to preach their cause, to expose their wrongs — I to quash my convictions, to stultify my book for the sake of popularity, money, patronage! And yet — all that involved seeing more of Lillian. They

were only too powerful inducements in themselves, alas! but I believe I could have resisted them tolerably, if they had not been backed by love. And so a struggle arose, which the rich reader may think a very fantastic one, though the poor man will understand it, and surely pardon it also - seeing that he himself is Man. Could I not, just once in a way, serve God and Mammon at once? - or rather, not Mammon, but Venus: a worship which looked to me, and really was in my case, purer than all the Mariolatry in Popedom. After all, the fall might not be so great as it seemed - perhaps I was not infallible on these same points. (It is wonderful how humble and self-denying one becomes when one is afraid of doing one's duty.) Perhaps the dean might be right. He had been a republican himself once, certainly. The facts, indeed, which I had stated, there could be no doubt of; but I might have viewed them through a prejudiced and angry medium -I might have been not quite logical in my deductions from them - I might - In short, between "perhapses" and "mights" I fell - a very deep, real, damnable fall; and consented to emasculate my poems, and become a flunkey and a dastard.

I mentioned my consent that evening to the party; the dean purred content thereat. Eleanor, to my astonishment, just said, sternly and abruptly,

"Weak!" and then turned away, while Lillian began:

"Oh! what a pity! And really they were some of the prettiest verses of all! But of course my father must know best; you are quite right to be guided by him, and do whatever is proper and prudent. After all, papa, I have got the naughtiest of them all, you know, safe. Eleanor set it to music, and wrote it out in her book; and I thought it so charming that I copied it."

What Lillian said about herself I drank in as greedily as usual; what she said about Eleanor fell on a heedless ear, and vanished, not to reappear in my recollection till — But I must not anticipate.

So it was all settled pleasantly; and I sat up that evening writing a bit of verse for Lillian, about the Old Cathedral, and "Heaven-aspiring towers," and "Aisles of cloistered shade," and all that sort of thing; which I did not believe, or care for; but I thought it would please her, and so it did; and I got golden smiles and compliments for my first, though not my last, insincere poem. I was going fast down hill, in my hurry to rise. However, as I said, it was all pleasant enough. I was to return to town, and there await the dean's orders; and, most luckily, I had received that morning from Sandy Mackaye a characteristic letter:

"Gowk, Telemachus, hearken! Item 1. Ye'r fou wi' the Circean cup, aneath the shade o' shovel hats and steeplehouses.

"Item 2. I, cuif-Mentor that I am, wearing out a gude pair o' gude Scots brogues that my sister's husband's third cousin sent me a towmond gane fra Aberdeen, rinning ower the town to a' journals, respectable and ither, anent the sellin' o' your 'Autobiography of an Engine-Boiler in the Vauxhall-road,' the whilk I ha' disposit o' at the last, to O'Flynn's Weekly Warwhoop; and gin ye ha' ony mair sic trash in your head, ye may get your meal whiles out o' the same kist; unless, as I sair misdoubt, ye're praying already, like Eli's bairns, 'to be put into ane o' the priest's offices, that ye may eat a piece o' bread.'

"Ye'll be coming the-morrow? I'm lane without ye; though I look for ye surely to come ben wi'a gowd shoulderknot, and a red nose."

This letter, though it hit me hard, and made me, I confess, a little angry at the moment with my truest friend, still offered me a means of subsistence, and enabled me to decline safely the pecuniary aid which I dreaded the dean's offering me. And yet I felt dispirited and ill at ease. My conscience would not let me enjoy the success I felt I had attained. But next morning I saw Lillian; and I forgot books, people's cause, conscience, and everything.

I went home by coach — a luxury on which my cousin insisted — as he did on lending me the fare; so that in all I owed him somewhat more than eleven pounds. But I was too happy to care for a fresh debt, and home I went, considering my fortune made.

My heart fell, as I stepped into the dingy little old shop. Was it the meanness of the place after the comfort and elegance of my late abode? Was it disappointment at not finding Mackaye at home? Or was it that black-edged letter which lay waiting for me on the table? I was afraid to open it; I knew not why. I turned it over and over several times, trying to guess whose the handwriting on the cover might be; the postmark was two days old; and at last I broke the seal.

"SIR, - This is to inform you that your mother, Mrs. Locke, died this morning, a sensible sinner, not without assurance of her election: and that her funeral is fixed for Wednesday, the 29th instant.

" The humble servant of the Lord's people, "J. WIGGINTON."

# CHAPTER XIX.

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#### Short and Sad.

I SHALL pass over the agonies of the next few days. There is self-exenteration enough and to spare in my story, without dilating on them. They are too sacred to publish, and too painful, alas! even to recal. I write my story, too, as a working man. Of those emotions which are common to humanity, I shall say but little - except when it is necessary to prove that the working man has feelings like the rest of his kind. But those feelings may, in this case, be supplied by the reader's own imagination. Let him represent them to himself as bitter, as remorseful as he will, he will not equal the reality. True, she had cast me off; but had I not rejoiced in that rejection which should have been my shame? True, I had fed on the hope of some day winning reconciliation, by winning fame; but before the fame had arrived, the reconciliation had become impossible. I had shrunk from going back to her, as I ought to have done, in filial humility, and, therefore, I was not allowed to go back to her in the pride of success. Heaven knows, I had not forgotten her. Night and day I had thought of her with prayers and blessings; but I had made a merit of my own love to her - my forgiveness of her, as I dared to call it. I had pampered my conceit with a notion that I was a martyr in the cause of genius and enlightenment. How hollow, windy, heartless, all that looked now. There! I will say no more. Heaven preserve any who read these pages from such days and nights as I dragged on till that funeral, and for weeks after it was over, when I had sat once more in the little old chapel, with all the memories of my childhood crowding up, and tantalising me

with the vision of their simple peace — never, never to return! I heard my mother's dying pangs, her prayers, her doubts, her agonies, for my reprobate soul, dissected for the public good by my old enemy, Mr. Wigginton, who dragged in, among his fulsome eulogies of my mother's "signs of grace," rejoicings that there were "babes span-long in hell." I saw my sister Susan, now a tall handsome woman, but become all rigid, sour, with coarse grim lips, and that crushed, self-conscious, reserved, almost dishonest look about the eyes, common to fanatics of every creed. I heard her cold farewell, as she put into my hands certain notes and diaries of my mother's, which she had bequeathed to me on her death-bed. I heard myself proclaimed inheritor of some small matters of furniture, which had belonged to her; told Susan, carelessly, to keep them for herself; and went forth, fancying that the curse of Cain was on my brow.

I took home the diary; but several days elapsed before I had courage to open it. Let the words I read there be as secret as the misery which dictated them. I had broken my mother's heart! — no! I had not! — The infernal susperstition which taught her to fancy that Heaven's love was narrower than her own — that God could hate his creature, not for its sins, but for the very nature which he had given it — that, that had killed her!

And I remarked too, with a gleam of hope, that in several places where sunshine seemed ready to break through the black cloud of fanatic gloom — where she seemed inclined not merely to melt towards me (for there was, in every page, an under-current of love, deeper than death, and stronger than the grave), but also to dare to trust God on my behalf whole lines carefully erased, page after page torn out, evidently long after the MSS. were written. I believe, to this day, that either my poor sister or her father-confessor was the perpetrator of that act. The *fraus pia* is not yet extinct; and it is as inconvenient now as it was in popish times, to tell the whole truth about saints, when they dare to say or do things which will not quite fit into the formulæ of their sect.

But what was to become of Susan? Though my uncle continued to her the allowance which he had made to my mother, yet I was her natural protector — and she was my only tie on earth. Was I to lose her, too? Might we not, after all, be happy together, in some little hole in Chelsea,

#### ALTON LOCKE,

like Elia and his Bridget? That question was solved for me. She declined my offers; saying, that she could not live with any one whose religious opinions differed from her own, and that she had already engaged a room at the house of a Christian friend; and was shortly to be united to that dear man of God, Mr. Wigginton, who was to be removed to the work of the Lord in Manchester.

I knew the scoundrel, but it would have been impossible for me to undeceive her. Perhaps he was only a scoundrel perhaps he would not ill-treat her. And yet — my own little Susan! my playfellow! my only tie on earth! — to lose her and not only her, but her respect, her love! — And my spirit, deep enough already, sank deeper still into sadness; and I felt myself alone on earth, and clung to Mackaye as to a father — and a father indeed that old man was to me!

# CHAPTER XX.

### Pegasus in Harness.

BUT, in sorrow or in joy, I had to earn my bread; and so, too, had Crossthwaite, poor fellow! How he contrived to feed himself and his little Katie for the next few years is more than I can tell; at all events, he worked hard enough. He scribbled, agitated; ran from London to Manchester, and Manchester to Bradford, spouting, lecturing - sowing the east wind, I am afraid, and little more. Whose fault was it? What could such a man do, with that fervid tongue, and heart, and brain of his, in such a station as his, such a time as this? Society had helped to make him an agitator. Society has had, more or less, to take the consequences of her own handiwork. For Crossthwaite did not speak without hearers. He could make the fierce, shrewd, artisan nature flash out into fire - not always celestial, nor always, either, infernal. So he agitated and lived - how, I know not. That he did do so, is evident from the fact that he and Katie are at this moment playing chess in the cabin, before my eyes, and making love, all the while, as if they had not been married a week . . . . Ah, well!

I however, had to do more than get my bread; I had to pay off those fearful eleven pounds odd, which, now that all the excitement of my stay at D \* \* \* had been so sadly

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quenched, lay like lead upon my memory. My list of subscribers filled slowly, and I had no power of increasing it by any canvassings of my own. My uncle, indeed, had promised to take two copies, and my cousin one; not wishing, of course, to be so uncommercial as to run any risk, before they had seen whether my poems would succeed. But, with those exceptions, the dean had it all his own way; and he could not be expected to forego his own literary labours for my sake; so, through all that glaring summer, and sad foggy autumn, and nipping winter, I had to get my bread as I best could -by my pen. Mackaye grumbled at my writing so much, and so fast, and sneered about the furor scribendi. But it was hardly fair upon me. "My mouth craved it of me," as Solomon says. I had really no other means of livelihood. Even if I could have got employment as a tailor, in the honourable trade, I loathed the business utterly - perhaps, alas! to confess the truth, I was beginning to despise it. I could bear to think of myself as a poor genius, in connexion with my new wealthy and high-bred patrons; for there was precedent for the thing. Penniless bards and squires of low degree, low-born artists, ennobled by their pictures - there was something grand in the notion of mind triumphant over the inequalities of rank, and associating with the great and wealthy as their spiritual equal, on the mere footing of its own innate nobility; no matter to what den it might return, to convert it into a temple of the Muses, by the glorious creations of its fancy, &c., &c. But to go back daily from the drawing-room and the publisher's to the goose and the shopboard, was too much for my weakness, even if it had been physically possible, as, thank Heaven, it was not.

So I became a hack-writer, and sorrowfully, but deliberately, "put my Pegasus into heavy harness," as my betters had done before me. It was miserable work, there is no denying it — only not worse than tailoring. To try and serve God and Mammon too; to make miserable compromises daily, between the two great incompatibilities, what was true, and what would pay; to speak my mind, in fear and trembling, by hints, and halves, and quarters; to be daily hauling poor Truth just up to the top of her well, and then, frightened at my own success, let her plump down again to the bottom; to sit there trying to teach others, while my mind was in a whirl of doubt; to feed others' intellects while my own were hungering; to grind on in the Philistine's mill, or occasionally make sport for them, like some weary-hearted clown grinning in a pantomime, in a "light article," as blind as Samson, but not, alas! as strong, for indeed my Delilah of the West-end had clipped my locks, and there seemed little chance of their growing again. That face and that drawingroom flitted before me from morning till eve, and enervated and distracted my already over-wearied brain.

I had no time, besides, to concentrate my thoughts sufficiently for poetry; no time to wait for inspiration. From the moment I had swallowed my breakfast, I had to sit scribbling off my thoughts anyhow in prose; and soon my own scanty stock was exhausted, and I was forced to beg, borrow, and steal notions and facts wherever I could get them. Oh! the misery of having to read, not what I longed to know, but what I thought would pay! to skip page after page of interesting matter, just to pick out a single thought or sentence which could be stitched into my patchwork! and then the still greater misery of seeing the article which I had sent to press a tolerably healthy and lusty bantling, appear in print next week, after suffering the inquisition-tortures of the editorial censorship, all maimed, and squinting, and one-sided, with the colour rubbed off its poor cheeks, and generally a villanous hangdog look of ferocity, so different from its birthsmile that I often did not know my own child again! - and then, when I dared to remonstrate, however feebly, to be told, by way of comfort, that the public taste must be consulted! It gave me a hopeful notion of the said taste, certainly; and often and often I groaned in spirit over the temper of my own class, which not only submitted to, but demanded, such onesided bigotry, prurience, and ferocity, from those who set up as its guides and teachers.

Mr. O'Flynn, editor of the Weekly Warwhoop, whose white slave I now found myself, was, I am afraid, a pretty faithful specimen of that class, as it existed before the bitter lesson of the 10th of April brought the Chartist working men and the Chartist press to their senses. Thereon sprang up a new race of papers, whose moral tone, whatever may be thought of their political or doctrinal opinions, was certainly not inferior to that of the Whig and Tory press. The Commonwealth, the Standard of Freedom, the Plain Speaker, were reprobates, if to be a Chartist is to be a reprobate: but none except the most

one-sided bigots could deny them the praise of a stern morality and a lofty earnestness, a hatred of evil and a craving after good, which would often put to shame many a paper among the oracles of Belgravia and Exeter Hall. But those were the days of lubricity and O'Flynn. Not that the man was an unredeemed scoundrel. He was no more profligate, either in his literary or his private morals, than many a man who earns his hundreds, sometimes his thousands, a year, by prophesying smooth things to Mammon, crying in daily leaders "Peace! peace!" when there is no peace, and daubing the rotten walls of careless luxury and self-satisfied covetousness with the untempered mortar of party statistics and garbled foreign news - till "the storm shall fall, and the breaking thereof cometh suddenly in an instant." Let those of the respectable press who are without sin, cast the first stone at the unrespectable. Many of the latter class, who have been branded as traitors and villains, were singleminded, earnest, valiant men; and, as for even O'Flynn, and those worse than him, what was really the matter with them was, that they were too honest — they spoke out too much of their whole minds. Bewildered, like Lear, amid the social storm, they had determined, like him, to become "unsophisticated," "to owe the worm no silk, the cat no perfume" - seeing, indeed, that if they had, they could not have paid for them; so they tore off, of their own will, the peacock's feathers of gentility, the sheep's clothing of moderation, even the figleaves of decent reticence, and became just what they really were - just what hundreds more would become, who now sit in the high places of the earth, if it paid them as well to be unrespectable as it does to be respectable; if the selfishness and covetousness, bigotry and ferocity, which are in them, and more or less in every man, had happened to enlist them against existing evils, instead of for them. O'Flynn would have been gladly as respectable as they; but, in the first place, he must have starved; and in the second place, he must have lied; for he believed in his own radicalism with his whole soul. There was a ribald sincerity, a frantic courage in the man. He always spoke the truth when it suited him, and very often when it did not. He did see, which is more than all do, that oppression is oppression, and humbug, humbug. He had faced the gallows before now, without flinching. He had spouted rebellion in the Birmingham Alton Locke. 12

Bullring, and elsewhere, and taken the consequences like a man; while his colleagues left their dupes to the tender mercies of broadswords and bayonets, and decamped in the disguise of sailors, old women, and dissenting preachers. He had sat three months in Lancaster Castle, the Bastille of England, one day perhaps to fall like that Parisian one, for a libel which he never wrote, because he would not betray his cowardly contributor. He had twice pleaded his own cause, without help of attorney, and showed himself as practised in every law-quibble and practical cheat as if he had been a regularly ordained priest of the blue-bag; and each time, when hunted at last into a corner, had turned valiantly to bay, with wild witty Irish eloquence, "worthy," as the press say of poor misguided Mitchell, "of a better cause." Altogether, a much-enduring Ulysses, unscrupulous, tough-hided, ready to do and suffer anything fair or foul, for what he honestly believed - if a confused, virulent positiveness be worthy of the name "belief" - to be the true and righteous cause.

Those who class all mankind compendiously and comfortably under the two exhaustive species of saints and villains, may consider such a description garbled and impossible. have seen few men, but never yet met I among those few either perfect saint or perfect villain. I draw men as I have found them - inconsistent, piecemeal, better than their own actions, worse than their own opinions, and poor O'Flynn among the rest. Not that there were no questionable spots in the sun of his fair fame. It was whispered that he had in old times done dirty work for Dublin Castle bureaucrats - nay, that he had even, in a very hard season, written court poetry for the Morning Post; but all these little peccadilloes he carefully veiled in that kindly mist which hung over his youthful years. He had been a medical student, and got plucked, his foes declared, in his examination. He had set up a savingsbank, which broke. He had come over from Ireland, to agitate for "repale" and "rint," and, like a wise man as he was, had never gone back again. He had set up three or four papers in his time, and entered into partnership with every leading democrat in turn; but his papers failed, and he quarrelled with his partners, being addicted to profane swearing and personalities. And now, at last, after Ulyssean wanderings, he had found rest in the office of the Weekly Warwhoop, if rest it could be called, that perennial hurricane of plotting, railing, sneering, and bombast, in which he lived, never writing a line, on principle, till he had worked himself up into a passion.

I will dwell no more on so distasteful a subject. Such leaders, let us hope, belong only to the past - to the youthful self-will and licentiousness of democracy; and as for reviling O'Flynn, or any other of his class, no man has less right than myself, I fear, to cast stones at such as they. I fell as low as almost any, beneath the besetting sins of my class; and shall I take merit to myself, because God has shown me, a little earlier perhaps than to them, somewhat more of the true duties and destinies of The Many? Oh, that they could see the depths of my affection to them! Oh, that they could see the shame and self-abasement with which, in rebuking their sins, I confess my own! If they are apt to be flippant and bitter, so was I. If they lust to destroy, without knowing what to build up instead, so did I. If they make an almighty idol of that Electoral Reform, which ought to be, and can be, only a preliminary means, and expect final deliverance from "their twenty-thousandth part of a talker in the national palaver," so did I. Unhealthy and noisome as was the literary atmosphere in which I now found myself, it was one to my taste. The very contrast between the peaceful, intellectual luxury which I had just witnessed, and the misery of my class and myself, quickened my delight in it. In bitterness, in sheer envy, I threw my whole soul into it, and spoke evil, and rejoiced in evil. It was so easy to find fault! It pampered my own self-conceit, my own discontent, while it saved me the trouble of inventing remedies. Yes; it was indeed easy to find fault. "The world was all before me, where to choose." In such a disorganised, anomalous, grumbling, party-embittered element as this English society, and its twin pauperism and luxury, I had but to look straight before me to see my prey.

And thus I became daily more and more cynical, fierce, reckless. My mouth was filled with cursing — and too often justly. And all the while, like tens of thousands of my class, I had no man to teach me. Sheep scattered on the hills, we were, that had no shepherd. What wonder if our bones lay bleaching among rocks and quagmires, and wolves devoured the heritage of God? Mackaye had nothing positive, after all, to advise or propound. His wisdom was one of apophthegms and maxims, utterly impracticable, too often merely negative, as was his creed, which, though he refused to be classed with any sect, was really a somewhat undefined Unitarianism — or rather Islamism. He could say, with the old Moslem, "God is great — who hath resisted his will?" And he believed what he said, and lived manful and pure, reverent and self-denying, by that belief, as the first Moslem did. But that was not enough.

# "Not enough? Merely negative?"

No - that was positive enough, and mighty; but I repeat it, it was not enough. He felt it so himself; for he grew daily more and more cynical, more and more hopeless about the prospects of his class and of all humanity. Why not? Poor suffering wretches! what is it to them to know that "God is great," unless you can prove to them that God is also merciful? Did he indeed care for men at all? - was what I longed to know; was all this misery and misrule around us his will his stern and necessary law - his lazy connivance? And were we to free ourselves from it by any frantic means that came to hand? or had he ever interfered himself? Was there a chance, a hope, of his interfering now, in our own time, to take the matter into his own hand, and come out of his place to judge the earth in righteousness? That was what we wanted to know; and poor Mackaye could give no comfort there. "God was great - the wicked would be turned into hell." Ay - the few wilful, triumphant wicked; but the millions of suffering, starving wicked, the victims of society and circumstance - what hope for them? "God was great." And for the clergy, our professed and salaried teachers, all I can say is - and there are tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of workmen who can re-echo my words - with the exception of the dean and my cousin, and one who shall be mentioned hereafter, a clergyman never spoke to me in my life.

"Why should he? Was I not a Chartist and an Infidel? The truth is, the clergy are afraid of us. To read the *Dispatch*, is to be excommunicated. Young men's classes? Honour to them, however few they are — however hampered by the restrictions of religious bigotry and political cowardice.

But the working men, whether rightly or wrongly, do not trust them; they donot trust the clergy who set them on foot; they do not expect to be taught at them the things they long to know - to be taught the whole truth in them about history, politics, science, the Bible. They suspect them to be mere tubs to the whale - mere substitutes for education, slowly and late adopted, in order to stop the mouths of the importunate. They may misjudge the clergy; but whose fault is it if they do? Clergymen of England! - look at the history of your Establishment for the last fifty years, and say, what wonder is it if the artisan mistrust you? Every spiritual reform, since the time of John Wesley, has had to establish itself in the teeth of insult, calumny, and persecution. Every ecclesiastical reform comes not from within, but from without your body. Mr. Horsman, struggling against every kind of temporising and trickery, has to do the work which bishops, by virtue of their seat in the House of Lords, ought to have been doing years ago. Everywhere we see the clergy, with a few persecuted exceptions (like Dr. Arnold), proclaiming themselves the advocates of Toryism, the dogged opponents of our political liberty, living either by the accursed system of pew-rents, or else by one which depends on the high price of corn; chosen exclusively from the classes who crush us down; prohibiting all free discussion on religious points; commanding us to swallow down, with faith as passive and implicit as that of a Papist, the very creeds from which their own bad example, and their scandalous neglect, have, in the last three generations, alienated us; never mixing with the thoughtful working men, except in the prison, the hospital, or in extreme old age; betraying, in every tract, in every sermon, an ignorance of the doubts, the feelings, the very language of the masses, which would be ludicrous, were it not accursed before God and man. And then will you show us a few tardy improvements here and there, and ask us, indignantly, why we distrust you? Oh! gentlemen, if you cannot see for yourselves the causes of our distrust, it is past our power to show you. We must leave it to God.

But to return to my own story. I had, as I said before, to live by my pen; and in that painful, confused, maimed way, I contrived to scramble on the long winter through, writing regularly for the Weekly Warwhoop, and sometimes getting an occasional scrap into some other cheap periodical, often on the very verge of starvation, and glad of a handful of meal from Sandy's widow's barrel. If I had had more than my share of feasting in the summer, I made the balance even, during those frosty months, by many a bitter fast.

And here let me ask you, gentle reader, who are just now considering me ungentle, virulent, and noisy, did you ever, for one day in your whole life, literally, involuntarily, and in spite of all your endeavours, longings, and hungerings, not get enough to eat? If you ever have, it must have taught you several things.

But all this while, it must not be supposed that I had forgotten my promise to good Farmer Porter, to look for his missing son. And, indeed, Crossthwaite and I were already engaged in a similar search for a friend of his - the young tailor, who, as I told Porter, had been lost for several months. He was the brother of Crossthwaite's wife, a passionate, kindhearted Irishman, Mike Kelly by name, reckless and scatterbrained enough to get himself into every possible scrape, and weak enough of will never to get himself out of one. For these two, Crossthwaite and I had searched from one sweater's den to another, and searched in vain. And though the present interest and exertion kept us both from brooding over our own difficulties, yet in the long run it tended only to embitter and infuriate our minds. The frightful scenes of hopeless misery which we witnessed — the ever widening pit of pauperism and slavery, gaping for fresh victims day by day, as they dropped out of the fast lessening "honourable trade," into the ever-increasing miseries of sweating, piece-work, and starvationprices; the horrible certainty that the same process which was devouring our trade was slowly, but surely, eating up every other also; the knowledge that there was no remedy, no salvation for us in man, that political economists had declared such to be the law and constitution of society, and that our rulers had believed that message, and were determined to act upon it; - if all these things did not go far towards maddening us, we must have been made of sterner stuff than any one who reads this book.

At last, about the middle of January, just as we had given up the search as hopeless, and poor Katie's eyes were getting red and swelled with daily weeping, a fresh spur was given to our exertions, by the sudden appearance of no less a person than the farmer himself. What ensued upon his coming must be kept for another chapter.

# CHAPTER XXI.

#### The Sweater's Den.

I was greedily devouring Lane's "Arabian Nights," which had made their first appearance in the shop that day.

Mackaye sat in his usual place, smoking a clean pipe, and assisting his meditations by certain mysterious chironomic signs; while opposite to him was Farmer Porter — a stone or two thinner than when I had seen him last, but one stone is not much missed out of seventeen. His forehead looked smaller, and his jaws larger than ever; and his red face was sad, and furrowed with care.

Evidently, too, he was ill at ease about other matters besides his son. He was looking out of the corners of his eyes, first at the skinless cast on the chimney-piece, then at the crucified books hanging over his head, as if he considered them not altogether afe companions, and rather expected something "uncanny" to lay hold of him from behind - a process which involved the most horrible contortions of visage, as he carefully abstained from stirring a muscle of his neck or body, but sat bolt upright, his elbows pinned to his sides, and his knees as close together as his stomach would permit, like a huge corpulent Egyptian Memnon - the most ludicrous contrast to the little old man opposite, twisted up together in his Joseph's coat, like some wizard magician in the stories which I was reading. A curious pair of "poles" the two made; the mesothet whereof, by no means a "punctum indifferens," but a true connecting spiritual idea, stood on the table - in the whisky-bottle.

Farmer Porter was evidently big with some great thought, and had all a true poet's bashfulness about publishing the fruit of his creative genius. He looked round again at the skinless man, the caricatures, the books; and, as his eye wandered from pile to pile, and shelf to shelf, his face brightened, and he seemed to gain courage.

Solemnly he put his hat on his knees, and began solemnly brushing it with his cuff. Then he saw me watching him, and stopped. Then he put his pipe solemnly on the hob, and

#### ALTON LOCKE,

cleared his throat for action, while I buried my face in the book.

"Them's a sight o' larned beuks, Muster Mackaye?"

"Humph!"

"Yow maun ha' got a deal o' scholarship among they, noo?"

"Humph!"

"Dee yow think, noo, yow could find out my boy out of un, by any ways o' conjuring like?"

"By what?"

"Conjuring — to strick a perpendicular, noo, or say the Lord's Prayer backwards?"

"Wadna ye prefer a meeracle or twa?" asked Sandy, after a long pull at the whisky-toddy.

"Or a few efreets?" added I.

"Whatsoever you likes, gentlemen. You're best judges, to be sure," answered Farmer Porter, in an awed and helpless voice.

"Aweel - I'm no that disinclined to believe in the occult sciences. I dinna haud a'thegither wi' Salverte. There was mair in them than Magia naturalis, I'm thinking. Mesmerism and magic-lanterns, benj and opium, winna explain all facts, Alton, laddie. Dootless they were an unco' barbaric an' empiric method o' expressing the gran' truth o' man's mastery ower matter. But the interpenetration o' the spiritual an' physical worlds is a gran' truth too; an' aiblins the Deity might ha' allowed witchcraft, just to teach that to puir barbarous folk - signs and wonders, laddie, to mak them believe in somewhat mair than the beasts that perish: an' so ghaists. an' warlocks might be a necessary element o' the divine education in dark and carnal times. But I've no read o' a case in which necromancy, nor geomancy, nor coskinomancy, nor ony ither mancy, was applied to sic a purpose as this. Unco gude they were, may be, for the discovery o' stolen spunes but no that o' stolen tailors."

Farmer Porter had listened to this harangue, with mouth and eyes gradually expanding between awe and the desire to comprehend; but at the last sentence his countenance fell.

"So I'm thinking, Mister Porter, that the best witch in siccan a case is ane that ye may find at the police-office."

"Anan?"

"Thae detective police are gran' necromancers an' canny

in their way: an' I just took the liberty, a week agone, to ha a crack wi' ane o' 'em. And noo, gin ye're inclined, we'll leave the whusky awhile, an' gang up to that cave o' Trophawnius, ca'd by the vulgar Bow-street, an' speir for tidings o' the twa lost sheep."

So to Bow-street we went, and found our man, to whom the farmer bowed with obsequiousness most unlike his usual burly independence. He evidently half suspected him to have dealings with the world of spirits: but whether he had such or not, they had been utterly unsuccessful; and we walked back again, with the farmer between us, half-blubbering —

"I tell ye, there's nothing like ganging to a wise 'ooman. Bless ye, I mind one up to Guy Hall, when I was a barn, that two Irish reapers coom down, and murthered her for the money - and if you lost aught she'd vind it, so sure as the church and a mighty hand to cure burns; and they two villains coom back, after harvest, seventy mile to do it - and when my vather's cows was shrew-struck, she made un be draed under a brimble as growed together at the both ends, she a praying like mad all the time; and they never got nothing but fourteen shilling and a crooked sixpence; for why, the devil carried off all the rest of her money: and I seen um both a-hanging in chains by Wisbeach river, with my own eyes. So when they Irish reapers comes into the vens, our chaps always says, 'Yow goo to Guy Hall, there's yor brithren a-waitin' for yow,' and that do make um joost mad loike, it do. I tell ye there's nowt like a wise 'ooman, for vinding out the likes o' this."

At this hopeful stage of the argument I left them, to go to the Magazine office. As I passed through Covent Garden, a pretty young woman stopped me under a gas-lamp. I was pushing on, when I saw it was Jemmy Downes's Irish wife, and saw, too, that she did not recognise me. A sudden instinct made me stop and hear what she had to say.

"Shure, thin, and ye're a tailor, my young man?"

"Yes," I said, nettled a little that my late loathed profession still betrayed itself in my gait.

"From the counthry?"

I nodded, though I dared not speak a white lie to that effect. I fancied that, somehow, through her I might hear of poor Kelly and his friend Porter.

"Ye'll be wanting work, thin?" "I have no work." "Och, thin, it's I can show ye the flower o' work, I can. Bedad, there's a shop I know of where ye'll earn — bedad, if ye're the ninth part of a man, let alone a handy young fellow like the looks of you—och, ye'll earn thirty shillings the week, to the very least — an' beautiful lodgings; — och, thin, just come and see 'em — as chape as mother's milk! Come along, thin — och, it's the beauty ye are — just the nate figure for a tailor."

The fancy still possessed me; and I went with her through one dingy back street after another. She seemed to be purposely taking an indirect road, to mislead me as to my whereabouts; but after a half-hour's walking, I knew, as well as she, that we were in one of the most miserable slop-working nests of the East-end.

She stopped at a house door, and hurried me in, up to the first floor, and into a dirty, slatternly parlour, smelling infamously of gin; where the first object I beheld was Jemmy Downes, sitting before the fire, three-parts drunk, with a couple of dirty, squalling children on the hearth-rug, whom he was kicking and cuffing alternately.

"Och, thin, ye villain, bating the poor darlints whinever I lave ye a minute." And pouring out a volley of Irish curses, she caught up the urchins, one under each arm, and kissed and hugged them till they were nearly choked. "Och, ye plague o' my life — as drunk as a baste; an' I brought home this darlint of a young gentleman to help ye in the business."

Downes got up, and steadying himself by the table, leered at me with lacklustre eyes, and attempted a little ceremonious politeness. How this was to end I did not see; but I was determined to carry it through, on the chance of success, infinitely small as that might be.

"An' I've told him thirty shillings a week's the least he'll earn; and charges for board and lodging only seven shillings."

"Thirty! — she lies; she's always a lying; don't you mind her. Five-and-forty is the werry lowest figure. Ask my respectable and most piousest partner, Shemei Solomons. Why, blow me — it's Locke!"

"Yes, it is Locke; and surely you're my old friend Jemmy Downes? Shake hands. What an unexpected pleasure to meet you again!"

"Werry unexpected pleasure. Tip us your daddle! De-

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lighted – delighted, as I was a saying, to be of the least use to yer. Take a caulker? Summat heavy, then? No? 'Tak' a drap o' kindness yet, for auld langsyne?'"

"You forget I was always a teetotaller."

"Ay," with a look of unfeigned pity. "An' you're a going to lend us a hand? Oh, ah! perhaps you'd like to begin? Here's a most beautiful uniform, now, for a markis in her Majesty's Guards; we don't mention names — tarn't business like. P'r'aps you'd like best to work here to night, for company — 'for auld langsyne, my boys;' and I'll introduce yer to the gents up-stairs to-morrow."

"No," I said; "I'll go up at once, if you've no objection."

"Och, thin, but the sheets isn't aired — no — faix; and I'm thinking the gentleman as is a going isn't gone yet."

But I insisted on going up at once; and, grumbling, she followed me. I stopped on the landing of the second floor, and asked which way; and seeing her in no hurry to answer, opened a door, inside which I heard the hum of many voices, saying in as sprightly a tone as I could muster, that I supposed that was the workroom.

As I had expected, a fetid, choking den, with just room enough in it for the seven or eight sallow, starved beings, who, coatless, shoeless, and ragged, sat stitching, each on his truckle-bed. I glanced round; the man whom I sought was not there.

My heart fell; why it had ever risen to such a pitch of hope I cannot tell; and half-cursing myself for a fool, in thus wildly thrusting my head into a squabble, I turned back and shut the door, saying —

"A very pleasant room, ma'am, but a leetle too crowded." Before she could answer, the opposite door opened; and a face appeared — unwashed, unshaven, shrunken to a skeleton. I did not recognise it at first.

"Blessed Vargen! but that wasn't your voice, Locke?"

"And who are you?"

"Tear and ages! and he don't know Mike Kelly!"

My first impulse was to catch him up in my arms, and run down stairs with him. I controlled myself, however, not knowing how far he might be in his tyrant's power. But his voluble frish heart burst out at once —

"Oh! blessed saints, take me out o' this! - take me out,

# ALTON LOCKE,

for the love of Jesus! — take me out o' this hell, or I'll go mad intirely! Och! will nobody have pity on poor sowls in purgatory — here in prison like negur slaves? We're starved to the bone, we are, and kilt intirely with cowld."

And as he clutched my arm, with his long, skinny, trembling fingers, I saw that his hands and feet were all chapped and bleeding. Neither shoe nor stocking did he possess; his only garments were a ragged shirt and trousers; and — and, in horrible mockery of his own misery, a grand new flowered satin vest, which to-morrow was to figure in some gorgeous shop-window!

"Och! Mother of Heaven!" he went on, wildly, "when will I get out to the fresh air? For five months I haven't seen the blessed light of sun, nor spoken to the praste, nor ate a bit o' mate, barring bread-and-butter. Shure, it's all the blessed sabbaths and saints' days I've been a working like a haythen Jew, and niver seen the insides o' the chapel to confess my sins, and me poor sowl's lost intirely — and they've pawned the relaver\* this fifteen weeks, and not a boy of us iver sot foot in the street since."

"Vot's that row?" roared at this juncture Downes's voice from below.

"Och, thin," shrieked the woman, "here's that thief o' the warld, Micky Kelly, slandhering o' us afore the blessed heaven, and he owing 2l. 14s.  $\frac{1}{2}d$ . for his board an' lodgin', let alone pawn-tickets, and goin' to rin away, the black-hearted ongrateful sarpent!" And she began yelling indiscriminately, "Thieves!" "Murder!" "Blasphemy!" and such other ejaculations, which (the English ones at least) had not the slightest reference to the matter in hand.

"I'll come to him!" said Downes, with an oath, and rushed stumbling up the stairs, while the poor wretch sneaked in again, and slammed the door to. Downes battered at it, but was met with a volley of curses from the men inside; while, profiting by the Babel, I blew out the light, ran down stairs, and got safe into the street.

In two hours afterwards, Mackaye, Porter, Crossthwaite, and I were at the door, accompanied by a policeman, and a search-warrant. Porter had insisted on accompanying us.

\* A coat, we understand, which is kept by the coatless wretches in these sweaters' dungeons, to be used by each of them in turn when they want to go out. — EDITOR. He had made up his mind that his son was at Downes's; and all representations of the smallness of his chance were fruitless. He worked himself up into a state of complete frenzy, and flourished a huge stick in a way which shocked the policeman's orderly and legal notions.

"That may do very well down in your country, sir; but you aren't a goin' to use that there weapon here, you know, not by no hact o' Parliament as I knows on."

"Ow, it's joost a way I ha' wi' me." And the stick was quiet for fifty yards or so, and then recommenced smashing imaginary skulls.

"You'll do somebody a mischief, sir, with that. You'd much better a lend it me."

Porter tucked it under his arm for fifty yards more; and so on, till we reached Downes's house.

The policeman knocked; and the door was opened, cautiously, by an old Jew, of a most un-"Caucasian" cast of features, however "high nosed," as Mr. Disraeli has it.

The policeman asked to see Michael Kelly.

"Michaelsh? I do't know such namesh —" But before the parley could go further, the farmer burst past policeman and Jew, and rushed into the passage, roaring, in a voice which made the very windows rattle,

"Billy Poorter! Billy Poorter! whor be yow? whor be yow?"

We all followed him up-stairs, in time to see him charging valiantly, with his stick for a bayonet, the small person of a Jew-boy, who stood at the head of the stairs in a scientific attitude. The young rascal planted a dozen blows in the huge carcase — he might as well have thumped the rhinoceros in the Regent's Park; the old man ran right over him, without stopping, and dashed up the stairs; at the head of which oh, joy! — appeared a long, shrunken, red-haired figure, the tears on its dirty cheeks glittering in the candle-glare. In an instant, father and son were in each other's arms.

"Oh, my barn! my barn! my barn! my barn!" And then the old Hercules held him off at arm's length, and looked at him with a wistful face, and hugged him again with "My barn! my barn!" He had nothing else to say. Was it not enough? And poor Kelly danced frantically around them, hurrahing; his own sorrows forgotten in his friend's deliverance, The Jew-boy shook himself, turned, and darted down stairs past us; the policeman quietly put out his foot, tripped him headlong, and jumping down after him, extracted from his grasp a heavy pocket-book.

"Ah! my dear mothersh's dying gift! Oh, dear! oh, dear! give it back to a poor orphansh!"

"Didn't I see you take it out o' the old un's pocket you young villain?" answered the maintainer of order, as he shoved the book into his bosom, and stood with one foot on his writhing victim, a complete nineteenth-century St. Michael.

"Let me hold him," I said, "while you go up-stairs."

"You hold a Jew-boy! — you hold a mad cat!" answered the policeman, contemptuously — and with justice — for at that moment Downes appeared on the first-floor landing, cursing and blaspheming.

"He's my 'prentice! he's my servant! I've got a bond, with his own hand to it, to serve me for three years. I'll have the law of you — I will!"

Then the meaning of the big stick came out. The old man leapt down the stairs, and seized Downes. "You're the tyrant as has locked my barn up here!" And a thrashing commenced, which it made my bones ache only to look at. Downes had no chance; the old man felled him on his face in a couple of blows, and taking both hands to his stick, hewed away at him as if he had been a log.

"I waint hit a's head! I waint hit a's head!" — whack, whack. "Let me be!" — whack, whack — puff. "It does me gude, it does me gude!" — puff, puff, puff — whack. "I've been a bottling of it up for three years, come Whitsuntide!" — whack, whack, whack — while Mackaye and Crossthwaite stood coolly looking on, and the wife shut herself up in the side-room, and screamed murder.

The unhappy policeman stood at his wits' end, between the prisoner below, and the breach of the peace above, bellowing in vain, in the Queen's name, to us, and to the grinning tailors on the landing. At last, as Downes's life seemed in danger, he wavered; the Jew-boy seized the moment, jumped up, upsetting the constable, dashed like an eel between Crossthwaite and Mackaye, gave me a backhanded blow in passing, which I felt for a week after, and vanished through the street-door, which he locked after him. "Very well!" said the functionary, rising solemnly, and pulling out a note-book — "Scar under left eye, nose a little twisted to the right, bad chilblains on the hands. You'll keep till next time, young man. Now, you fat gentleman up there, have you done a qualifying of yourself for Newgate?"

The old man had run up-stairs again, and was hugging his son; but when the policeman lifted Downes, he rushed back to his victim, and begged, like a great school-boy, for leave to "bet him joost won bit moor."

"Let me bet un! I'll pay un! — I'll pay all as my son owes un! Marcy me! where's my pooss?" And so on raged the Babel, till we got the two poor fellows safe out of the house. We had to break open the door to do it, thanks to that imp of Israel.

"For God's sake, take us too!" almost screamed five or six other voices.

"They're all in debt — every onesh; they sha'n't go till they paysh, if there's law in England," whined the old Jew, who had re-appeared.

"I'll pay for 'em — I'll pay every farden, if so be as they treated my boy well. Here, you, Mr. Locke, there's the ten pounds as I promised you. Why, whor is my pooss?"

The policeman solemnly handed it to him. He took it, turned it over, looked at the policeman half frightened, and pointed with his fat thumb at Mackaye.

"Well, he said as you was a conjuror — and sure he was right."

He paid me the money. I had no mind to keep it in such company; so I got the poor fellows' pawn-tickets, and Crossthwaite and I took the things out for them. When we returned, we found them in a group in the passage, holding the door open, in their fear lest we should be locked up, or entrapped in some way. Their spirits seemed utterly broken. Some three or four went off to lodge where they could; the majority went up-stairs again to work. That, even that dungeon, was their only home — their only hope — as it is of thousands of "free" Englishmen at this moment.

We returned, and found the old man with his new-found prodigal sitting on his knee, as if he had been a baby. Sandy told me afterwards, that he had scarcely kept him from carrying the young man all the way home; he was convinced that the poor fellow was dying of starvation. I think really he was not far wrong. In the corner sat Kelly, crouched together like a baboon, blubbering, hurrahing, invoking the saints, cursing the sweaters, and blessing the present company. We were afraid, for several days, that his wits were seriously affected.

And, in his old arm-chair, pipe in mouth, sat good Sandy Mackaye, wiping his eyes with the many-coloured sleeve, and moralising to himself, sotto voce:

"The auld Romans made slaves o' their debitors; sae did the Anglo-Saxons, for a' good Major Cartwright has writ to the contrary. But I didna ken the same Christian practice was part o' the Breetish constitution. Aweel, aweel — atween Riot Acts, Government by Commissions, and ither little extravagants and codicils o' Mammon's making, it's no that easy to ken, the day, what is the Breetish constitution, and what isn't. Tak a drappie, Billy Porter, lad?"

"Never again so long as I live. I've learnt a lesson and a half about that, these last few months."

"Aweel, moderation's best, but abstinence better than naething. Nae man sall deprive me o' my leeberty, but I'll tempt nae man to gie up his." And he actually put the whiskybottle by into the cupboard.

The old man and his son went home next day, promising me, if I would but come to see them, "twa hundert acres o' the best partridge-shooting, and wild dooks as plenty as sparrows; and to live in clover till I bust, if I liked." And so, as Bunyan has it, they went on their way, and I saw them no more.

# CHAPTER XXII.

# An Emersonian Sermon.

CERTAINLY, if John Crossthwaite held the victim-of-circumstance doctrine in theory, he did not allow Mike Kelly to plead it in practice, as an extenuation of his misdeeds. Very different from his Owenite "it's-nobody's-fault" harangues in the debating society, or his admiration for the teacher of whom my readers shall have a glimpse shortly, was his lecture that evening to the poor Irishman on "It's all your own fault." Unhappy Kelly! he sat there like a beaten cur, looking first at one of us, and then at the other, for mercy and finding none. As soon as Crossthwaite's tongue was tired, Mackaye's began, on the sins of drunkenness, hastiness, improvidence, overtrustfulness, &c., &c., and, above all, on the cardinal offence of not having signed the protest years before, and spurned the dishonourable trade, as we had done. Even his most potent excuse that "a boy must live somehow," Crossthwaite treated as contemptuously as if he had been a very Leonidas, while Mackaye chimed in with —

"An' ye a Papist! ye talk o' praying to saints an' martyrs, that died in torments because they wad na do what they should na do? What ha' ye to do wi' martyrs? — a meeserable wretch that sells his soul for a mess o' pottage — four slices per diem o' thin bread-and-butter? Et propter veetam veevendi perdere causas! Dinna tell me o' your hardships ye've had your deserts — your rights were just equivalent to your mights, an' so ye got them."

"Faix, thin, Misther Mackaye, darlint, an' whin did I desarve to pawn me own goose an' board, an' sit looking at the spidhers for the want o' them?"

"Pawn his ain goose? Pawn himsel! pawn his needle gin it had been worth the pawning, they'd ha' ta'en it. An' yet there's a command in Deuteronomy, Ye shall na tak the millstone in pledge, for it's a man's life; nor yet keep his raiment owre night, but gie it the puir body back, that he may sleep in his ain claes, an' bless ye. O — but pawnbrokers dinna care for blessings— na marketable value in them, whatsoever."

"And the shopkeeper," said I, "in the 'Arabian Nights,' refuses to take the fisherman's net in pledge, because he gets his living thereby."

"Ech! but, laddie, they were puir legal Jews, under carnal ordinances, an' daur na even tak an honest five per cent. interest for their money. An' the baker o' Bagdad, why he was a benighted heathen, ye ken, an' deceivit by that fause prophet, Mahomet, to his eternal damnation, or he wad never ha' gone aboot to fancy a fisherman was his brither."

"Faix, an' ain't we all brothers?" asked Kelly.

"Ay, and no," said Sandy, with an expression which would have been a smile, but for its depth of bitter earnestness; "brethren in Christ, my laddie."

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"An' ain't that all over the same?"

"Ask the preachers. Gin they meant brothers, they'd say brothers, be sure; but because they don't mean brothers at a', they say brethren — ye'll mind, brethren — to soun' antiquate, an' professional, an' perfunctory-like, for fear it should be owre real, an' practical, an' startling, an' a' that; and then jist limit it down wi' a 'in Christ,' for fear o' owre wide applications, and a' that. But

> For a' that, an' a' that, It's comin' yet, for a' that, When man an' man, the warld owre, Shall brothers be, for a' that —

An' na brithren any mair at a'!"

"An' didn't the blessed Jesus die for all?"

"What? for heretics, Micky?"

"Bedad, thin, an' I forgot that intirely!"

"Of course you did! It's strange, laddie," said he, turning to me, "that that Name suld be everywhere, fra the thunderers o' Exeter Ha' to this puir feckless Paddy, the watchword o' exclusiveness. I'm thinking ye'll no find the workmen believe in 't, till somebody can fin' the plan o' making it the sign o' universal comprehension. Gin I had na seen in my youth that a brither in Christ meant less a thousand-fold than a brither out o' him, I might ha' believit the noo — we'll no say what. I've an owre great organ o' marvellousness, an' o' veneration too, I'm afeard."

"Ah!" said Crossthwaite, "you should come and hear Mr. Windrush to-night, about the all-embracing benevolence of the Deity, and the abomination of limiting it by all those narrow creeds and dogmas."

"Oh, he's an American; he was a Calvinist preacher originally, I believe; but as he told us, last Sunday evening, he soon cast away the worn-out vestures of an obsolete faith, which were fast becoming only crippling fetters."

"An' ran oot sarkless on the public, eh? I'm afeard there's mony a man else that throws awa' the gude auld plaid o' Scots Puritanism, an' is unco fain to cover his nakedness wi' ony cast popinjay's feathers he can forgather wi'. Aweel, aweel a puir priestless age it is, the noo. We'll e en gang hear him the nicht, Alton, laddie; ye ha' na darkened the kirk door this mony a day -- nor I neither, mair by token." It was too true. I had utterly given up the whole problem of religion as insoluble. I believed in poetry, science, and democracy — and they were enough for me then; enough, at least, to leave a mighty hunger in my heart, I knew not for what. And as for Mackaye, though brought up, as he told me, a rigid Scotch Presbyterian, he had gradually ceased to attend the church of his fathers.

"It was no the kirk o' his fathers — the auld God-trusting kirk that Clavers dragoonit down by burns and muirsides. It was a' gane dead an' dry; a piece of Auld-Bailey barristration anent soul-saving dodges. What did he want wi' proofs o' the being o' God, an' o' the doctrine o' original sin? He could see eneugh o' them ayont the shop-door, ony tide. They made puir Rabbie Burns an anything-arian, wi' their blethers, an' he was near gaun the same gate."

And, besides, he absolutely refused to enter any place of worship where there were pews. "He wad na follow after a multitude to do evil; he wad na gang before his Maker wi'a lee in his right hand. Nae wonder folks were so afraid o' the names o' equality an' britherhood, when they'd kicked them out e'en o' the kirk o' God. Pious folks may ca' me a sinfu' auld Atheist. They winna gang to a harmless stage-play an' richt they — for fear o' countenancing the sin that's dune there, by putting down my hurdies on that stool o' antichrist, a haspit pew!"

I was, therefore, altogether surprised at the promptitude with which he agreed to go and hear Crossthwaite's newfound prophet. His reasons for so doing may be, I think, gathered from the conversation towards the end of this chapter.

Well, we went; and I, for my part, was charmed with Mr. Windrush's eloquence. His style, which was altogether Emersonian, quite astonished me by its alternate bursts of what I considered brilliant declamation, and of forcible epigrammatic antithesis. I do not deny that I was a little startled by some of his doctrines, and suspected that he had not seen much, either of St. Giles's cellars and tailors' workshops either, when he talked of sin as "only a lower form of good. Nothing," he informed us, "was produced in nature without pain and disturbance; and what we had been taught to call sin, was, in fact, nothing but the birth-throes attend-

ant on the progress of the species. - As for the devil, Novalis, indeed, had gone so far as to suspect him to be a necessary illusion. Novalis was a mystic, and tainted by the old creeds. The illusion was not necessary - it was disappearing before the fast-approaching meridian light of philosophic religion. Like the myths of Christianity, it had grown up in an age of superstition, when men, blind to the wondrous order of the universe, believed that supernatural beings, like the Homeric gods, actually interfered in the affairs of mortals. Science had revealed the irrevocability of the laws of nature - was man alone to be exempt from them? No. The time would come when it would be as obsolete an absurdity to talk of the temptation of a fiend, as it was now to talk of the wehrwolf, or the angel of the thunder-cloud. The metaphor might remain, doubtless, as a metaphor, in the domain of poetry, whose office was to realise, in objective symbols, the subjective ideas of the human intellect; but philosophy, and the pure sentiment of religion, which found all things, even God himself, in the recesses of its own enthusiastic heart, must abjure such a notion."

"What!" he asked again, "shall all nature be a harmonious whole, reflecting, in every drop of dew which gems the footsteps of the morning, the infinite love and wisdom of its Maker, and man alone be excluded from his part in that concordant choir? Yet such is the doctrine of the advocates of free-will, and of sin — its phantom-bantling. Man disobey his Maker! disarrange and break the golden wheels and springs of the infinite machine! The thought were blasphemy! - impossibility! All things fulfil their destiny; and so does man, in a higher or lower sphere of being. Shall I punish the robber? Shall I curse the profligate? As soon destroy the toad, because my partial taste may judge him ugly; or doom to hell, for his carnivorous appetite, the muscanonge of my native lakes! Toad is not horrible to toad, or thief to thief. Philanthropists or statesmen may environ him with more genial circumstances, and so enable his propensities to work more directly for the good of society; but to punish him — to punish nature for daring to be nature! — Never! I may thank the Upper Destinies that they have not made me as other men are - that they have endowed me with nobler instincts, a more delicate conformation than the thief;

but I have my part to play, and he has his. Why should we

wish to be other than the All-wise has made us?" "Fine doctrine, that," grumbled Sandy; "gin ye've first made up your mind wi' the Pharisee, that ye are no like ither men."

"Shall I pray, then? For what? I will coax none, flatter none - not even the Supreme! I will not be absurd enough to wish to change that order, by which sun and stars, saints and sinners, alike fulfil their destinies. There is one comfort, my friends; coax and flatter as we will, he will not hear us."

"Pleasant, for puir deevils like us!" quoth Mackaye.

"What then remains? Thanks, thanks - not of words, but of actions. Worship is a life, not a ceremony. He who would honour the Supreme, let him cheerfully succumb to the destiny which the Supreme has allotted, and, like the shell or the flower - ("Or the pickpocket," added Mackaye, almost audibly), - become the happy puppet of the universal impulse. He who would honour Christ, let him become a Christ himself! Theodore of Mopsuestia - born, alas! before his time — a prophet for whom as yet no audience stood ready in the amphitheatre of souls - 'Christ!' he was wont to say; 'I can become Christ myself, if I will.' Become thou Christ, my brother! He has an idea — the idea of utter submission - abnegation of his own fancied will before the supreme necessities. Fulfil that idea, and thou art he! Deny thyself, and then only wilt thou be a reality; for thou hast no self. If thou hadst a self, thou wouldst but lie in denying it - and would The Being thank thee for denying what he had given thee? But thou hast none! God is circumstance, and thou his creature! Be content! Fear not, strive not, change not, repent not! Thou art nothing! Be nothing, and thou becomest a part of all things!"

And so Mr. Windrush ended his discourse, which Crossthwaite had been all the while busily taking down in shorthand, for the edification of the readers of a certain periodical, and also for those of this my Life.

I plead guilty to having been entirely carried away by what I heard. There was so much which was true, so much more which seemed true, so much which it would have been convenient to believe true, and all put so eloquently and originally, as I then considered, that, in short, I was in raptures, and so was poor dear Crossthwaite; and as we walked home, we dinned Mr. Windrush's praises one into each of Mackaye's ears. The old man, however, paced on silent and meditative. At last —

"A hunder sects or so in the land o' Gret Britain; an' a hunder or so single preachers, each man a sect of his ain! an' this the last fashion! Last, indeed! The moon of Calvinism's far gone in the fourth quarter, when it's come to the like o' that. Truly, the soul-saving business is a'thegither fa'n to a low ebb, as Master Tummas says somewhere!"

"Well, but," asked Crossthwaite, "was not that man, at least, splendid?"

"An' hoo much o' thae gran' objectives an' subjectives did ye comprehen', then, Johnnie, my man?"

"Quite enough for me," answered John, in a somewhat nettled tone.

"An' sae did I."

"But you ought to hear him often. You can't judge of his system from one sermon, in this way."

"Seestem! and what's that like?"

"Why, he has a plan for uniting all sects and parties, on the one broad fundamental ground of the unity of God as revealed by science —"

"Verra like uniting o' men by just pu'ing aff their claes, and telling 'em, 'There, ye're a' brithers noo, on the one broad fundamental principle o' want o' breeks.'"

"Of course," went on Crossthwaite, without taking notice of this interruption, "he allows full liberty of conscience. All he wishes for is the emancipation of intellect. He will allow every one, he says, to realise that idea to himself, by the representations which suit him best."

"An' so he has no objection to a wee playing at Papistry, gin a man finds it good to tickle up his soul?"

"Ay, he did speak of that — what did he call it? Oh! 'one of the ways in which the Christian idea naturally embodied itself in imaginative minds!' but the higher intellects, of course, would want fewer helps of that kind. 'They would see,' — ay, that was it — 'the pure white light of truth, without requiring those coloured refracting media.'"

"That wad depend muckle on whether the light o' truth chose or not, I'm thinking. But, Johnnie, 'lad — guide us and save us! -- whaur got ye a' these gran' outlandish words the night?"

"Haven't I been taking down every one of these lectures for the press?"

"The press gang to the father o't — and you too, for lending your han' in the matter - for a mair accursed aristocrat I never heerd, sin' I first ate haggis. Oh, ye gowk - ye gowk! Dinna ye see what be the upshot o' siccan doctrine? That every puir fellow as has no gret brains in his head will be left to his superstition, an' his ignorance, to fulfil the lusts o' his flesh; while the few that are geniuses, or fancy themselves sae, are to ha' the monopoly o' this private still o' philosophy - these carbonari, illuminati, vehmgericht, samothracian mysteries o' bottled moonshine. An' when that comes to pass, I'll just gang back to my schule and my catechism, and begin again wi' 'who was born o' the Virgin Mary, suffered oonder Pontius Pilate!' Hech! lads, there's no subjectives and objectives there, na beggarly, windy abstractions, but joost a plain fact, that God cam' down to look for puir bodies, instead o' leaving puir bodies to gang looking for Him. An' here's a pretty place to be left looking for Him in - between ginshops and gutters! A pretty gospel for the publicans an' harlots, to tell 'em that if their bairns are canny enough, they may possibly some day be allowed to believe that there is one God, and not twa! And then, by way of practical application - 'Hech! my dear, starving, simple brothers, ye manna be sae owre conscientious, and gang fashing yourselves anent being brutes an' deevils, for the gude God's made ye sae, and He's verra weel content to see ye sae, gin ye be content or no.' "

"Then, do you believe in the old doctrines of Christianity?" I asked.

"Dinna speir what I believe in. I canna tell ye. I've been seventy years trying to believe in God, and to meet aneither man that believed in him. So I'm just like the Quaker o' the town o' Redcross, that met by himself every First-day in his ain hoose."

"Well, but," I asked again, "is not complete freedom of thought a glorious aim — to emancipate man's noblest part the intellect — from the trammels of custom and ignorance?"

"Intellect — intellect!" rejoined he, according to his fashion, catching one up at a word, and playing on that in

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order to answer, not what one said, but what one's words led to. "I'm sick o' all the talk anent intellect I hear noo. An' what's the use o' intellect? 'Aristocracy o' intellect,' they cry. Curse a' aristocracies — intellectual anes, as well as anes o' birth, or rank, or money! What! will I ca' a man my superior, becauce he's cleverer than mysel? — will I boo down to a bit o' brains, ony mair than to a stock or a stane? Let a man prove himsel better than me, my laddie — honester, humbler, kinder, wi' mair sense o' the duty o' man, an' the weakness o' man — and that man I'll acknowledge — that man's my king, my leader, though he war as stupid as Eppe Dalgleish, that could no count five on her fingers, and yet keepit her drucken father by her ain hands' labour for twentythree yeers."

We could not agree to all this, but we made a rule of never contradicting the old sage in one of his excited moods, for fear of bringing on a week's silent fit — a state which generally ended in his smoking himself into a bilious melancholy; but I made up my mind to be henceforth a frequent auditor of Mr. Windrush's oratory.

"An' sae the deevil's dead!" said Sandy, half to himself, as he sat crooning and smoking that night over the fire. "Gone at last, puir fàllow! — an' he sae little appreciated, too! Every gowk laying his ain sins on Nickie's back. Puir Nickie! — verra like that much misunderstood politeecian, Mr. John Cade, as Charles Buller ca'd him in the Hoose o' Commons — an' he to be dead at last! The warld 'll seem quite unco without his auld-farrant phizog on the streets. Aweel, aweel — aiblins he's but shammin'. —

> When pleasant Spring came on apace, And showers began to fa', John Barleycorn got up again, And sore surprised them a'.

At ony rate, I'd no bury him till he began smell a wee strong like. It's a grewsome thing, is premature interment, Alton, laddie!"

is one up at a worse, and playing on that in

# CHAPTER XXIII.

#### The Freedom of the Press.

BUT all this while, my slavery to Mr. O'Flynn's partyspirit and coarseness was becoming daily more and more intolerable: an explosion was inevitable; and an explosion came.

Mr. O'Flynn found out that I had been staying at Cambridge, and at a cathedral city too; and it was quite a godsend to him to find any one who knew a word about the institutions at which he had been railing weekly for years. So nothing would serve him but my writing a set of articles on the Universities, as a prelude to one on the Cathedral Establishments. In vain I pleaded the shortness of my stay there, and the smallness of my information.

"Och, were not abuses notorious? And couldn't I get them up out of any Radical paper - and just put in a little of my own observations, and a dashing personal cut or two, to spice the thing up, and give it an original look? and if I did not choose to write that - why," with an enormous oath, "I should write nothing." So - for I was growing weaker and weaker, and indeed my hackwriting was breaking down my moral sense, as it does that of most men - I complied; and burning with vexation, feeling myself almost guilty of a breach of trust toward those from whom I had received nothing but kindness, I scribbled off my first number and sent it to the editor — to see it appear next week, three-parts rewritten, and every fact of my own furnishing twisted and misapplied, till the whole thing was as vulgar and commonplace a piece of rant as ever disgraced the people's cause. And all this, in spite of a solemn promise, confirmed by a volley of oaths, that I "should say what I liked, and speak my whole mind, as one who had seen things with his own eyes had a right to do."

Furious, I set off to the editor; and not only my pride, but what literary conscience I had left, was stirred to the bottom by seeing myself made, whether I would or not, a blackguard and a slanderer.

As it was ordained, Mr. O'Flynn was gone out for an hour or two; and, unable to settle down to any work till I had fought my battle with him fairly out, I wandered onward towards the Westend, staring into print-shop windows, and meditating on many things.

As it was ordained, also, I turned up Regent-street, and mto Langham-place; when, at the door of All-Souls Church, behold a crowd, and a long string of carriages arriving, and all the pomp and glory of a grand wedding.

I joined the crowd from mere idleness, and somehow found myself in the first rank. Just as the bride was stepping out of the carriage — it was Miss Staunton; and the old gentleman who handed her out was no other than the dean. They were, of course, far too deeply engaged to recognise insignificant little me, so that I could stare as thoroughly to my heart's content as any of the butcherboys and nursery-maids around me.

She was closely veiled — but not too closely to prevent my seeing her magnificent lip and nostril curling with pride, resolve, rich tender passion. Her glorious-brown hair — the true "purple locks" which Homer so often talks of — rolled down beneath her veil in great heavy ringlets; and with her tall and rounded figure, and step as firm and queenly as if she were going to a throne, she seemed to me the very ideal of those magnificent Eastern Zubeydehs and Nourmahals, whom I used to dream of after reading the "Arabian Nights."

As they entered the doorway, almost touching me, she looked round, as if for some one. The dean whispered something in his gentle, stately way, and she answered by one of those looks so intense, and yet so bright, so full of unutterable depths of meaning and emotion, that, in spite of all my antipathy, I felt an admiration akin to awe thrill through me, and gazed after her so intently, that Lillian — Lillian herself was at my side, and almost passed me before I was aware of it.

Yes, there she was, the foremost among a bevy of fair girls, "herself the fairest far," all April smiles and tears, golden curls, snowy rosebuds, and hovering clouds of lace a fairy queen; but — but yet — how shallow that hazel eye, how empty of meaning those delicate features, compared with the strength and intellectual richness of the face which preceded her!

It was too true — I had never remarked it before; but now it flashed across me like lightning — and like lightning vanished; for Lillian's eye caught mine, and there was the faintest spark of a smile of recognition, and pleased surprise, and a nod. I blushed scarlet with delight; some servant-girl or other, who stood next to me, had seen it too — quick-eyed that women are — and was looking curiously at me. I turned, I know not why, in my delicious shame, and plunged through the crowd to hide I knew not what.

I walked on — poor fool — in an ecstasy; the whole world was transfigured in my eyes, and virtue and wisdom beamed from every face I passed. The omnibus-horses were racers, and the drivers — were they not my brothers of the people? The very policemen looked sprightly and philanthropic. I shook hands earnestly with the crossing-sweeper of the Regent-circus, gave him my last two-pence, and rushed on, like a young David, to exterminate that Philistine O'Flynn.

Ah well! I was a great fool, as others too have been; but yet, that little chance-meeting did really raise me. It made me sensible that I was made for better things than low abuse of the higher classes. It gave me courage to speak out, and act without fear of consequences, once at least in that confused facing-both-ways period of my life. O woman! woman! only true missionary of civilisation and brotherhood, and gentle, forgiving charity; it is in thy power, and perhaps in thine only, to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives! One real lady, who should dare to stoop, what might she not do with us — with our sisters? If —

There are hundreds, answers the reader, who do stoop. Elizabeth Fry was a lady, well-born, rich, educated, and she has many scholars.

True, my dear readers, true — and may God bless her and her scholars. Do you think the working men forget them? But look at St. Giles's, or Spitalfields, or Shadwell, and say, is not the harvest plentiful, and the labourers, alas! few? No one asserts that nothing is done; the question is, is enough done? Does the supply of mercy meet the demand of misery? Walk into the next court and see!

I found Mr. O'Flynn in his sanctum, busy with paste and scissors, in the act of putting in a string of advertisements indecent French novels, Atheistic tracts, quack medicines, and slopsellers' puffs; and commenced with as much dignity as I could muster: "What on earth do you mean, sir, by re-writing my article?"

"What — (in the other place) — do you mean by giving me the trouble of re-writing it? Me head's splitting now with sitting up, cutting out, and putting in. Poker o' Moses! but ye'd given it an intirely aristocratic tendency. What did ye mane" (and three or four oaths rattled out) "by talking about the pious intentions of the original founders, and the democratic tendencies of monastic establishments?"

"I wrote it because I thought it."

"Is that any reason ye should write it? And there was another bit, too — it made my hair stand on end when I saw it, to think how near I was sending the copy to press without looking at it — something about a French Socialist, and Church Property."

"Oh! you mean, I suppose, the story of the French Socialist, who told me that church property was just the only property in England which he would spare, because it was the only one which had definite duties attached to it; that the real devourers of the people were not the bishops, who, however rich, were at least bound to work in return for their riches, but the landlords and millionnaires, who refused to confess the duties of property, while they raved about its rights."

"Bedad, that's it; and pretty doctrine, too!"

"But it's true: it's an entirely new and a very striking notion, and I consider it my duty to mention it."

"Thrue! What the devil does that matter? There's a time to speak the truth, and a time not, isn't there? It 'll make a grand hit, now, in a leader upon the Irish Church question, to back the prastes against the landlords. But if I'd let that in as it stood, bedad, I'd have lost three parts of my subscribers the next week. Every soul of the Independents, let alone the Chartists, would have bid me good morning. Now do, like a good boy, give us something more the right thing next time. Draw it strong. — A good drunken supper-party and a police-row; if ye haven't seen one, get it up out of Pater Priggins — or Laver might do, if the other wasn't convanient. That's Dublin to be sure, but one university's just like another. And give us a seduction or two, and a brace of Dons carried home drunk from Barnwell by the Procthors."

"Really I never saw anything of the kind; and as for pro-

fligacy amongst the Dons, I don't believe it exists. I'll call them idle, and bigoted, and careless of the morals of the young men, because I know that they are so; but as for anything more, I believe them to be as sober, respectable a set of Pharisees as the world ever saw."

Mr. O'Flynn was waxing warm, and the bully-vein began fast to show itself.

"I don't care a curse, sir! My subscribers won't stand it, and they sha'n't! I am a man of business, sir, and a man of the world, sir, and faith that's more than you are, and I know what will sell the paper, and by J-s I'll let no upstart spalpeen dictate to me!"

"Then I'll tell you what, sir," quoth I, waxing warm in my turn, "I don't know which are the greater rogues, you or your subscribers. You a patriot? You are a humbug. Look at those advertisements, and deny it if you can. Crying out for education, and helping to debauch the public mind with Voltaire's 'Candide,' and Eugène Sue - swearing by Jesus, and puffing Atheism and blasphemy - yelling at a quack government, quack law, quack priesthoods, and then dirtying your fingers with half-crowns for advertising Holloway's ointment and Parr's life pills - shrieking about slavery of labour to capital, and inserting Moses and Son's doggerel - ranting about searching investigations and the march of knowledge, and concealing every fact which cannot be made to pander to the passions of your dupes — extolling the freedom of the press, and showing yourself in your own office a tyrant and a censor of the press. You a patriot? You the people's friend? You are doing everything in your power to blacken the people's cause in the eyes of their enemies. You are simply a humbug, a hypocrite, and a scoundrel; and so I bid you good morning.

Mr. O'Flynn had stood, during this harangue, speechless with passion, those loose lips of his wreathing like a pair of earthworms. It was only when I stopped that he regained his breath, and with a volley of incoherent oaths, caught up his chair and hurled it at my head. Luckily, I had seen enough of his temper already, to keep my hand on the lock of the door for the last five minutes. I darted out of the room quicker than I ever did out of one before or since. The chair took effect on the luckless door; and as I threw a flying glance behind me, I saw one leg sticking through the middle panel, in a way that augured ill for my skull, had it been in the way of Mr. O'Flynn's fury.

I ran home to Mackaye in a state of intense self-glorification, and told him the whole story. He chuckled, he crowed, he hugged me to his bosom.

"Leeze me o' ye! but I kenned ye were o' the true Norse blude after a'!

> For a' that, an' a' that, A man's a man for a' that.

Oh, but I hae expeckit it this month an' mair! Oh, but I prophesied it, Johnnie!"

"Then why, in Heaven's name, did you introduce me to such a scoundrel?"

"I sent ye to schule, lad, I sent ye to schule. Ye wad na be ruled by me. Ye tuk me for a puir doited auld misanthrope; an'I thocht to gie ye the meat ye lusted after, an' fill ye wi' the fruit o' your ain desires. An' noo that ye've gane doon in the fire o' temptation, an' conquered, here's your reward standin' ready. Special prawvidences! — wha can doot them? I ha' had mony — miracles I might ca' them, to see how they cam' just when I was gaun daft wi' despair."

And then he told me that the editor of a popular journal, of the Howitt and Eliza Cook school, had called on me that morning, and promised me work enough, and pay enough, to meet all present difficulties.

I did indeed accept the curious coincidence, if not as a reward for an act of straightforwardness, in which I saw no merit, at least as proof that the upper powers had not altogether forgotten me. I found both the editor and his periodical, as I should have wished them, temperate and sunny somewhat clap-trap and sentimental, perhaps, and afraid of speaking out, as all parties are, but still willing to allow my fancy free range in light fictions, descriptions of foreign countries, scraps of showy rose-pink morality, and such like; which, though they had no more power against the raging mass of crime, misery, and discontent, around, than a peacock's feather against a three-decker, still were all genial, graceful, kindly, humanising, and soothed my discontented and impatient heart in the work of composition.

Jadi yaw a mi . Isaag sibban onit

# CHAPTER XXIV.

## The Townsman's Sermon to the Gownsman.

ONE morning in February, a few days after this explosion, I was on the point of starting to go to the dean's house about that weary list of subscribers, which seemed destined never to be filled up, when my cousin George burst in upon me. He was in the highest good spirits at having just taken a double first-class at Cambridge; and after my congratulations, sincere and hearty enough, were over, he offered to accompany me to that reverend gentleman's house.

He said, in an off-hand way, that he had no particular business there, but he thought it just as well to call on the dean and mention his success, in case the old fellow should not have heard of it.

"For you see," he said, "I'm a sort of *protégé*, both on my own account and on Lord Lynedale's — Ellerton, he is now — you know he's just married to the dean's niece, Miss Staunton — and Ellerton's a capital fellow — promised me a living as soon as I'm in priest's orders. So my cue is now," he went on as we walked down the Strand together, "to get ordained as fast as ever I can."

"But," I asked, "have you read much for ordination, or seen much of what a clergyman's work should be?"

"Oh! as for that — you know it isn't one out of ten who's ever entered a school, or a cottage even, except to light his cigar, before he goes into the church: and as for the examination, that's all humbug; any man may cram it all up in a month — and thanks to King's College, I knew all I wanted to know before I went to Cambridge. And I shall be threeand-twenty by Trinity Sunday, and then in I go, neck or nothing. Only the confounded bore is, that this Bishop of London won't give one a title — won't let any man into his diocese, who has not been ordained two years; and so I shall he shoved down into some peking little country-curacy, without a chance of making play before the world, or getting myself known at all. Horrid bore! isn't it?"

"I think," I said, "considering what London is just now, the bishop's regulation seems to be one of the best specimens of episcopal wisdom that I've heard of for some time."

"Great bore for me, though, all the same; for I must

make a name, I can tell you, if I intend to get on. A person must work like a horse, now-a-days, to succeed at all; and Lynedale's a desperately particular fellow, with all sorts of *outré* notions about people's duties and vocations and heaven knows what."

"Well," I said, "my dear cousin, and have you no high notions of a clergyman's vocation? because we — I mean the working men — have. It's just their high idea of what a clergyman should be, which makes them so furious at clergymen for being what they are."

"It's a queer way of showing their respect to the priesthood," he answered, "to do all they can to exterminate it."

"I dare say they are liable, like other men, to confound the thing with its abuses; but if they hadn't some dim notion that the thing might be made a good thing in itself, you may depend upon it they would not rave against those abuses so fiercely." (The reader may see that I had not forgotten my conversation with Miss Staunton.) "And," thought I to myself, "is it not you, and such as you, who do so incorporate the abuses into the system, that one really cannot tell which is which, and longs to shove the whole thing aside as rotten to the core, and make a trial of something new?"

"Well, but," I said, again returning to the charge, for the subject was altogether curious and interesting to me, "do you really believe the doctrines of the Prayer-book, George?"

"Believe them!" he answered, in a tone of astonishment, "why not? I was brought up a Churchman, whatever my parents were; I was always intended for the ministry. I'd sign the Thirty-nine Articles now, against any man in the three kingdoms: and as for all the proofs out of Scripture and Church History, I've known them ever since I was sixteen — I'll get them all up again in a week as fresh as ever."

"But," I rejoined, astonished in my turn at my cousin's notion of what belief was, "have you any personal faith? you know what I mean — I hate using cant words — but inward experience of the truth of all these great ideas, which, true or false, you will have to preach and teach? Would you live by them, die for them, as a patriot would for his country, now?"

"My dear fellow, I don't know anything about all those Methodistical, mystical, Calvinistical, inward experiences, and all that. I'm a Churchman, remember, and a High Churchman, too; and the doctrine of the Church is, that children are regenerated in holy baptism; and there's not the least doubt, from the authority both of Scripture and the fathers, that that's the —"

"For Heaven's sake," I said, "no polemical discussions! Whether you're right or wrong, that's not what I'm talking about. What I want to know is this: — You are going to teach people about God and Jesus Christ. Do you delight in God? Do you love Jesus Christ? Never mind what I do, or think, or believe. What do you do, George?"

"Well, my dear fellow, if you take things in that way, you know, of course" — and he dropped his voice into that peculiar tone, by which all sects seem to think they show their reverence; while to me, as to most other working men, it never seemed anything but a symbol of the separation and discrepancy between their daily thoughts and their religious ones — "of course, we don't any of us think of these things half enough, and I'm sure I wish I could be more earnest than I am; but I can only hope it will come in time. The Church holds that there's a grace given in ordination; and really — really, I do hope and wish to do my duty — indeed, one can't help doing it; one is so pushed on by the immense competition for preferment; an idle parson hasn't a chance now-a-days."

"But," I asked again, half-laughing, half-disgusted, "do you know what your duty is?"

"Bless you, my good fellow, a man can't go wrong there. Carry out the Church system; that's the thing — all laid down by rule and method. A man has but to work out that — and it's the only one for the lower classes, I'm convinced."

"Strange," I said, "that they have from the first been so little of that opinion, that every attempt to enforce it, for the last three hundred years, has ended either in persecution or revolution."

"Ah! that was all those vile puritans' fault. They wouldn't give the Church a chance of showing her powers."

"What! not when she had it all her own way, during the whole eighteenth century?"

"Ah! but things are very different now. The clergy are awakened now to the real beauty of the Catholic machinery; Alton Locke. 14 and you have no notion how much is doing in church-building and schools, and societies of every sort and kind. It is quite incredible what is being done now for the lower orders by the Church."

"I believe," I said, "that the clergy are exceedingly improved; and I believe, too, that the men to whom they owe all their improvement, are the Wesleys, and Whitfields — in short, the very men whom they drove one by one out of the Church, from persecution or disgust. And I do think it strange, that if so much is doing for the lower classes, the working men, who form the mass of the lower classes, are just those who scarcely feel the effects of it; while the churches seem to be filled with children, and rich and respectable, to the almost entire exclusion of the adult lower classes. A strange religion this!" I went on, "and, to judge by its effects, a very different one from that preached in Judea 1800 years ago, if we are to believe the Gospel story."

"What on earth do you mean? Is not the Church of England the very purest form of Apostolic Christianity?"

"It may be - and so may the other sects. But, somehow, in Judea, it was the publicans and harlots who pressed into the kingdom of heaven; and it was the common people who heard Christ gladly. Christianity, then, was a movement in the hearts of the lower order. But now, my dear fellow, you rich, who used to be told, in St. James's time, to weep and howl, have turned the tables upon us poor. It is you who are talking, all day long, of converting us. Look at any place of worship you like, orthodox and heretical. - Who fill the pews? - the outcast and the reprobate? No! - the Pharisees and the covetous, who used to deride Christ, fill His churches, and say still 'This people, these masses, who know not the Gospel, are accursed.' And the universal feeling, as far as I can judge, seems to be, not 'how hardly shall they who have,' but how hardly shall they who have not, 'riches, enter into the kingdom of heaven!'"

"Upon my word," said he, laughing, "I did not give you credit for so much eloquence: you seem to have studied the Bible to some purpose, too. I didn't think that so much Radicalism could be squeezed out of a few texts of Scripture. It's quite a new light to me. I'll just mark that card, and play it when I get a convenient opportunity. It may be a winning one in these democratic times."

Allon Locke.

And he did play it, as I heard hereafter; but at present he seemed to think, that the less that was said further on clerical subjects the better, and commenced quizzing the people whom we passed, humorously and neatly enough; while I walked on in silence, and thought of Mr. Bye-Ends, in the "Pilgrim's Progress." And yet I believe the man was really in earnest. He was really desirous to do what was right, as far as he knew it; and all the more desirous, because he saw, in the present state of society, what was right would pay him. God shall judge him, not I. Who can unravel the confusion of mingled selfishness and devotion that exists even in his ownheart, much less in that of another?

The dean was not at home that day, having left town on business. George nodded familiarly to the footman who opened the door.

"You'll mind and send me word the moment your master comes home — mind, now!"

The fellow promised obedience, and we walked away.

"You seem to be very intimate here," said I, "with all parties?"

"Oh! footmen are useful animals — a half-sovereign now and then is not altogether thrown away upon them. But as for the higher powers, it is very easy to make oneself at home in the dean's study, but not so much so to get a footing in the drawing-room above. I suspect he keeps a precious sharp eye upon the fair Miss Lillian."

"But," I asked, as a jealous pang shot through my heart, "how did you contrive to get this same footing at all? When I met you at Cambridge, you seemed already well acquainted with these people."

"How? — how does a hound get a footing on a cold scent? By working and casting about and about, and drawing on it inch by inch, as I drew on them for years, my boy; and cold enough the scent was. You recollect that day at the Dulwich Gallery? I tried to see the arms on the carriage, but there were none; so that cock wouldn't fight."

"The arms! I should never have thought of such a plan." "Dare say you wouldn't. Then I harked back to the door-keeper, while you were St. Sebastianizing. He didn't know their names, or didn't choose to show me their ticket, on which it ought to have been; so I went to one of the fellows whom I knew, and got him to find out. There comes out the

value of money - for money makes acquaintances. Well, I found who they were. - Then 1 saw no chance of getting at them. But for the rest of that year, at Cambridge, I beat every bush in the university, to find some one who knew them; and as fortune favours the brave, at last I hit off this Lord Lynedale; and he, of course, was the ace of trumps - a fine catch in himself, and a double catch, because he was going to marry the cousin. So I made a dead set at him; and tight work I had to nab him, I can tell you, for he was three or four years older than I, and had travelled a good deal, and seen. life. But every man has his weak side; and I found his was a sort of a High-Church Radicalism, and that suited me well enough, for I was always a deuce of a radical myself; so I stuck to him like a leech, and stood all his temper, and his pride, and those unpractical, windy visions of his, that made a common-sense fellow like me sick to listen to; but I stood it, and here I am."

"And what on earth induced you to stoop to all this —" meanness I was on the point of saying. "Surely you are in no want of money — your father could buy you a good living to-morrow."

"And he will, but not the one I want; and he could not buy me reputation, power, rank, do you see, Alton, my genius? And what's more, he couldn't buy me a certain little tit-bit, a jewel, worth a Jew's-eye and a half, Alton, that I set my heart on from the first moment I set my eye on it."

My heart beat fast and fierce, but he ran on -

"Do you think I'd have eaten all this dirt, if it hadn't lain in my way to her? Eat dirt! I'd drink blood, Alton — though I don't often deal in strong words — if it lay in that road. I never set my heart on the thing yet, that I didn't get it at last by fair means or foul — and I'll get her! I don't care for her money, though that's a pretty plum. Upon my life, I don't. I worship her, limbs and eyes. — I worship the very ground she treads on. She's a duck and a darling," said he, smacking his lips like an Ogre over his prey, "and I'll have her before I've done, so help me —"

"Whom do you mean?" I stammered out.

"Lillian! you blind beetle!"

寺 小王

I dropped his arm - "Never, as I live!" of additional distance

He started back, and burst into a horse-laugh.

"Hullo! my eye and Betty Martin! You don't mean to say that I have the honour of finding a rival in my talented cousin?"

I made no answer.

"Come, come, my dear fellow, this is too ridiculous. You and I are very good friends, and we may help each other, if we choose, like kith and kin in this here wale. So if you're fool enough to quarrel with me, I warn you I'm not fool enough to return the compliment. Only" (lowering his voice), "just bear one little thing in mind — that I am, unfortunately, of a somewhat determined humour; and if folks will get in my way, why it's not my fault if I drive over them. You understand? Well, if you intend to be sulky, I don't. So good morning, till you feel yourself better."

And he turned gaily down a side-street, and disappeared, looking taller, handsomer, manfuller than ever.

I returned home miserably; I now saw in my cousin not merely a rival, but a tyrant: and I began to hate him with that bitterness which fear alone can inspire. The eleven pounds still remained unpaid. Between three and four pounds was the utmost which I had been able to hoard up that autumn, by dint of scribbling and stinting; there was no chance of profit from my book for months to come — if indeed it ever got published, which I hardly dare believe it would; and I knew him too well to doubt that neither pity nor delicacy would restrain him from using his power over me, if I dared even to seem an obstacle in his way.

I tried to write, but could not. I found it impossible to direct my thoughts, even to sit still; a vague spectre of terror and degradation crushed me. Day after day I sat over the fire, and jumped up and went into the shop, to find something which I did not want, and peep listlessly into a dozen books, one after the other, and then wandered back again to the fireside, to sit mooning and moping, staring at that horrible incubus of debt — a devil which may give mad strength to the strong, but only paralyses the weak. And I was weak, as every poet is, more or less. There was in me, as I have somewhere read that there is in all poets, that feminine vein — a receptive as well as a creative faculty — which kept up in me a continual thirst after beauty, rest, enjoyment. And here was circumstance after circumstance goading me onward, as the gadfly did Io, to continual wanderings, never ceasing exertions; every hour calling on me to do, while I was only longing to be — to sit and observe, and fancy, and build freely at my own will. And then — as if this necessity of perpetual petty exertion was not in itself sufficient torment — to have that accursed debt — that knowledge that I was in a rival's power, rising up like a black wall before me, to cripple, and render hopeless, for aught I knew, the very exertions to which it compelled me! I hated the bustle — the crowds; the ceaseless roar of the street outside maddened me. I longed in vain for peace — for one day's freedom — to be one hour a shepherd-boy, and lie looking up at the blue sky, without a thought beyond the rushes I was plaiting! "Oh! that I had wings as a dove! — then would I flee away, and be at rest!"—

And then, more than once, or twice either, the thoughts of suicide crossed me; and I turned it over, and looked at it, and dallied with it, as a last chance in reserve. And then the thought of Lillian came, and drove away the fiend. And then the thought of my cousin came, and paralysed me again; for it told me that one hope was impossible. And then some fresh instance of misery or oppression forced itself upon me, and made me feel the awful sacredness of my calling, as a champion of the poor, and the base cowardice of deserting them for any selfish love of rest. And then I recollected how I had betrayed my suffering brothers. — How, for the sake of vanity and patronage, I had consented to hide the truth about their rights — their wrongs. And so on, through weary weeks of moping melancholy — "a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways!"

At last, Mackaye, who, as I found afterwards, had been watching all along my altered mood, contrived to worm my secret out of me. I had dreaded, that whole autumn, having to tell him the truth, because I knew that his first impulse would be to pay the money instantly out of his own pocket; and my pride, as well as my sense of justice, revolted at that, and sealed my lips. But now this fresh discovery — the knowledge that it was not only in my cousin's power to crush me, but also his interest to do so — had utterly unmanned me; and, after a little innocent and fruitless prevarication, out came the truth, with tears of bitter shame.

The old man pursed up his lips, and, without answering me, opened his table drawer, and commenced fumbling among accounts and papers. "No! no! no! best, noblest of friends! I will not burden you with the fruits of my own vanity and extravagance. I will starve, go to gaol, sooner than take your money. If you offer it me, I will leave the house, bag and baggage, this moment." And I rose to put my threat into execution.

"I havena at present ony sic intention," answered he, deliberately, "seeing that there's na necessity for paying debits twice owre, when ye ha' the stampt receipt for them." And he put into my hands, to my astonishment and rapture, a receipt in full for the money, signed by my cousin.

Not daring to believe my own eyes, I turned it over and over, looked at it, looked at him — there was nothing but clear, smiling assurance in his beloved old face, as he twinkled, and winked, and chuckled, and pulled off his spectacles, and wiped them, and put them on upside-down; and then relieved himself by rushing at his pipe, and cramming it fiercely with tobacco till he burst the bowl.

Yes; it was no dream! — the money was paid, and I was free! The sudden relief was as intolerable as the long burden had been; and like a prisoner suddenly loosed from off the rack, my whole spirit seemed to collapse, and I sunk with my head upon the table, too faint even for gratitude.

But who was my benefactor? Mackaye vouchsafed no answer, but that I "suld ken better than he." But when he found that I was really utterly at a loss to whom to attribute the mercy, he assured me, by way of comfort, that he was just as ignorant as myself; and at last, piecemeal, in his circumlocutory and cautious Scotch method, informed me, that some six weeks back he had received an anonymous letter, "a'thegither o' a Belgravian cast o' phizog," containing a bank-note for twenty pounds, and setting forth the writer's suspicions that I owed my cousin money, and their desire that Mr. Mackaye, "o' whose uprightness an' generosity they were pleased to confess themselves no that ignorant," should write to George, ascertain the sum, and pay it without my knowledge, handing over the balance, if any, to me, when he thought fit - "Sae there's the remnant - aucht pounds, sax shillings, an' saxpence; tippence being deduckit for expense o' twa letters anent the same transaction."

"But what sort of handwriting was it?" asked I, almost disregarding the welcome coin. "Ou, then — aiblins a man's, aiblins a maid's. He was na chirographosophic himsel — an' he had na curiosity anent ony sic passages o' aristocratic romance."

"But what was the postmark of the letter?"

"Why for suld I ha' speired? Gin the writers had been minded to be beknown, they'd ha' sign't their names upon the document. An' gin they didna sae intend, wad it be coorteous o' me to gang speiring an' peering ower covers an' seals?"

"But where is the cover?"

"Ou, then," he went on, with the same provoking coolness, "white paper's o' geyan use, in various operations o' the domestic economy. Sae I just tare it up — aiblins for pipe-lights — I canna mind at this time."

"And why," asked I, more vexed and disappointed than I liked to confess — "why did you not tell me before?"

"How wad I ken that you had need o't? An' verily, I thocht it no that bad a lesson for ye, to let ye experiment a towmond mair on the precious balms that break the head whereby I opine the Psalmist was minded to denote the delights o' spending borrowed siller."

There was nothing more to be extracted from him; so I was fain to set to work again (a pleasant compulsion truly) with a free heart, eight pounds in my pocket, and a brainful of conjectures. Was it the dean? Lord Lynedale? or was it — could it be — Lillian herself? That thought was so delicious, that I made up my mind, as I had free choice among half a dozen equally improbable fancies, to determine that the most pleasant should be the true one; and I hoarded the money, which I shrunk from spending as much as I should from selling her miniature or a lock of her beloved golden hair. They were a gift from her — a pledge — the first fruits of — I dared not confess to myself what.

Whereat the reader will smile, and say, not without reason, that I was fast fitting myself for Bedlam; if, indeed, I had not proved my fitness for it already, by paying the tailors' debts, instead of my own, with the ten pounds which Farmer Porter had given me. I am not sure that he would not be correct; but so I did, and so I suffered.

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# CHAPTER XXV.

### A true Nobleman.

At last my list of subscribers was completed, and my poems actually in the press. Oh! the childish joy with which I fondled my first set of proofs! And how much finer the words looked in print than they ever did in manuscript! — One took in the idea of a whole page so charmingly at a glance, instead of having to feel one's way through line after line, and sentence after sentence. — There was only one drawback to my happiness — Mackaye did not seem to sympathise with it. He had never grumbled at what I considered, and still do consider, my cardinal offence, the omission of the strong political passages; he seemed, on the contrary, in his inexplicable waywardness, to be rather pleased at it than otherwise. It was my publishing at all at which he growled. "Ech," he said, "owre young to marry, is owre young to

"Ech," he said, "owre young to marry, is owre young to write; but it's the way o' these puir distractit times. Nae chick can find a grain o' corn, but oot he rins cackling wi' the shell on his head, to-tell it to a' the warld, as if there was never barley grown on the face o' the earth before. I wonder whether Isaiah began to write before his beard was grown, or Dawvid either? He had mony a long year o' shepherding an' moss-trooping, an' rugging an' riving i' the wilderness, I'll warrant, afore he got thae gran' lyrics o' his oot o' him. Ye might tak example too, gin ye were minded, by Moses, the man o' God, that was joost forty years at the learning o' the Egyptians, afore he thocht gude to come forward into public life, an' then fun', to his gran' surprise, I warrant, that he'd begun forty years too sune — an' then had forty years mair, after that, o' marching an' law-giving, an' bearing the burdens o' the people, before he turned poet."

"Poet, sir! I never saw Moses in that light before."

"Then ye'll just read the 90th Psalm — 'the prayer o' Moses, the man o' God' — the grandest piece o' lyric, to my taste, that I ever heard o' God's earth, an' see what a man can write that'll have the patience to wait a century or twa before he rins to the publisher's. I gie ye up fra' this moment; the letting out o' ink is like the letting out o' waters, or the eating o' opium, or the getting up at public meetings. — When a man begins he canna stop. There's nae mair enslaving lust o' the flesh under the heaven than that same furor scribendi, as the Latins hae it."

But at last my poems were printed, and bound, and actually published; and I sat staring at a book of my own making, and wondering how it ever got into being! And what was more, the book "took," and sold, and was reviewed in People's journals, and in newspapers; and Mackaye himself relaxed into a grin, when his oracle, the Spectator, the only honest paper, according to him, on the face of the earth, condescended, after asserting its impartiality by two or three searching sarcasms, to dismiss me, grimly-benignant, with a paternal pat on the shoulder. Yes - I was a real live author at last, and signed myself, by special request, in the \*\*\*\* Magazine, as "the author of Songs of the Highways." At last it struck me, and Mackaye too, who, however he hated flunkeydom, never overlooked an act of discourtesy, that it would be right for me to call upon the dean, and thank him formally for all the real kindness he had shown me. So I went to the handsome house off Harley-street, and was shown into his study, and saw my own book lying on the table; and was welcomed by the good old man, and congratulated on my success, and asked if I did not see my own wisdom in "yielding to more experienced opinions than my own, and submitting to a censorship which, however severe it might have appeared at first, was, as the event proved, benignant both in its intentions and effects?"

And then I was asked, even I, to breakfast there the next morning. And I went, and found no one there but some scientific gentlemen, to whom I was introduced as "the young man whose poems we were talking of last night." And Lillian sat at the head of the table, and poured out the coffee and tea. And between ecstasy at seeing her, and the intense relief of not finding my dreaded and now hated cousin there, I sat in a delirium of silent joy, stealing glances at her beauty, and listening with all my ears to the conversation, which turned upon the new-married couple.

I heard endless praises, to which I could not but assent in silence, of Lord Ellerton's perfections. His very personal appearance had been enough to captivate my fancy; and then they went on to talk of his magnificent philanthropic schemes, and his deep sense of the high duties of a landlord; and how, finding himself, at his father's death, the possessor of two vast but neglected estates, he had sold one in order to be able to do justice to the other, instead of laying house to house, and field to field, like most of his compeers, "till he stood alone in the land, and there was no place left;" and how he had lowered his rents, even though it had forced him to put down the ancestral pack of hounds, and live in a corner of the old castle; and how he was draining, claying, breaking up old moorlands, and building churches, and endowing schools, and improving cottages; and how he was expelling the old ignorant bankrupt race of farmers, and advertising everywhere for men of capital, and science, and character, who would have courage to cultivate flax and silk, and try every species of experiment; and how he had one scientific farmer after another, staying in his house as a friend; and how he had numbers of his books rebound in plain covers, that he might lend them to every one on his estate who wished to read them; and how he had thrown open his picture gallery, not only to the inhabitants of the neighbouring town, but what (strange to say) seemed to strike the party as still more remarkable, to the labourers of his own village; and how he was at that moment busy transforming an old unoccupied manor-house into a great associate farm, in which all the labourers were to live under one roof, with a common kitchen and dining-hall, clerks and superintendents, whom they were to choose, subject only to his approval, and all of them, from the least to the greatest, have their own interest in the farm, and be paid by per-centage on the profits; and how he had one of the first political economists of the day staying with him, in order to work out for him tables of proportionate remuneration, applicable to such an agricultural establishment; and how, too, he was giving the spade-labour system a fair trial, by laying out small cottage-farms, on rocky knolls and sides of glens, too steep to be cultivated by the plough; and was locating on them the most intelligent artisans whom he could draft from the manufacturing town hard by -

And at that notion, my brain grew giddy with the hope of seeing myself one day in one of those same cottages, tilling the earth, under God's sky, and perhaps — And then a whole cloud-world of love, freedom, fame, simple, graceful country luxury steamed up across my brain, to end — not, like the man's in the "Arabian Nights," in my kicking over the tray of China, which formed the base-point of my inverted pyramid of hope — but in my finding the contents of my plate deposited in my lap, while I was gazing fixedly at Lillian.

I must say for myself, though, that such accidents happened seldom; whether it was bashfulness, or the tact which generally, I believe, accompanies a weak and nervous body, and an active mind; or whether it was that I possessed enough relationship to the monkey-tribe to make me a firstrate mimic, I used to get tolerably well through on these occasions, by acting on the golden rule of never doing anything which I had not seen some one else do first — a rule which never brought me into any greater scrape than swallowing something intolerably hot, sour, and nasty (whereof I never discovered the name), because I had seen the dean do so a moment before.

But one thing struck me through the whole of this conversation — the way in which the new-married Lady Ellerton was spoken of, as aiding, encouraging, originating — a helpmeet, if not an oracular guide, for her husband — in all these noble plans. She had already acquainted herself with every woman on the estate; she was the dispenser, not merely of alms — for those seemed a disagreeable necessity, from which Lord Ellerton was anxious to escape as soon as possible — but of advice, comfort, and encouragement. She not only visited the sick, and taught in the schools — avocations which, thank God, I have reason to believe are matters of course, not only in the families of clergymen, but those of most squires and noblemen, when they reside on their estates — but seemed, from the hints which I gathered, to be utterly devoted, body and soul, to the welfare of the dwellers on her husband's land.

"I had no notion," I dared at last to remark, humbly enough, "that Miss — Lady Ellerton cared so much for the people."

"Really! One feels inclined sometimes to wish that she cared for anything beside them," said Lillian, half to her father and half to me.

This gave a fresh shake to my estimate of that remarkable woman's character. But still, who could be prouder, more imperious, more abrupt in manner, harsh even to the very verge of good-breeding? (for I had learnt what good-breeding was, from the debating society as well as from the drawingroom;) and, above all, had she not tried to keep me from Lillian? But these cloudy thoughts melted rapidly away in that sunny atmosphere of success and happiness, and I went home as merry as a bird, and wrote all the morning more gracefully and sportively, as I fancied, than I had ever yet done.

But my bliss did not end here. In a week or so, behold one morning a note — written, indeed, by the dean — but directed in Lillian's own hand, inviting me to come there to tea, that I might see a few of the literary characters of the day.

I covered the envelope with kisses, and thrust it next my fluttering heart. I then proudly showed the note to Mackaye. He looked pleased, yet pensive, and then broke out with a fresh adaptation of his favourite song,

#### —— and shovel hats and a' that — A man's a man for a' that.

"The auld gentleman is a man and a gentleman; an' has made a verra courteous, an' weel considerit move, gin ye ha' the sense to profit by it, an' no turn it to yer ain destruction."

"Destruction?" Applastovago out visistrop bus ; si

"Ay - that's the word, an' nothing less, laddie!"

And he went into the outer shop, and returned with a volume of Bulwer's "Ernest Maltravers."

"What! are you a novel reader, Mr. Mackaye?"

"How do ye ken what I may ha' thocht gude to read in my time? Ye'll be pleased the noo to sit down an' begin at that page — an' read, mark, learn, an' inwardly digest, the history of Castruccio Cesarini — an' the gude God gie ye grace to lay the same to heart."

I read that fearful story; and my heart sunk, and my eyes were full of tears, long ere I had finished it. Suddenly I looked up at Mackaye, half angry at the pointed allusion to my own case.

The old man was watching me intently, with folded hands, and a smile of solemn interest and affection worthy of Socrates himself. He turned his head as I looked up, but his lips kept moving. I fancied, I know not why, that he was praying for me.

stealing up to the plano; and, teasting my groedy eyes with

## CHAPTER XXVI.

# The Triumphant Author.

So to the party I went, and had the delight of seeing and hearing the men with whose names I had been long acquainted, as the leaders of scientific discovery in this wondrous age; and more than one poet, too, over whose works I had gloated, whom I had worshipped in secret. Intense was the pleasure of now realising to myself, as living men, wearing the same flesh and blood as myself, the names which had been to me mythic ideas. Lillian was there among them, more exquisite than ever; but even she at first attracted my eyes and thoughts less than did the truly great men around her. I hung on every word they spoke, I watched every gesture, as if they must have some deep significance; the very way in which they drank their coffee was a matter of interest to me. I was almost disappointed to see them eat and chat like common men. I expected that pearls and diamonds would drop from their lips, as they did from those of the girl in the fairy-tale, every time they opened their mouths; and certainly the conversation that evening was a new world to me - though I could only, of course, be a listener. Indeed, I wished to be nothing more. I felt that I was taking my place there among the holy guild of authors --that I too, however humbly, had a thing to say, and had said it; and I was content to sit on the lowest step of the literary temple, without envy for those elder and more practised priests of wisdom, who had earned by long labour the freedom of the inner shrine. I should have been quite happy enough standing there, looking and listening - but I was at last forced to come forward. Lillian was busy chatting with grave, grey-headed men, who seemed as ready to flirt, and pet and admire the lovely little fairy, as if they had been as young and gay as herself. It was enough for me to see her appreciated and admired. I loved them for smiling on her, for handing her from her seat to the piano with reverent courtesy: gladly would I have taken their place: I was. content, however, to be only a spectator; for it was not my rank, but my youth, I was glad to fancy, which denied me that blissful honour. But as she sang, I could not help stealing up to the piano; and, feasting my greedy eyes with

every motion of those delicious lips, listen and listen, entranced, and living only in that melody.

Suddenly, after singing two or three songs, she began fingering the keys, and struck into an old air, wild and plaintive, rising and falling like the swell of an Æolian harp upon a distant breeze.

"Ah! now," she said, "if I could get words for that! What an exquisite lament somebody might write to it, if they could only thoroughly take in the feeling and meaning of it."

"Perhaps," I said, humbly, "that is the only way to write songs — to let some air get possession of one's whole soul, and gradually inspire the words for itself; as the old Hebrew prophets had music played before them, to wake up the prophetic spirit within them."

She looked up, just as if she had been unconscious of my presence till that moment.

"Ah! Mr. Locke! — well, if you understand my meaning so thoroughly, perhaps you will try and write some words for me."

"I am afraid that I do not enter sufficiently into the meaning of the air."

"Oh! then, listen while I play it over again. I am sure you ought to appreciate anything so sad and tender."

And she did play it, to my delight, over again, even more gracefully and carefully than before — making the inarticulate sounds speak a mysterious train of thoughts and emotions. It is strange how little real intellect, in women especially, is required for an exquisite appreciation of the beauties of music — perhaps, because it appeals to the heart and not the head.

She rose and left the piano, saying, archly, "Now, don't forget your promise;" and I, poor fool, my sunlight suddenly withdrawn, began torturing my brains on the instant to think of a subject.

As it happened, my attention was caught by hearing two gentlemen close to me discuss a beautiful sketch by Copley Fielding, if I recollect rightly, which hung on the wall — a wild waste of tidal sands, with here and there a line of stakenets fluttering in the wind — a grey shroud of rain sweeping up from the westward, through which low red cliffs glowed dimly in the rays of the setting sun — a train of horses and cattle splashing slowly through shallow desolate pools and creeks, their wet, red, and black hides glittering in one longline of level light.

They seemed thoroughly conversant with art; and as I listened to their criticisms, I learnt more in five minutes, about the characteristics of a really true and good picture, and about the perfection to which our unrivalled English landscapepainters have attained, than I ever did from all the books and criticisms which I had read. One of them had seen the spot represented, at the mouth of the Dee, and began telling wild stories of salmon-fishing, and wild-fowl shooting - and then a tale of a girl, who in bringing her father's cattle home across the sands, had been caught by a sudden flow of the tide, and found next day a corpse hanging among the stake-nets far below. The tragedy, the art of the picture, the simple, dreary grandeur of the scenery, took possession of me; and I stood gaping a long time, and fancying myself pacing the sands, and wondering whether there were shells upon it - I had often longed for once only in my life to pick up shells - when Lady Ellerton, whom I had not before noticed, woke me from my reverie.

I took the liberty of asking after Lord Ellerton.

"He is not in town — he has stayed behind for one day to attend a great meeting of his tenantry — you will see the account in the papers to-morrow morning — he comes to-morrow." And as she spoke, her whole face and figure seemed to glow and heave, in spite of herself, with pride and affection.

"And now, come with me, Mr. Locke - the \*\*\* ambassador wishes to speak to you."

"The \*\* \* ambassador!" I said, startled; for let us be as democratic as we will, there is something in the name of great officers which awes, perhaps rightly, for the moment, and it requires a strong act of self-possession to recollect that "a man's a man for a' that." Besides, I knew enough of the great man in question to stand in awe of him for his own sake, having lately read a panegyric of him, which perfectly astounded me, by its description of his piety and virtue, his family affection, and patriarchal simplicity, the liberality and philanthropy of all his measures, and the enormous intellectual powers, and stores of learning, which enabled him, with the affairs of Europe on his shoulders, to write deeply and originally on the most abstruse questions of theology, history, and science. Lady Ellerton seemed to guess my thoughts. "You need not be afraid of meeting an aristocrat, in the vulgar sense of the word. You will see one who, once perhaps as unknown as yourself, has risen by virtue and wisdom to guide the destinies of nations — and shall I tell you how? Not by fawning and yielding to the fancies of the great; not by compromising his own convictions to suit their prejudices —"

I felt the rebuke, but she went on-

"He owes his greatness to having dared, one evening, to contradict a crown-prince to his face, and fairly conquer him in argument, and thereby bind the truly royal heart to him for ever."

"There are few scions of royalty to whose favour that would be a likely path."

"True; and therefore the greater honour is due to the young student who could contradict, and the prince who could be contradicted."

By this time we had arrived in the great man's presence; he was sitting with a little circle round him, in the further drawing-room, and certainly I never saw a nobler specimen of humanity. I felt myself at once before a hero — not of war and bloodshed, but of peace and civilisation; his portly and ample figure, fair hair and delicate complexion, and, above all, the benignant calm of his countenance, told of a character gentle and genial — at peace with himself and all the world; while the exquisite proportion of his chiselled and classic features, the lofty and ample brain, and the keen, thoughtful eye, bespoke, at the first glance, refinement and wisdom —

> The reason firm, the temperate will -Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill.

I am not ashamed to say, Chartist as I am, that I felt inclined to fall upon my knees, and own a master of God's own making.

He received my beautiful guide with a look of chivalrous affection, which I observed that she returned with interest; and then spoke in a voice peculiarly bland and melodious:

"So, my dear lady, this is the protégé of whom you have so often spoken?"

So she had often spoken of me! Blind fool that I was, I only took it in as food for my own self-conceit, that my enemy (for so I actually fancied her) could not help praising me.

"I have read your little book, sir," he said, in the same soft, benignant voice, "with very great pleasure. It is an-Alton Locke. 15 other proof, if I required any, of the under-current of living and healthful thought which exists even in the less-known ranks of your great nation. I shall send it to some young friends of mine in Germany, to show them that Englishmen can feel acutely and speak boldly on the social evils of their country, without indulging in that frantic and bitter revolutionary spirit, which warps so many young minds among us. You understand the German language at all?"

I had not that honour.

"Well, you must learn it. We have much to teach you in the sphere of abstract thought, as you have much to teach us in those of the practical reason and the knowledge of mankind. I should be glad to see you some day in a German university. I am anxious to encourage a truly spiritual fraternisation between the two great branches of the Teutonic stock, by welcoming all brave young English spirits to their ancient fatherland. Perhaps hereafter your kind friends here will be able to lend you to me. The means are easy, thank God! You will find in the Germans true brothers, in ways even more practical than sympathy and affection."

I could not but thank the great man, with many blushes, and went home that night utterly "*tête montée*," as I believe the French phrase is — beside myself with gratified vanity and love; to lie sleepless under a severe fit of asthma — sent perhaps as a wholesome chastisement, to cool my excited spirits down to something like a rational pitch. As I lay castlebuilding, Lillian's wild air rang still in my ears, and combined itself somehow with that picture of the Cheshire Sands, and the story of the drowned girl, till it shaped itself into a song, which, as it is yet unpublished, and as I have hitherto obtruded little or nothing of my own composition on my readers, I may be excused for inserting it here.

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home, And call the cattle home, And call the cattle home, Across the sands o' Dee;" The western wind was wild and dank wi' foam, And all alone went she.

The creeping tide came up along the sand, And o'er and o'er the sand, And round and round the sand,

I.

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As far as eye could see; The blinding mist came down and hid the land – And never home came she.

III.

"Oh, is it weed, or fish, or floating hair — A tress o' golden hair, O' drowned maiden's hair, Above the nets at sea? Was never salmon yet that shone so fair, Among the stakes on Dee."

#### IV.

They rowed her in across the rolling foam, The cruel crawling foam, The cruel hungry foam, To her grave beside the sea: But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home, Across the sands o' Dee.

There — let it go! — it was meant as an offering for one whom it never reached.

About mid-day I took my way towards the dean's house, to thank him for his hospitality — and, I need not say, to present my offering at my idol's shrine; and as I went, I conned over a dozen complimentary speeches about Lord Ellerton's wisdom, liberality, eloquence — but behold! the shutters of the house were closed. What could be the matter? It was full ten minutes before the door was opened; and then, at last, an old woman, her eyes red with weeping, made her appearance. My thoughts flew instantly to Lillian — something must have befallen her. I gasped out her name first, and then, recollecting myself, asked for the dean.

"They had all left town that morning."

"Miss — Miss Winnstay — is she ill?"

"No."

"Thank God!" I breathed freely again. What matter what happened to all the world beside?

"Ay, thank God, indeed; but poor Lord Ellerton was thrown from his horse last night and brought home dead. A messenger came here by six this morning, and they're all gone off to \*\*\*\*. Her ladyship's raving mad. — And no wonder." And she burst out crying afresh, and shut the door in my face.

Lord Ellerton dead! and Lillian gone too! Something whispered that I should have cause to remember that day. My heart sunk within me. When should I see her again? That day was the 1st of June, 1845. On the 10th of April, 1848, I saw Lillian Winnstay again. Dare I write my history between those two points of time? Yes, even that must be done, for the sake of the rich who read, and the poor who suffer.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

#### The Plush Breeches Tragedy.

My triumph had received a cruel check enough, when just at its height, and more were appointed to follow. Behold! some two days after, another - all the more bitter, because my conscience whispered that it was not altogether undeserved. The people's press had been hitherto praising and petting me lovingly enough. I had been classed (and Heaven knows that the comparison was dearer to me than all the applause of the wealthy) with the Corn-Law Rhymer, and the author of the "Purgatory of Suicides." My class had claimed my talents as their own - another "voice fresh from the heart of nature," another "untutored songster of the wilderness," another "prophet arisen among the suffering millions," -- when, one day, behold in Mr. O'Flynn's paper a long and fierce attack on me, my early history! How he could have got at some of the facts there mentioned, how he could have dared to inform his readers that I had broken my mother's heart by my misconduct, I cannot conceive; unless my worthy brotherin-law, the Baptist preacher, had been kind enough to furnish him with the materials. But however that may be, he showed me no mercy. I was suddenly discovered to be a time-server, a spy, a concealed aristocrat. Such paltry talent as I had, I had prostituted for the sake of fame. I had deserted The People's Cause for filthy lucre — an allurement which Mr. O'Flynn had always treated with withering scorn — in print. Nay, more, I would write, and notoriously did write, in any paper, Whig, Tory, or Radical, where I could earn a shilling by an enormous gooseberry, or a scrap of private slander. And the working men were solemnly warned to beware of me and my writings, till the editor had further investigated certain ugly facts in my history, which he would in due time report to his patriotic and enlightened readers.

All this stung me in the most sensitive nerve of my whole heart, for I knew that I could not altogether exculpate myself; and to that miserable certainty was added the dread of some fresh exposure. Had he actually heard of the omission in my poems? — and if he once touched on that subject, what could I answer? Oh! how bitterly now I felt the force of the critic's careless lash! — The awful responsibility of those written words, which we bandy about so thoughtlessly! How I recollected now, with shame and remorse, all the hasty and cruel utterances to which I, too, had given vent against those who had dared to differ from me; the harsh, one-sided judgments, the reckless imputations of motive, the bitter succers, "rejoicing in evil rather than in the truth." How I, too, had longed to prove my victims in the wrong, and turned away, not only lazily, but angrily, from many an exculpatory fact! And here was my Nemesis come at last. As I had done unto others, so it was done unto me!

It was right that it should be so. However indignant, mad, almost murderous, I felt at the time, I thank God for it now. It is good to be punished in kind. It is good to be made to feel what we have made others feel. It is good — anything is good however bitter, which shows us that there is such a law as retribution; that we are not the sport of blind chance or a triumphant fiend, but that there is a God who judges the earth — righteous to repay every man according to his works.

But at the moment I had no such ray of comfort — and, full of rage and shame, I dashed the paper down before Mackaye. "How shall I answer him? What shall I say?"

The old man read it all through with a grim saturnine smile.

"Hoolie, hoolie, speech is o' silver — silence is o' gold, says Thomas Carlyle, anent this an' ither matters. Wha'd be fashed wi' sic blethers? Ye'll just abide patient, and haud still in the Lord, until this tyranny be owerpast. Commit your cause to Him, said the auld Psalmist, an' he'll mak your righteousness as clear as the light, an' your just dealing as the noonday."

"But I must explain; I owe it as a duty to myself; I must refute these charges; I must justify myself to our friends."

"Can ye do that same, laddie?" asked he, with one of his quaint, searching looks. Somehow, I blushed, and could not altogether meet his eye, while he went on, "- An' gin ye could, whaur would ye do 't? I ken na periodical whar the editor will gie ye a clear stage an' no favour to bang him ower the lugs."

"Then I will try some other paper."

"An' what for then? They that read him, winna read the ither; an' they that read the ither, winna read him. He has his ain set o' dupes like every ither editor; an' ye mun let him gang his gate, an' feed his ain kye with his ain hay. He'll no' change it for your bidding."

"What an abominable thing this whole business of the press is, then, if each editor is to be allowed to humbug his readers at his pleasure, without a possibility of exposing or contradicting him!"

"An' ye've just spoken the truth, laddie. There's na mair accursed inquisition, than this of thae self-elected popes, the editors. That puir auld Roman ane, ye can bring him forat whan ye list, bad as he is. 'Fœnum habet in cornu;' his name's ower his shop-door. But these anonymies — priests o' the order of Melchisedec by the deevil's side, without father or mither, beginning o' years nor end o' days — without a local habitation or a name — as kittle to hand as a brock in a cairn —"

"What do you mean, Mr. Mackaye?" asked I, for he was getting altogether unintelligibly Scotch, as was his custom when excited.

"Ou, I forgot; ye're a puir Southern body, an' no' sensible to the gran' metaphoric powers o' the true Dawric. But it's an accursit state a'thegither, the noo, this a' the anonymous press — oreeginally devised, ye ken, by Balaam the son o' Beor, for serving God wi'out the deevil's finding it out — an' noo, after the way o' human institutions, translated ower to help folks to serve the deevil without God's finding it out. I'm no' astonished at the puir expiring religious press for siccan a fa'; but for the working men to be a' as bad - it's grewsome to behold. I'll tell ye what, my bairn, there's na salvation for the workmen, while they defile themselves this fashion, wi' a' the very idols o' their ain tyrants - wi' salvation by act o' parliament - irresponsible rights o' property - anonymous Balaamry - fechtin' that canny auld farrant fiend, Mammon, wi' his ain weapons - and then a' fleyed, because they get well beaten for their pains. I'm sair forfaughten this mony a year wi' watching the puir gowks, trying to do God's wark wi' the deevil's tools. Tak tent o' that."

And I did "tak tent o' it." Still there would have been as little present consolation as usual in Mackaye's unwelcome truth, even if the matter had stopped there. But, alas! it did not stop there. O'Flynn seemed determined to "run a muck" at me. Every week some fresh attack appeared. The very passages about the universities and church property, which had caused our quarrel, were paraded against me, with free additions and comments; and, at last, to my horror, out came the very story which I had all along dreaded, about the expurgation of my poems, with the coarsest allusions to petticoat influence - aristocratic kisses - and the Duchess of Devonshire canvassing draymen for Fox, &c., &c. How he got a clue to the scandal I cannot conceive. Mackaye and Crossthwaite, I had thought, were the only souls to whom I had ever breathed the secret, and they denied indignantly the having ever betrayed my weakness. How it came out, I say again, I cannot conceive; except because it is a great everlasting law, and sure to fulfil itself sooner or later, as we may see by the histories of every remarkable, and many an unremarkable, man - "There is nothing secret, but it shall be made manifest; and whatsoever ye have spoken in the closet, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops."

For some time after that last exposure, I was thoroughly crestfallen — and not without reason. I had been giving a few lectures among the working men, on various literary and social subjects. I found my audience decrease — and those who remained seemed more inclined to hiss than to applaud me. In vain I ranted and quoted poetry, often more violently than my own opinions justified. My words touched no responsive chord in my hearers' hearts; they had lost faith in me.

At last, in the middle of a lecture on Shelley, I was indulging, and honestly too, in some very glowing and passionate praise of the true nobleness of a man, whom neither birth nor education could blind to the evils of society; who, for the sake' of the suffering many, could trample under foot his hereditary pride, and become an outcast for the People's Cause.

I heard a whisper close to me, from one whose opinion I valued, and value still — a scholar and a poet, one who had tasted poverty, and slander, and a prison, for The Good Cause:

"Fine talk: but it's 'all in his day's work.' Will he dare to say that to-morrow to the ladies at the West-end?"

No — I should not. I knew it; and at that instant I felt myself a liar, and stopped short — my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. I fumbled at my papers — clutched the watertumbler — tried to go on — stopped short again — caught up my hat, and rushed from the room, amid peals of astonished laughter.

It was some months after this that, fancying the storm blown over, I summoned up courage enough to attend a political meeting of our party; but even there my Nemesis met me full face. After some sanguinary speech, I really forget from whom, and, if I recollected, God forbid that I should tell now, I dared to controvert, mildly enough, Heaven knows, some especially frantic assertion or other. But before I could get out three sentences, O'Flynn flew at me with a coarse invective, hounded on, by-the-by, by one who, calling himself a gentleman, might have been expected to know better. But. indeed, he and O'Flynn had the same object in view, which was simply to sell their paper; and as a means to that great end, to pander to the fiercest passions of their readers, to bully and silence all moderate and rational Chartists, and pet and tar on the physical-force men, till the poor fellows began to take them at their word. Then, when it came to deeds and not to talk, and people got frightened, and the sale of the paper decreased a little, a blessed change came over them - and they awoke one morning meeker than lambs; "ulterior measures" had vanished back into the barbarous ages, pikes, vitriol-bottles, and all; and the public were entertained with nothing but homilies on patience and resignation, the "triumphs of moral justice," the "omnipo-tence of public opinion," and the "gentle conquests of fraternal love" - till it was safe to talk treason and slaughter again.

But just then treason happened to be at a premium. Sedition, which had been floundering on in a confused, disconsolate, underground way ever since 1842, was supposed by the public to be dead; and for that very reason it was safe to talk it, or, at least, back up those who chose to do so. And so I got no quarter — though really, if the truth must be told, I had said nothing unreasonable.

Home I went disgusted, to toil on at my hack-writing, only praying that I might be let alone to scribble in peace, and often thinking, sadly, how little my friends in Harley-street could guess at the painful experience, the doubts, the struggles, the bitter cares, which went to the making of the poetry which they admired so much!

I was not, however, left alone to scribble in peace, either by O'Flynn or by his readers, who formed, alas! just then, only too large a portion of the thinking artisans; every day brought some fresh slight or annoyance with it, till I received one afternoon, by the Parcels Delivery Company, a large unpaid packet, containing, to my infinite disgust, an old pair of yellow plush breeches, with a recommendation to wear them, whose meaning could not be mistaken.

Furious, I thrust the unoffending garment into the fire, and held it there with the tongs, regardless of the horrible smell which accompanied its martyrdom, till the lady-lodger on the first floor rushed down to inquire whether the house was on fire.

I answered her by hurling a book at her head, and brought down a volley of abuse, under which I sat in sulky patience, till Mackaye and Crossthwaite came in, and found her railing in the doorway, and me sitting over the fire, still intent on the frizzling remains of the breeches.

"Was this insult of your invention, Mr. Crossthwaite?" asked I, in a tone of lofty indignation, holding up the last scrap of unroasted plush.

Roars of laughter from both of them made me only more frantic, and I broke out so incoherently, that it was some time before the pair could make out the cause of my fury.

"Upon my honour, Locke," quoth John, at last, holding his sides, "I never sent them; though, on the whole — you've made my stomach ache so with laughing, I can't speak. But you must expect a joke or two, after your late fashionable connexions."

I stood, still and white with rage.

"Really, my good fellow, how can you wonder if our friends suspect you? Can you deny that you've been off and on lately between flunkeydom and The Cause, like a donkey between two bundles of hay? Have you not neglected our meetings? Have you not picked all the spice out of your poems? And can you expect to eat your cake and keep it too? You must be one thing or the other; and, though Sandy, here, is too kind-hearted to tell you, you have disappointed us both miserably — and there's the long and the short of it."

I hid my face in my hands, and sat moodily over the fire; my conscience told me that I had nothing to answer.

"Whisht, Johnnie! Ye're ower sair on the lad. He's a' right at heart still, an' he'll do good service. But the deevil a'ways fechts hardest wi' them he's maist 'feard of. What's this anent agricultural distress ye had to tell me the noo?"

"There is a rising down in the country, a friend of mine writes me. The people are starving, not because bread is dear, but because it's cheap; and, like sensible men, they're going to have a great meeting, to inquire the rights and wrong of all that. Now, I want to send a deputation down, to see how far they are inclined to go, and let them know we up in London are with them. And then we might get up a corresponding association, you know. It's a great opening for spreading the principles of the Charter."

"I sair misdoubt, it's just bread they'll be wanting, they labourers, mair than liberty. Their God is their belly, I'm thinking, and a verra poor, empty idol he is the noo; sma' burnt-offerings and fat o' rams he gets, to propitiate him. But ye might send down a canny body, just to spy out the nakedness o' the land."

"I will go!" I said, starting up. "They shall see that I do care for The Cause. If it's a dangerous mission, so much the better; it will prove my sincerity. Where is the place?" "About ten miles from D \*\* \*\*."

"D \* \* \* \*!" My heart sank. If it had been any other spot in England! But it was too late to retract. Sandy saw what was the matter, and tried to turn the subject; but I was peremptory, almost rude with him. I felt I must keep up my present excitement, or lose my heart, and my caste, for ever; and as the hour for the committee was at hand, I jumped up and set off thither with them, whether they would or not. I heard Sandy whisper to Crossthwaite, and turned quite fiercely on him.

"If you want to speak about me, speak out. If you fancy that I shall let my connexion with that place" (I could not bring myself to name it) "stand in the way of my duty, you do not know me."

I announced my intention at the meeting. It was at first received coldly; but I spoke energetically - perhaps, as some told me afterwards, actually eloquently. When I got heated, I alluded to my former stay at D \* \* \*\*, and said (while my heart sunk at the bravado which I was uttering) that I should consider it a glory to retrieve my character with them, and devote myself to the cause of the oppressed, in the very locality whence had first arisen their unjust but pardonable suspicions. In short, generous, trusting hearts as they were, and always are, I talked them round; they shook me by the hand one by one, bade me God speed, told me that I stood higher than ever in their eyes, and then set to work to vote money from their funds for my travelling expenses, which I magnanimously refused, saying that I had a pound or two left from the sale of my poems, and that I must be allowed, as an act of repentance and restitution, to devote it to The Cause.

My triumph was complete. Even O'Flynn, who, like all Irishmen, had plenty of loose good-nature at bottom, and was as sudden and furious in his loves as in his hostilities, scrambled over the benches, regardless of patriots' toes, to shake me violently by the hand, and inform me that I was "a broth of a boy," and that "any little disagreements between us had vanished like a passing cloud from the sunshine of our fraternity" — when my eye was caught by a face which there was no mistaking — my cousin's!

Yes, there he sat, watching me like a basilisk, with his dark, glittering, mesmeric eyes, out of a remote corner of the room — not in contempt or anger, but there was a quiet, assured, sardonic smile about his lips, which chilled me to the heart.

The meeting was sufficiently public to allow of his presence, but how had he found out its existence? Had he come there as a spy on me? Had he been in the room when my visit to D \*\*\*\* was determined on? I trembled at the thought; and I trembled, too, lest he should be daring enough — and I knew he could dare anything, to claim acquaintance with me there and then. It would have ruined my new-restored reputation for ever. But he sat still and steady: and I had to go through the rest of the evening's business under the miserable, cramping knowledge that every word and gesture was being noted down by my most deadly enemy: trembling whenever I was addressed, lest some chance word of an acquaintance would implicate me still further — though, indeed, I was deep enough already. The meeting seemed interminable; and there I fidgeted, with my face scarlet — always seeing those basilisk eyes upon me — in fancy, for I dared not look again towards the corner where I knew they were.

At last it was over — the audience went out; and when I had courage to look round, my cousin had vanished among them. A load was taken off my breast, and I breathed freely again — for five minutes; for I had not made ten steps up the street, when an arm was familiarly thrust through mine, and I found myself in the clutches of my evil genius.

"How are you, my dear fellow? Expected to meet you there. Why, what an orator you are! Really, I haven't heard more fluent or passionate English this month of Sundays. You must give me a lesson in sermon-preaching. I can tell you, we parsons want a hint or two in that line. So you're going down to D \* \* \* \*, those poor starving labourers? 'Pon my honour, I've a great mind to go with you."

So, then, he knew all! However, there was nothing for it but to brazen it out; and, besides, I was in his power, and however hateful to me his seeming cordiality might be, I dared not offend him at that moment.

"It would be well if you did. If you parsons would show yourselves at such places as these a little oftener, you would do more to make the people believe your mission real, than by all the tracts and sermons in the world."

"But, my dear cousin" (and he began to snuffle and sink his voice), "there is so much sanguinary language, so much unsanctified impatience, you frighten away all the meek apostolic men among the priesthood — the very ones who feel most for the lost sheep of the flock."

"Then the parsons are either great Pharisees or great cowards, or both."

"Very likely. I was in a precious fright myself, I know, when I saw you recognised me. If I had not felt strengthened, you know, as of course one ought to be in all trials, by the sense of my holy calling, I think I should have bolted at once. However, I took the precaution of bringing my Bowie and revolver with me, in case the worst came to the worst."

"And a very needless precaution it was," said I, half laughing at the quaint incongruity of the priestly and the lay elements in his speech. "You don't seem to know much of working men's meetings, or working men's morals. Why, that place was open to all the world. The proceedings will be in the newspaper to-morrow. The whole bench of bishops might have been there, if they had chosen; and a great deal of good it would have done them!"

"I fully agree with you, my dear fellow. No one hates the bishops more than we true high-churchmen, I can tell you that's a great point of sympathy between us and the people. But I must be off. By-the-by, would you like me to tell our friends at D \*\*\*\* that I met you? They often ask after you in their letters, I assure you."

This was a sting of complicated bitterness. I felt all that it meant at once. So he was in constant correspondence with them, while I — and that thought actually drove out of my head the more pressing danger of his utterly ruining me in their esteem, by telling them, as he had a very good right to do, that I was going to preach Chartism to discontented mobs.

"Ah! well! perhaps you wouldn't wish it mentioned? As you like, you know. Or, rather," and he laid an iron grasp on my arm, and dropped his voice — this time in earnest — "as you behave, my wise and loyal cousin! Good night."

I went home — the excitement of self-applause, which the meeting had called up, damped by a strange weight of foreboding. And yet I could not help laughing, when, just as I was turning into bed, Crossthwaite knocked at my door, and, on being admitted, handed over to me a bundle wrapped up in paper.

"There's a pair of breeks for you — not plush ones, this time, old fellow — but you ought to look as smart as possible. There's so much in a man's looking dignified, and all that, when he's speechifying. So I've just brought you down my best black trousers to travel in. We're just of a size, you know; little and good, like a Welshman's cow. And if you tear them, why, we're not like poor, miserable, useless aristocrats; tailors and sailors can mend their own rents." And he vanished, whistling the "Marseillaise." I went to bed and tossed about, fancying to myself my journey, my speech, the faces of the meeting, among which Lillian's would rise, in spite of all the sermons which I preached to myself on the impossibility of her being there, of my being known, of any harm happening from the movement; but I could not shake off the fear, If there were a riot, a rising! — If any harm were to happen to her! — If — Till, mobbed into fatigue by a rabble of such miserable hypothetic ghosts, I fell asleep, to dream that I was going to be hanged for sedition, and that the mob were all staring and hooting at me, and Lillian clapping her hands and setting them on; and I woke in an agony, to find Sandy Mackaye standing by my bedside with a light.

"Hoolie, laddie! ye need na jump up that way. I'm no' gaun to burke ye the nicht; but I canna sleep; I'm sair misdoubtful o' the thing. It seems a' richt, an' I've been praying for us, an' that's mickle for me, to be taught our way; but I dinna see aught for ye but to gang. If your heart is richt with God in this matter, then he's o' your side, an' I fear na what men may do to ye. An' yet, ye're my Joseph, as it were, the son o' my auld age, wi' a coat o' many colours, plush breeks included; an' gin aught take ye, ye'll bring down my grey haffets wi' sorrow to the grave!"

The old man gazed at me as he spoke, with a deep, earnest affection I had never seen in him before; and the tears glistened in his eyes by the flaring candlelight, as he went on:

"I ha' been reading the Bible the nicht. It's strange how the words o''t rise up, and open themselves, whiles, to puir distractit bodies; though, maybe, no' always in just in the orthodox way. An' I fell on that, 'Behold, I send ye forth as lambs in the midst o' wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents an' harmless as doves;' an' that gave me comfort, laddie, for ye. Mind the warning, dinna gang wud, whatever ye may see an' hear; it's an ill way o' showing pity, to gang daft anent it. Dinna talk magniloquently; that's the workman's darling sin. An' mind ye dinna go too deep wi' them. Ye canna trust them to understand ye; they're puir foolish sheep that ha' no shepherd — swine that ha' no wash, rather. So cast na your pearls before swine, laddie, lest they trample them under their feet, an' turn again an' rend ye."

He went out, and I lay awake tossing till morning, making a thousand good resolutions — like the rest of mankind.

### TAILOR AND POET.

# CHAPTER XXVIII.

#### The Men who are Eaten.

WITH many instructions from our friends, and warnings from Mackaye, I started next day on my journey. When I last caught sight of the old man, he was gazing fixedly after me, and using his pocket-handkerchief in a somewhat suspicious way. I had remarked how depressed he seemed, and my own spirits shared the depression. A presentiment of evil hung over me, which not even the excitement of the journey - to me a rare enjoyment - could dispel. I had no heart, somehow, to look at the country scenes around, which in general excited in me so much interest, and I tried to lose myself in summing up my stock of information on the question which I expected to hear discussed by the labourers. I found myself not altogether ignorant. The horrible disclosures of S. G. O., and the barbarous abominations of the Andover Workhouse, then fresh in the public mind, had had their due effect on mine; and, like most thinking artisans, I had acquainted myself tolerably from books and newspapers with the general condition of the country labourers.

I arrived in the midst of a dreary, treeless country, whose broad brown and grey fields were only broken by an occasional line of dark, doleful firs, at a knot of thatched hovels, all sinking and leaning every way but the right, the windows patched with paper, the doorways stopped with filth, which surrounded a beer-shop. That was my destination — unpromising enough for any one but an agitator. If discontent and misery are preparatives for liberty — and they are — so strange and unlike ours are the ways of God — I was likely enough to find them there.

I was welcomed by my intended host, a little pert, snub-nosed shoemaker, who greeted me as his cousin from London — a relationship which it seemed prudent to accept.

He took me into his little cabin, and there, with the assistance of a shrewd, good-natured wife, shared with me the best he had; and after supper commenced, mysteriously and in trembling, as if the very walls might have ears, a rambling bitter diatribe on the wrongs and sufferings of the labourers; which went on till late in the night, and which I shall spare my readers: for if they have either brains or hearts, they ought to know more than I can tell them, from the public prints, and, indeed, from their own eyes — although, as a wise man says, there is nothing more difficult than to make people see first the facts which lie under their own nose.

Upon one point, however, which was new to me, he was very fierce — the custom of landlords.letting the cottages with their farms, for the mere sake of saving themselves trouble; thus giving up all power of protecting the poor man, and delivering him over, bound hand and foot, even in the matter of his commonest home comforts, to farmers, too penurious, too ignorant, and often too poor, to keep the cottages in a state fit for the habitation of human beings. Thus the poor man's hovel, as well as his labour, became, he told me, a source of profit to the farmer, out of which he wrung the last drop of gain. The necessary repairs were always put off as long as possible — the labourers were robbed of their gardens — the slightest rebellion lost them not only work, but shelter from the elements; the slavery under which they groaned penetrated even to the fireside and to the bedroom.

"And who was the landlord of this parish?"

"Oh! he believed he was a very good sort of man, and uncommon kind to the people where he lived, but that was fifty miles away in another county; and he liked that estate better than this, and never came down here, except for the shooting."

Full of many thoughts, and tired out with my journey, I went up to bed, in the same loft with the cobbler and his wife, and fell asleep, and dreamt of Lillian.

About eight o'clock the next morning I started forth with my guide, the shoemaker, over as desolate a country as men can well conceive. Not a house was to be seen for miles, except the knot of hovels which we had left, and here and there a great dreary lump of farm-buildings, with its yard of yellow stacks. Beneath our feet the earth was iron, and the sky iron above our heads. Dark curdled clouds, "which had built up everywhere an under-roof of doleful grey," swept on before the bitter northern wind, which whistled through the low leafless hedges and rotting wattles, and crisped the dark sodden leaves of the scattered hollies, almost the only trees in sight.

We trudged on, over wide stubbles, thick with innumerable weeds; over wide fallows, in which the deserted ploughs stood frozen fast; then over clover and grass, burnt black with frost; then over a field of turnips, where we passed a large fold of hurdles, within which some hundred sheep stood, with their heads turned from the cutting blast. All was dreary, idle, silent; no sound or sign of human beings. One wondered where the people lived, who cultivated so vast a tract of civilised, over-peopled, nineteenth-century England. As we came up to the fold, two little boys hailed us from the inside — two little wretches with blue noses and white cheeks, scarecrows of rags and patches, their feet peeping through bursten shoes twice too big for them, who seemed to have shared between them a ragged pair of worsted gloves, and cowered among the sheep, under the shelter of a hurdle, crying and inarticulate with cold.

"What's the matter, boys?"

"Turmits is froze, and us can't turn the handle of the cutter. Do ye gie us a turn, please!"

We scrambled over the hurdles, and gave the miserable little creatures the benefit of ten minutes' labour. They seemed too small for such exertion: their little hands were purple with chilblains, and they were so sorefooted they could scarcely limp. I was surprised to find them at least three years older than their size and looks denoted, and still more surprised, too, to find that their salary for all this bitter exposure to the elements — such as I believe I could not have endured two days running — was the vast sum of one shilling a week each, Sundays included. "They didn't never go to school, nor to church nether, except just now and then, sometimes they had to mind the shep."

I went on, sickened with the contrast between the highlybred, over-fed, fat, thick-woolled animals, with their troughs of turnips and malt-dust, and their racks of rich clover-hay, and their little pent-house of rock-salt, having nothing to do but to eat and sleep, and eat again, and the little half-starved shivering animals who were their slaves. Man the master of the brutes? Bah! As society is now, the brutes are the masters - the horse, the sheep, the bullock, is the master, and the labourer is their slave. "Oh! but the brutes are eaten!" Well; the horses at least are not eaten - they live, like landlords, till they die. And those who are eaten, are certainly not eaten by their human servants. The sheep they fat, another kills, to parody Shelley; and, after all, is not the labourer, as well as the sheep, eaten by you, my dear Society? Alton Locke. 16

- devoured body and soul, not the less really because you are longer about the meal, there being an old prejudice against cannibalism, and also against murder — except after the Riot Act has been read.

"What!" shrick the insulted respectabilities, "have we not paid him his wages weekly, and has be not lived upon them?" Yes; and have you not given your sheep and horses their daily wages, and have they not lived on them? You wanted to work them; and they could not work, you know, unless they were alive. But here lies your iniquity: you gave the labourer nothing but his daily food - not even his lodgings; the pigs were not stinted of their wash to pay for their sty-room, the man was; and his wages, thanks to your competitive system, were beaten down deliberately and conscientiously (for was it not according to political economy, and the laws thereof?) to the minimum on which he could or would work, without the hope or the possibility of saving a farthing. You know how to invest your capital profitably, dear Society, and to save money over and above your income of daily comforts; but what has he saved? - what is he profited by all those years of labour? He has kept body and soul together - perhaps he could have done that without you or your help. But his wages are used up every Saturday night. When he stops working, you have in your pocket the whole real profits of his nearly fifty years' labour, and he has nothing. And then you say that you have not eaten him! You know, in your heart of hearts, that you have. Else, why in Heaven's name do you pay him poor's rates? If, as you say, he has been duly repaid in wages, what is the meaning of that half-a-crown a week? - you owe him nothing. Oh! but the man would starve -- common humanity forbids? What now, Society? Give him alms, if you will, on the score of humanity; but do not tax people for his support, whether they choose or not—that were a mere tyranny and robbery. If the landlord's feelings will not allow him to see the labourer starve, let him give, in God's name; but let him not cripple and drain, by compulsory poor-rates, the farmer who has paid him his "just remuneration" of wages, and the parson who probably, out of his scanty income, gives away twice as much in alms as the landlord does out of his superfluous one. No, no; as long as you retain compulsory poor-laws, you confess that it is not merely humane, but just, to pay the labourer more than his wages. You confess yourself in debt to him, over and above, an uncertain sum, which it suits you not to define, because such an investigation would expose ugly gaps and patches in that same snug competitive and property world of yours; and, therefore, being the stronger party, you compel your debtor to give up the claim which you confess, for an annuity of halfa-crown a week — that being the just-above-starving-point of the economic thermometer. And yet you say you have not eaten the labourer! You see, we workmen too have our thoughts about political economy, differing slightly from yours, truly — just as the man who is being hanged may take a somewhat different view of the process from the man who is hanging him. Which view is likely to be the more practical one?

With some such thoughts I walked across the open down, toward a circular camp, the earthwork, probably, of some old British town. Inside it, some thousand or so of labouring people were swarming restlessly round a single large block of stone, some relic of Druid times, on which a tall man stood, his dark figure thrown out in bold relief against the dreary sky. As we pushed through the crowd, I was struck with the wan, haggard look of all faces; their lacklustre eyes and drooping lips, stooping shoulders, heavy, dragging steps, gave them a crushed, dogged air, which was infinitely painful, and bespoke a grade of misery more habitual and degrading than that of the excitable and passionate artisan.

There were many women among them, talking shrilly, and looking even more pinched and wan than the men. I remarked, also, that many of the crowd carried heavy sticks, pitchforks, and other tools which might be used as fearful weapons — an ugly sign, which I ought to have heeded betimes.

They glared with sullen curiosity at me and my Londoner's clothes, as, with no small feeling of self-importance, I pushed my way to the foot of the stone. The man who stood on it seemed to have been speaking some time. His words, like all I heard that day, were utterly devoid of anything like eloquence or imagination — a dull string of somewhat incoherent complaints, which derived their force only from the intense earnestness, which attested their truthfulness. As far as I can recollect, I will give the substance of what I heard. But, indeed, I heard nothing but what has been bandied about from newspaper to newspaper for years — confessed by all parties, deplored by all parties, but never an attempt made to remedy it.

- "They farmers makes slaves on us. I can't hear no difference between a Christian and a nigger, except they flogs the niggers and starves the Christians; and I don't know which I'd choose. I served Farmer \*\*\*\* seven year, off and on, and arter harvest he tells me he's no more work for me, nor my boy nether, acause he's getting too big for him, so he gets a little 'un instead, and we does nothing; and my boy lies about, getting into bad ways, like hundreds more; and then we goes to board, and they bids us go and look for work; and we goes up next part to London. I couldn't get none; they'd enough to do, they said, to employ their own; and we begs our way home, and goes into the Union; and they turns us out again in two or three days, and promises us work again, and gives us two days' gravel-pecking, and then says they has no more for us; and we was sore pinched, and laid a-bed all day; then next board-day we goes to 'em, and they gives us one day more - and that threw us off another week, and then next board-day we goes into the Union again for three days, and gets sent out again: and so I've been starving one-half of the time, and they putting us off and on o' purpose like that; and I'll bear it no longer, and that's what I says."

He came down, and a tall, powerful, well-fed man, evidently in his Sunday smock-frock and clean yellow leggings, got up and began:

"I hav'n't no complaint to make about myself. I've a good master, and the parson's a right kind 'un, and that's more than all can say, and the squire's a real gentleman; and my master, he don't need to lower his wages. I gets my ten shillings a week all the year round, and harvesting, and a pig, and a 'lotment — and that's just why I come here. If I can get it, why can't you?"

"Cause our masters baint like yourn."

"No, by George, there baint no money round here away like that, I can tell you."

"And why ain't they?" continued the speaker. "There's the shame on it. There's my master can grow five quarters where yourn only grows three; and so he can live and pay like a man; and so he say he don't care for free trade. You know, as well as I, that there's not half o' the land round here grows what it ought. They ain't no money to make it grow more, and besides, they won't employ no hands to keep it clean. I come across more weeds in one field here, than I've seen for nine year on our farm. Why arn't some of you a-getting they weeds up? It 'ud pay 'em to farm better and they knows that, but they're too lazy; if they can just get a living off the land, they don't care; and they'd sooner save money out o' your wages, than save it by growing more corn - it's easier for 'em, it is. There's the work to be done, and they won't let you do it. There's you crying out for work, and work crying out for you - and nether of you can get to the other. I say that's a shame, I do. I say a poor man's a slave. He daren't leave his parish - nobody won't employ him, as can employ his own folk. And if he stays in his parish, it's just a chance whether he gets a good master or a bad 'un. He can't choose, and that's a shame, it is. Why should he go starving because his master don't care to do the best by the land? If they can't till the land, I say let them get out of it, and let them work it as can. And I think as we ought all to sign a petition to government, to tell 'em all about it; though I don't see as how they could help us, unless they'd make a law to force the squires to put in nobody to a farm as hadn't money to work it fairly."

"I says," said the next speaker, a poor fellow whose sentences were continually broken by a hacking cough, "just what he said. If they can't till the land, let them do it as can. But they won't; they won't let us have a scrap on it, though we'd pay 'em more for it nor ever they'd make for themselves. But they says it 'ud make us too independent, if we had an acre or so o' land; and so it 'ud, for they. And so I says as he did - they want to make slaves on us altogether, just to get the flesh and bones off us at their own price. Look you at this here down. - If I had an acre on it, to make a garden on, I'd live well with my wages, off and on. Why, if this here was in garden, it 'ud be worth twenty, forty times o' that it be now. And last spring I lays out o' work from Christmas till barley-sowing, and I goes to the farmer and axes for a bit o' land to dig and plant a few potatoes - and he says, 'You be d-d! If you're minding your garden after hours, you'll not be fit to do a proper day's work for me in hours - and I shall want you by-and-by, when the weather breaks' - for it was frost most bitter, it was. 'And if you gets potatoes

you'll be getting a pig - and then you'll want straw, and meal to fat 'un - and then I'll not trust you in my barn, I can tell ye;' and so there it was. And if I'd had only one half-acre of this here very down as we stands on, as isn't worth five shillings a year — and I'd a given ten shillings for it — my belly wouldn't a been empty now. Oh, they be dogs in the manger, and the Lord 'll reward 'em therefor! First they says they can't afford to work the land 'emselves, and then they wain't let us work it ether. Then they says prices is so low they can't keep us on, and so they lowers our wages; and then when prices goes up ever so much, our wages don't go up with 'em. So, high prices or low prices, it's all the same. With the one we can't buy bread, and with the other we can't get work. I don't mind free trade - not I: to be sure, if the loaf's cheap, we shall be ruined; but if the loaf's dear, we shall be starved - and for that, we is starved, now. Nobody don't care for us; for my part, I don't much care for myself. A man must die some time or other. Only I thinks if we could some time or other just see the Queen once, and tell her all about it, she'd take our part, and not see us put upon like that, I do."

"Gentlemen!" cried my guide, the shoemaker, in a somewhat conceited and dictatorial tone, as he skipped up by the speaker's side, and gently shouldered him down - "it ain't like the ancient times as I've read of, when any poor man as had a petition could come promiscuously to the King's royal presence, and put it direct into his own hand, and be treated like a gentleman. Don't you know as how they locks up the Queen now-a-days, and never lets a poor soul come a-near her, lest she should hear the truth of all their iniquities? Why, they never lets her stir without a lot o' dragoons with drawn swords riding all around her; and if you dared to go up to her to ax mercy, whoot! they'd chop your head off before you could say, 'Please your Majesty.' And then the hypocrites say as it's to keep her from being frightened and that's true - for it's frightened she'd be, with a vengeance, if she knowed all that they grand folks make poor labourers suffer, to keep themselves in power and great glory. I tell ye, 'tarn't perpracticable, at all, to ax the Queen for anything; she's afeard of her life on 'em. You just take my advice, and sign a round-robin to the squires - you tell 'em as you're willing to till the land for 'em, if they'll let you, There's draining and digging enough to be done as 'ud keep ye all in work, arn't there?"

"Ay, ay; there's lots o' work to be done, if so be we could get at it. Everybody knows that."

"Well, you tell 'em that. Tell 'em here's hundreds and hundreds of ye starving, and willing to work; and then tell 'em, if they won't find ye work, they shall find ye meat. There's lots o' victuals in their larders now; haven't you as good a right to it as their jackanapes o' footmen? The squires is at the bottom of it all. What do you stupid fellows go grumbling at the farmers for? Don't they squires tax the land twenty or thirty shillings an acre; and what do they do for that? The best of 'em, if he gets five thousand a year out o' the land, don't give back five hundred in charity, or schools, or poor-rates - and what's that to speak of? And the main of 'em - curse 'em! - they drains the money out o' the land, and takes it up to London, or into foreign parts, to spend on fine clothes and fine dinners; or throws it away at elections, to make folks beastly drunk, and sell their souls for money - and we gets no good on it. I'll tell you what it's come to, my men - that we can't afford no more landlords. We can't afford 'em, and that's the truth of it!"

The crowd growled a dubious assent.

"Oh, yes, you can grumble at the farmers, acause you deals with them first-hand; but you be too stupid to do aught but hunt by sight. I be an old dog, and I hunts cunning. I sees farther than my nose, I does. I larnt politics to London when I was a prentice; and I ain't forgotten the plans of it. Look you here. The farmers, they say they can't live unless they can make four rents, one for labour, and one for stock, and one for rent, and one for themselves; ain't that about right? Very well; just now they can't make four rents - in course they can't. Now, who's to suffer for that? - the farmer as works, or the labourer as works, or the landlord as does nothing? But he takes care on himself. He won't give up his rent-not he. Perhaps he might give back ten per cent., and what's that? - two shillings an acre, maybe. What's that, if corn falls two pound a load, and more? Then the farmer gets a stinting; and he can't stint hisself, he's bad enough off already; he's forty shillings out o' pocket on every load of wheat - that's eight shillings, maybe, on every acre of his land on a four-course shift - and were's the eight shillings

to come from, for the landlord's only given him back two on it? He can't stint hisself, he daren't stint his stock, and so he stints the labourers; and so it's you as pays the landlord's rent — you, my boys, out o' your flesh and bones, you do — and you can't afford it any longer, by the look of you — so just tell 'em so!"

This advice seemed to me as sadly unpractical as the rest. In short, there seemed to be no hope, no purpose among them — and they felt it; and I could hear, from the running comment of murmurs, that they were getting every moment more fierce and desperate at the contemplation of their own helplessness — a mood which the next speech was not likely to soften.

A pale, thin woman scrambled up on the stone, and stood there, her scanty and patched garments fluttering in the bitter breeze, as, with face sharpened with want, and eyes fierce with misery, she began, in a querulous, scornful falsetto:

"I am an honest woman. I brought up seven children decently, and never axed the parish for a farden, till my husband died. Then they tells me I can support myself and mine - and so I does. Early and late I hoed turmits, and early and late I rep, and left the children at home to mind each other; and one on 'em fell into the fire, and is gone to heaven, blessed angel! and two more it pleased the Lord to take in the fever; and the next, I hope, will soon be out o' this miserable sinful world. But look you here: three weeks agone, I goes to the board. I had no work. They say they could not relieve me for the first week, because I had money yet to take. - The hypocrites! they knowing as I couldn't but owe it all, and a lot more beside. Next week they sends the officer to inquire. That was ten days gone, and we starving. Then, on board-day, they gives me two loaves. Then, next week, they takes it off again. And when I goes over (five miles) to the board to ax why - they'd find me work - and they never did; so we goes on starving for another week - for no one wouldn't trust us; how could they, when we was in debt already a whole lot? - you're all in debt!"

"That we are."

"There's some here as never made ten shillings a week in their lives, as owes twenty pounds at the shop!"

"Ay, and more - and how's a man ever to pay that?"

"So this week, when I comes, they offers me the house.

Would I go into the house? They'd be glad to have me, acause I'm strong and hearty and a good nurse. But would I, that am an honest woman, go to live with they offscourings they" - (she used a strong word) - "would I be parted from my children? Would I let them hear the talk, and keep the company as they will there, and learn all sorts o' sins that they never heard on, blessed be God! I'll starve first, and see them starve too - though, Lord knows, it's hard. - Oh! it's hard," she said, bursting into tears, "to leave them as I did this morning, crying after their breakfasts, and I none to give 'em. I've got no bread - where should I? I've got no fire - how can I give one shilling and sixpence a hundred for coals? And if I did, who'd fetch 'em home? And if I dared break a hedge for a knitch o' wood, they'd put me in prison, they would, with the worst. What be I to do? What be you going to do? That's what I came here for. What be ye going to do for us women - us that starve and stint, and wear our hands off for you men and your children, and get hard words, and hard blows from you? Oh! if I was a man, I know what I'd do, I do! But I don't think you be men, three parts o' you, or you'd not see the widow and the orphan starve as you do, and sit quiet and grumble, as long as you can keep your own bodies and souls together. Eh! ye cowards!"

What more she would have said in her excitement, which had risen to an absolute scream, I cannot tell; but some prudent friend pulled her down off the stone, to be succeeded by a speaker more painful, if possible; an aged blind man, the worn-out melancholy of whose slow, feeble voice made my heart sink, and hushed the murmuring crowd into silent awe.

Slowly he turned his grey, sightless head from side to side, as if feeling for the faces below him — and then began:

"I heard you was all to be here — and I suppose you are; and I said I would come — though I suppose they'll take off my pay, if they hear of it. But I knows the reason of it, and the bad times and all. The Lord revealed it to me as clear as day, four year agone come Easter-tide. It's all along of our sins, and our wickedness — because we forgot Him — it is. I mind the old war times, what times they was, when there was smuggled brandy up and down in every public, and work more than hands could do. And then, how we all forgot the Lord, and went after our own lusts and pleasures — squires and parsons, and farmers and labouring folk, all alike. They

oughted to ha' knowed better - and we oughted too. Many's the Sunday I spent in skittle-playing and cock-fighting, and the pound I spent in beer, as might ha' been keeping me now. We was an evil and perverse generation — and so one o' my sons went for a sodger, and was shot at Waterloo, and the other fell into evil ways, and got sent across seas — and I be left alone for my sins. But the Lord was very gracious to me, and showed me how it was all a judgment on my sins, he did. He has turned his face from us, and that's why we're troubled. And so I don't see no use in this meeting. It won't do no good; nothing won't do us no good, unless we all repent of our wicked ways, our drinking, and our dirt, and our lovechildren, and our picking and stealing, and gets the Lord to turn our hearts, and to come back again, and have mercy on us, and take us away speedily out of this wretched world, where there's nothing but misery and sorrow, into His everlasting glory, Amen! Folks say as the day of judgment's a coming soon - and I partly think so myself. I wish it was all over, and we in heaven above; and that's all I have to say."

It seemed a not unnatural revulsion, when a tall, fierce man, with a forbidding squint, sprung jauntily on the stone, and setting his arms a-kimbo, broke out:

"Here be I, Blinkey, and I has as good a right to speak as ere a one. You're all blarned fools, you are. So's that old blind buffer there. You sticks like pigs in a gate, hollering and squeeking, and never helping yourselves. Why can't you do like me? I never does no work - darned if I'll work to please the farmers. The rich folks robs me, and I robs them, and that's fair and equal. You only turn poachers - you only go stealing turmits, and fire-ud, and all as you can find - and then you'll not need to work. Arn't it yourn? The game's no one's, is it now? - you know that. And if you takes turmits or corn, they're yourn - you helped to grow 'em. And if you're put to prison, I tell ye, it's a darned deal warmer, and better victuals too, than ever a one of you gets at home, let alone the Union. Now I knows the dodge. Whenever my wife's ready for her trouble, I gets cotched; then I lives like a prince in gaol, and she goes to the workus; and when it's all over, start fair again. Oh, you blockheads! - to stand here shivering with empty bellies. - You just go down to the farm and burn they stacks over the old rascal's head; and then they that let you starve now, will be forced to keep you then. If you can't get your share of the poor-rates, try the countryrates, my bucks — you can get fat on them at the Queen's expense — and that's more than you'll do in ever a Union as I hear on. Who'll come down and pull the farm about the folks' ears? Warn't it he as turned five on yer off last week? and ain't he more corn there than 'ud feed you all round this day, and won't sell it, just because he's waiting till folks are starved enough, and prices rise? Curse the old villain! who'll help to disappoint him o' that? Come along!"

A confused murmur arose, and a movement in the crowd. I felt that now or never was the time to speak. If once the spirit of mad aimless riot broke loose, I had not only no chance of a hearing, but every likelihood of being implicated in deeds which I abhorred; and I sprung on the stone and entreated a few minutes' attention, telling them that I was a deputation from one of the London Chartist committees. This seemed to turn the stream of their thoughts, and they gaped in stupid wonder at me, as I began hardly less excited than themselves.

I assured them of the sympathy of the London working men, made a comment on their own speeches — which the reader ought to be able to make for himself — and told them that I had come to entreat their assistance towards obtaining such a parliamentary representation as would secure them their rights. I explained the idea of the Charter, and begged for their help in carrying it out.

To all which they answered surlily, that they did not know anything about politics — that what they wanted was bread.

I went on, more vehement than ever, to show them how all their misery sprung (as I then fancied) from being unrepresented — how the laws were made by the rich for the poor, and not by all for all — how the taxes bit deep into the necessaries of the labourer, and only nibbled at the luxuries of the rich — how the criminal-code exclusively attacked the crimes to which the poor were prone, while it dared not interfere with the subtler iniquities of the high-born and wealthy — how poor-rates, as I have just said, were a confession on the part of society that the labourer was not fully remunerated. I tried to make them see that their interest, as much as common justice, demanded that they should have a voice in the councils of the nation, such as would truly proclaim their wants, their rights, their wrongs; and I have seen no reason since then to unsay my words.

To all which they answered that their stomachs were empty, and they wanted bread. "And bread we will have!" "Go, then," I cried, losing my self-possession between

disappointment and the maddening desire of influence - and, indeed, who could hear their story, or even look upon their faces, and not feel some indignation stir in him, unless selfinterest had drugged his heart and conscience - "go," I cried, "and get bread! After all, you have a right to it. No man is bound to starve. There are rights above all laws, and the right to live is one. Laws were made for man, not man for laws. If you had made the laws yourselves, they might bind you even in this extremity; but they were made in spite of you - against you. They rob you, crush you; even now they deny you bread. God has made the earth free to all, like the air and sunshine, and you are shut out from off it. The earth is yours, for you till it. Without you it would be a desert. Go and demand your share of that corn, the fruit of your own industry. What matter, if your tyrants imprison, murder you? - they can but kill your bodies at once, instead of killing them piece-meal, as they do now; and your blood will cry against them from the ground !! - Ay, Woe!" - I went on, carried away by feelings for which I shall make no apology; for, however confused, there was, and is, and ever will be, a God's truth in them, as this generation will find out at the moment when its own serene self-satisfaction crumbles underneath it - "Woe unto those that grind the faces of the poor! Woe unto those who add house to house, and field to field, till they stand alone in the land, and there is no room left for the poor man! The wages of their reapers which they have held back by fraud, cry out against them; and their cry has entered into the ears of the God of heaven -

But I had no time to finish. The murmur swelled into a roar, for "Bread! Bread!" My hearers had taken me at my word. I had raised the spirit; could I command him, now he was abroad?

"Go to Jennings's farm!"

"No! he ain't no corn, he sold 'un all last week."

"There's plenty at the Hall Farm! Rouse out the old steward!"

And, amid yells and execrations, the whole mass poured

down the hill, sweeping me away with them. I was shocked and terrified at their threats. I tried again and again to stop and harangue them. I shouted myself hoarse about the duty of honesty; warned them against pillage and violence; entreated them to take nothing but the corn which they actually needed; but my voice was drowned in the uproar. Still I felt myself in a measure responsible for their conduct; I had helped to excite them, and dare not, in honour, desert them; and, trembling, I went on, prepared to see the worst; following, as a flag of distress, a mouldy crust, brandished on the point of a pitchfork.

Bursting through the rotting and half-fallen palings, we entered a wide, rushy, neglected park, and along an old gravel road, now green with grass, we opened on a sheet of frozen water, and, on the opposite bank, the huge square corpse of a hall, the close-shuttered windows of which gave it a dead and ghastly look, except where here and there a single one showed, as through a black empty eyesocket, the dark unfurnished rooms within. On the right, beneath us, lay, amid tall elms, a large mass of farm-buildings, into the yard of which the whole mob rushed tumultuously — just in time to see an old man on horseback dart out and gallop hatless up the park, amid the yells of the mob.

"The old rascal's gone! and he'll call up the yeomanry. We must be quick, boys!" shouted one; and the first signs of plunder showed themselves in an indiscriminate chase after various screaming geese and turkeys; while a few of the more steady went up to the house-door, and, knocking, demanded sternly the granary keys.

A fat virago planted herself in the doorway, and commenced railing at them, with the cowardly courage which the fancied immunity of their sex gives to coarse women; but she was hastily shoved aside, and took shelter in an upper room, where she stood screaming and cursing at the window.

The invaders returned, cramming their mouths with bread, and chopping asunder flitches of bacon. The granary-doors were broken open, and the contents scrambled for, amid immense waste, by the starving wretches. It was a sad sight. Here was a poor shivering woman, hiding scraps of food under her cloak, and hurrying out of the yard to the children she had left at home. There was a tall man, leaning against the palings, gnawing ravenously at the same loaf with a little boy, who had scrambled up behind him. Then a huge blackguard came whistling up to me, with a can of ale. "Drink, my beauty! you're dry with hollering by now!"

"The ale is neither yours nor mine; I won't touch it."

"Darn your buttons! You said the wheat was ourn, acause we growed it — and thereby so's the beer — for we growed the barley too."

And so thought the rest; for the yard was getting full of drunkards, a woman or two among them, reeling knee-deep in the loose straw among the pigs.

"Thresh out they ricks!" roared another.

"Get out the threshing-machine!"

"You harness the horses!"

"No! there baint no time. Yeomanry 'll be here. You mun leave the ricks."

"Darned if we do. Old Woods shan't get naught by they." "Fire 'em, then, and go on to Slater's farm!"

"As well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb," hiccuped Blinkey, as he rushed through the yard with a lighted brand. I tried to stop him, but fell on my face in the deep straw, and got round the barns to the rick-yard, just in time to hear a crackle — there was no mistaking it; the windward stack was in a blaze of fire.

I stood awe-struck — I cannot tell how long — watching how the live flame-snakes crept and hissed, and leapt and roared, and rushed in long horizontal jets from stack to stack before the howling wind, and fastened their fiery talons on the barn-eaves, and swept over the peaked roofs, and hurled themselves in fiery flakes into the yard beyond — the food of man, the labour of years, devoured in aimless ruin! — Was it my doing? Was it not?

At last I recollected myself, and ran round again into the straw-yard, where the fire was now falling fast. The only thing which saved the house was the weltering mass of bullocks, pigs, and human beings drunk and sober, which trampled out unwittingly the flames as fast as they caught.

The fire had seized the roofs of the cart-stables, when a great lubberly boy blubbered out:

"Git my horses out! git my horses out o' the fire! I be so fond o' mun!"

"Well, they ain't done no harm, poor beasts!" And a dozen men ran in to save them; but the poor wretches, screaming with terror, refused to stir. I never knew what became of them — but their shricks still haunt my dreams. . . .

The yard now became a pandemonium. The more ruffianly part of the mob and alas! there were but too many of them-hurled the furniture out of the windows, or ran off with anything that they could carry. In vain I expostulated, threatened; I was answered by laughter, curses, frantic dances, and brandished plunder. Then I first found out how large a portion of rascality shelters itself under the wing of every crowd; and at the moment, I almost excused the rich for overlooking the real sufferers, in indignation at the rascals. But even the really starving majority, whose faces proclaimed the grim fact of their misery, seemed gone mad for the moment. The old crust of sullen, dogged patience had broken up, and their whole souls had exploded into reckless fury and brutal revenge - and yet there was no hint of violence against the red fat woman, who, surrounded with her blubbering children, stood screaming and cursing at the first-floor window, getting redder and fatter at every scream. The worst personality she heard was a roar of laughter, in which, such is poor humanity, I could not but join, as her little starved drab of a maid-of-all-work ran out of the door, with a bundle of stolen finery under her arm, and high above the roaring of the flames, and the shouts of the rioters, rose her mistress's yell:

"Oh Betsy! Betsy! you little awdacious unremorseful hussy! — a running away with my best bonnet and shawl!"

The laughter soon, however, subsided, when a man rushed breathless into the yard, shouting, "The yeomanry!"

At that sound, to my astonishment, a general panic ensued. The miserable wretches never stopped to inquire how many, or how far off, they were — but scrambled to every outlet of the yard, trampling each other down in their hurry. I leaped up on the wall, and saw, galloping down the park, a mighty armament of some fifteen men, with a tall officer at their head, mounted on a splendid horse.

"There they be! there they be! all the varmers, and young Squire Clayton wi'mun, on his grey hunter! O Lord! O Lord! and all their swords drawn!"

I thought of the old story in Herodotus — how the Scythian masters returned from war to the rebel slaves who had taken possession of their lands and wives, and brought them down

## ALTON LOCKE,

on their knees with terror, at the mere sight of the old dreaded dog-whips.

I did not care to run. I was utterly disgusted, disappointed with myself — the people. I longed, for the moment, to die and leave it all; and left almost alone, sat down on a stone, buried my head between my hands, and tried vainly to shut out from my ears the roaring of the fire.

At that moment "Blinkey" staggered out past me and against me, a writing-desk in his hands, shouting, in his drunken glory, "I've vound ut at last! I've got the old fellow's money! Hush! What a vule I be, hollering like that!" — And he was going to sneak off, with a face of drunken cunning, when I sprung up and seized him by the throat.

"Rascal! robber! lay that down! Have you not done mischief enough already?"

"I wain't have no sharing. What? Do you want un yourself, eh? Then we'll see who's the stronger!"

And in an instant he shook me from him, and dealt me a blow with the corner of the desk, that laid me on the ground. . . . . .

I just recollect the tramp of the yeomanry horses, and the gleam and jingle of their arms, as they galloped into the yard. I caught a glimpse of the tall young officer, as his great grey horse swept through the air over the high yard-pales — a feat to me utterly astonishing. Half a dozen long strides — the wretched ruffian, staggering across the field with his booty, was caught up. — The clear blade gleamed in the air — and then a fearful yell — and after that I recollect nothing.

Slowly I recovered my consciousness. I was lying on a truckle-bed — stone walls and a grated window! A man stood over me with a large bunch of keys in his hand. He had been wrapping my head with the towels. I knew, instinctively, where I was.

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"Well, young man," said he, in a not unkindly tone — "and a nice job you've made of it! Do you know where you are?"

"Yes," answered I, quietly; "in D \* \* \* gaol."

"Exactly so!"

# CHAPTER XXIX.

### The Trial.

THE day was come — quickly, thank Heaven; and I stood at the bar, with four or five miserable, haggard labourers, to take my trial for sedition, riot, and arson.

I had passed the intervening weeks half stupified with the despair of utter disappointment: disappointment at myself and my own loss of self-possession, which had caused all my misfortune, — perhaps, too, and the thought was dreadful, that of my wretched fellow-sufferers — disappointment with the labourers, with The Cause; and when the thought came over me, in addition, that I was irreparably disgraced in the eyes of my late patrons, parted for ever from Lillian by my own folly, I laid down my head and longed to die.

Then, again, I would recover awhile, and pluck up heart. I would plead my cause myself — I would testify against the tyrants to their face — I would say no longer to their besotted slaves, but to the men themselves, "Go to, ye rich men, weep and howl! The hire of your labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is by you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them that have reaped hath entered into the ears of the Lord God of Hosts." I would brave my fate — I would die protesting, and glory in my martyrdom. But —

"Martyrdom?" said Mackaye, who had come down to D \*\*\*\*, and was busy night and day about my trial. "Ye'll just leave alone the martyr dodge, my puir bairn. Ye're na martyr at a', ye'll understand, but a vara foolish callant, that lost his temper, an' cast his pearls before swine — an' very questionable pearls they, too, to judge by the price they fetch i' the market."

And then my heart sank again. And a few days before the trial a letter came, evidently in my cousin's handwriting, though only signed with his initials:

"Sire, — You are in a very great scrape — you will not deny that. How you will get out of it depends on your own common sense. You probably won't be hanged — for nobody believes that you had a hand in burning the farm; but, unless you take care, you will be transported. Call yourself John Nokes; entrust your case to a clever lawyer, and keep in the background. I warn you as a friend — if you try to speechify, Alton Locke. 17

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and play the martyr, and let out who you are, the respectable people who have been patronising you will find it necessary for their own sakes to clap a stopper on you for good and all, to make you out an impostor and a swindler, and get you out of the way for life: — while, if you are quiet, it will suit them to be quiet too, and say nothing about you, if you say nothing about them; and then there will be a change that they, as well as your own family, will do everything in their power to hush the matter up. So, again, don't let out your real name; and instruct your lawyers to know nothing about the W.'s; and then, perhaps, the Queen's counsel will know nothing about them either. Mind — you are warned, and woe to you if you are fool enough not to take the warning.

"G. L."

Plead in a false name! Never, so help me Heaven! To go into court with a lie in my mouth — to make myself an impostor — probably a detected one — it seemed the most cunning scheme for ruining me, which my evil genius could have suggested, whether or not it might serve his own selfish ends. But as for the other hints, they seemed not unreasonable, and promised to save me trouble; while the continued pressure of anxiety and responsibility was getting intolerable to my overwearied brain. So I showed the letter to Mackaye, who then told me that he had taken for granted that I should come to my right mind, and had therefore already engaged an old compatriot as attorney, and the best counsel which money could procure.

"But where did you get the money? You have not surely been spending your own savings on me?"

"I canna say that I wadna ha' so dune, in case o' need. But the men in town just subscribit; puir honest fellows."

"What! is my folly to be the cause of robbing them of their slender earnings? Never, Mackaye! Besides, they cannot have subscribed enough to pay the barrister whom you just mentioned. Tell me the whole truth, or, positively, I will plead my cause myself."

"Aweel, then, there was a bit bank-note or twa cam' to hand - I canna say whaur fra'. But that sent it direckit it to be expendit in the defence o' the sax prisoners — whereof ye make ane."

Again a world of fruitless conjecture. It must be the

And so the day was come. I am not going to make a long picturesque description of my trial—trials have become lately quite hackneyed subjects, stock properties for the fictionmongers—neither, indeed, could I do so, if I would. I recollect nothing of that day, but fragments—flashes of waking existence, scattered up and down in what seemed to me a whole life of heavy, confused, painful dreams, with the glare of all those faces concentrated on me—those countless eyes which I could not, could not meet—stony, careless, unsympathising—not even angry—only curious. If they had but frowned on me, insulted me, gnashed their teeth on me, I could have glared back defiance; as it was, I stood cowed and stupified, a craven by the side of cravens.

Let me see - what can I recollect? Those faces - faces - everywhere faces - a faint, sickly smell of flowers - a perpetual whispering and rustling of dresses - and all through it, the voice of some one talking, talking - I seldom knew what, or whether it was counsel, witness, judge, or prisoner, that was speaking. I was like one asleep at a foolish lecture, who hears in dreams, and only wakes when the prosing stops. Was it not prosing? What was it to me what they said? They could not understand me - my motives - my excuses; the whole pleading, on my side as well as the crown's, seemed one huge fallacy - beside the matter altogether - never touching the real point at issue, the eternal moral equity of my deeds or misdeeds. I had no doubt that it would all be conducted quite properly, and according to the forms of law; but what was law to me - I wanted justice. And so I let them go on their own way, conscious of but one thought - was Lillian in the court?

I dared not look and see. I dared not lift up my eyes toward the gaudy rows of ladies who had crowded to the "interesting trial of the D\*\*\*\* rioters." The torture of anxiety was less than that of certainty might be, and I kept my eyes down, and wondered how on earth the attorneys had found in so simple a case enough to stuff those great blue bags.

When, however, anything did seem likely to touch on a

reality, I woke up forthwith, in spite of myself. I recollect well, for instance, a squabble about challenging the jurymen; and my counsel's voice of pious indignation, as he asked, "Do you call these agricultural gentlemen and farmers, however excellent and respectable — on which point Heaven forbid that I, &c., &c. — the prisoner's 'pares,' peers, equals, or likes? What single interest, opinion, or motive, have they in common, but the universal one of self-interest, which, in this case, happens to pull in exactly opposite directions? Your lordship has often animadverted fully and boldly on the practice of allowing a bench of squires to sit in judgment on a poacher; surely it is quite as unjust that agricultural rioters should be tried by a jury of the very class against whom they are accused of rebelling."

"Perhaps my learned brother would like a jury of rioters?" suggested some Queen's counsel.

"Upon my word, then, it would be much the fairer plan."

I wondered whether he would have dared to say as much in the street outside — and relapsed into indifference. I believe there was some long delay, and wrangling about law-quibbles, which seemed likely at one time to quash the whole prosecution, but I was rather glad than sorry to find that it had been overruled. It was all a play, a game of bowls — the bowls happening to be human heads — got up between the lawyers, for the edification of society; and it would have been a pity not to play it out, according to the rules and regulations thereof.

As for the evidence, its tenor may be easily supposed from my story. There were those who could swear to my language at the camp. I was seen accompanying the mob to the farm, and haranguing them. The noise was too great for the witnesses to hear all I said, but they were certain I talked about the sacred name of liberty. The farmer's wife had seen me run round to the stacks when they were fired — whether just before or just after, she never mentioned. She had seen me running up and down in front of the house, talking loudly, and gesticulating violently; she saw me, too, struggling with another rioter for her husband's desk; — and the rest of the witnesses, some of whom I am certain I had seen busy plundering, though they were ready to swear that they had been merely accidental passers-by, seemed to think that they proved their own innocence, and testified their pious indigna-

tion, by avoiding carefully any fact which could excuse me. But, somehow, my counsel thought differently; and crossexamined, and bullied, and tormented, and misstated - as he was bound to do; and so one witness after another, clumsy and cowardly enough already, was driven by his engines of torture, as if by a pitiless spell, to deny half that he had deposed truly, and confess a great deal that was utterly false - till confusion became worse confounded, and there seemed no truth anywhere, and no falsehood either, and "naught was everything, and everything was naught;" till I began to have doubts whether the riot had ever occurred at all - and, indeed, doubts of my own identity also, when I had heard the counsel for the crown impute to me personally, as in duty bound, every seditious atrocity which had been committed either in England or France since 1793. To him, certainly, I did listen tolerably; it was "as good as a play." Atheism, blasphemy, vitriol-throwing, and community of women, were among my lighter offences - for had I not actually been engaged in a plot for the destruction of property? How did the court know that I had not spent the night before the riot, as "the doctor" and his friends did before the riots of 1839, in drawing lots for the estates of the surrounding gentlemen, with my deluded dupes and victims? - for of course I, and not want of work, had deluded them into rioting; at least, they never would have known that they were starving, if I had not stirred up their evil passions by daring to inform them of that otherwise impalpable fact. I, the only Chartist there? Might there not have been dozens of them? - emissaries from London, dressed up as starving labourers, and rheumatic old women? There were actually traces of a plan for seizing all the ladies in the country, and setting up a seraglio of them in D \* \* \* \* Cathedral. How did the court know that there was not one?

Ay, how indeed? and how did I know either? I really began to question whether the man might not be right after all. The whole theory seemed so horribly coherent — possible — natural. I might have done it, under possession of the devil, and forgotten it in excitement — I might — perhaps I did. And if there, why not elsewhere? Perhaps I had helped Jourdan Coupe-tête at Lyons, and been king of the Münster Anabaptists — why not? What matter? When would this eternity of wigs, and bonnets, and glaring windows, and eargrinding prate and jargon, as of a diabolic universe of street organs, end — end — end — and I get quietly hanged, and done with it all for ever?

Oh, the horrible length of that day! It seemed to me as if I had been always on my trial, ever since I was born. I wondered at times how many years ago it had all begun. I felt what a far stronger and more single-hearted patriot than I, poor Somerville, says of himself under the torture of the sergeant's cat, in a passage, whose horrible simplicity and unconscious pathos have haunted me ever since I read it; how, when only fifty out of his hundred lashes had fallen on the bleeding back, "The time since they began was like a long period of life: I felt as if I had lived all the time of my real life in torture, and that the days when existence had a pleasure in it were a dream long, long gone by."

The reader may begin to suspect that I was fast going mad; and I believe I was. If he has followed my story with a human heart, he may excuse me of any extreme weakness, if I did at moments totter on the verge of that abyss.

What saved me, I believe now, was the keen, bright look of love and confidence which flashed on me from Crossthwaite's glittering eyes, when he was called forward as a witness to my character. He spoke out like a man, I hear, that day. But the counsel for the crown tried to silence him triumphantly, by calling on him to confess himself a Chartist; as if a man must needs be a liar and a villain because he holds certain opinions about the franchise! However, that was, I heard, the general opinion of the court. And then Crossthwaite lost his temper, and called the Queen's counsel a hired bully, and so went down; having done, as I was told afterwards, no good to me.

And then there followed a passage of tongue-fence between Mackaye and some barrister, and great laughter at the barrister's expense; and then I heard the old man's voice rise thin and clear:

"Let him that is without sin amang ye, cast the first stane!"

And as he went down he looked at me — a look full of despair. I never had had a ray of hope from the beginning; but now I began to think whether men suffered much when they were hung, and whether one woke at once into the next life, or had to wait till the body had returned to the dust, and watch the ugly process of one's own decay. I was not afraid of death — I never experienced that sensation. I am not physically brave. I am as thoroughly afraid of pain as any child can be; but that next world has never offered any prospect to me, save boundless food for my insatiable curiosity.

But at that moment my attorney thrust into my hand a little dirty scrap of paper. "Do you know this man?"

I read it.

"SIR, — I wull tell all truthe. Mr. Lock is a murdered man if he be hanged. Lev me spek out, for love of the Lord. "J. DAVIS."

No. I never had heard of him; and I let the paper fall. A murdered man? I had known that all along. Had not the Queen's counsel been trying all day to murder me, as was

their duty, seeing that they got their living thereby? A few moments after a labouring man was in the witnessbox; and, to my astonishment, telling the truth, the whole truth, und nothing but the truth.

I will not trouble the reader with his details, for they were simply and exactly what I have already stated. He was badgered, bullied, cross-examined, but nothing could shake him. With that dogged honesty and laconic dignity, which is the good side of the English peasant's character, he stood manfully to his assertion — that I had done everything that words or actions could do to prevent violence, even to the danger of my own personal safety. He swore to the words which I used when trying to wrest the desk from the man who had stolen it; and when the Queen's counsel asked him, tauntingly, who had set him on bringing his new story there at the eleventh hour, he answered, equally to the astonishment of his questioner and of me,

"Muster Locke, hisself."

"What! the prisoner?" almost screamed the counsellor, who fancied, I suppose, that he had stumbled on a confession of unblushing bribery.

"Yes, he; he there. As he went up over hill to meeting he met my two boys a shep-minding; and, because the cutter was froze, he stop and turn the handle for 'em for a matter of

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ten minutes; and I was coming up over field, and says I, I'll hear what that chap's got to say — there can't be no harm in going up arter the likes of he; for, says I to myself, a man can't have got any great wickedness a plotting in he's head, when he'll stop a ten minutes to help two boys as he never sot eyes on afore in his life; and I think their honours 'll say the same."

Whether my reader will agree or not with the worthy fellow, my counsel, I need not say, did, and made full use of his hint. All the previous evidence was now discovered to have corroborated the last witness, except where it had been notoriously overthrown. I was extolled as a miracle of calm benevolence; and black became grey, and grey became spotless white, and the whole feeling of the court seemed changed in my favour; till the little attorney popped up his head and whispered to me:

"By George! that last witness has saved your life."

To which I answered, "Very well" — and turned stupidly back upon that nightmare thought — was Lillian in the court?

At last a voice, the judge's, I believe, for it was grave, gentle, almost compassionate, asked us one by one whether we had anything to say in our own defence. I recollect an indistinct murmur from one after another of the poor semibrutes on my left; and then my attorney, looking up to me, made me aware that I was expected to speak. On the moment, somehow, my whole courage returned to me. I felt that I must unburden my heart, now or never. With a sudden effort I roused myself, and looking fixedly and proudly at the reverend face opposite, began:

"The utmost offence which has been proved against me is a few bold words, producing consequences as unexpected as illogical. If the stupid ferocity with which my words were misunderstood, as by a horde of savages rather than Englishmen; — if the moral and physical condition of these prisoners at my side; — of those witnesses who have borne testimony against me, miserable white slaves, miscalled free labourers; — ay, if a single walk through the farms and cottages on which this mischief was bred, affords no excuse for one indignant sentence — "

There she was! There she had been all the time - right

opposite to me, close to the judge — cold, bright, curious smiling! And as our eyes met, she turned away, and whispered gaily something to a young man who sat be side her.

Every drop of blood in my body rushed into my forehead; the court, the windows, and the faces, whirled round and round, and I fell senseless on the floor of the dock.

I next recollect some room or other in the gaol, Mackaye with both my hands in his; and the rough kindly voice of the gaoler congratulating me on having "only got three years."

"But you didn't show half a good pluck," said some one. "There's two on 'em transported, took it as bold as brass, and thanked the judge for getting 'em out o' this starving place 'free gracious for nothing,' says they."

"Ah!" quoth the little attorney, rubbing his hands, "you should have seen \*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\* after the row in '42! They were the boys for the Bull Ring! Gave a barrister as good as he brought, eh, Mr. Mackaye? My small services, you remember, were of no use — really no use at all — quite ashamed to send in my little account. Managed the case themselves, like two patriotic parties as they were, with a degree of forensic acuteness, inspired by the consciousness of a noble cause — Ahem! You remember, friend M.? Grand triumphs those, eh?"

"Ay," said Sandy, "I mind them unco weel — they cost me a' my few savings, mair by token; an' mony a braw fallow paid for ither folks' sins that tide. But my puir laddie here's no made o' that stuff. He's ower thin-skinned for a patriot."

"Ah, well — this little taste of British justice will thicken his hide for him, eh?" And the attorney chuckled and winked. "He'll come out again as tough as a bull-dog, and as surly too. Eh, Mr. Mackaye? — eh?"

"Deed, then, I'm unco sair afeard that your opeenion is no a'thegither that improbable," answered Sandy, with a drawl of unusual solemnity.

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# CHAPTER XXX.

#### Prison Thoughts.

I was alone in my cell.

Three years' imprisonment! Thirty-six months! — one thousand and ninety-five days — and twenty-four whole hours in each of them! Well — I should sleep half the time: onethird at least. Perhaps I should not be able to sleep! To lie awake, and think — there! The thought was horrible — it was all horrible. To have three whole years cut out of my life, instead of having before me, as I had always as yet had, a mysterious Eldorado of new schemes and hopes, possible developments, possible triumphs, possible bliss — to have nothing, nothing before me but blank and stagnation, dead loss and waste: and then to go out again, and start once more where I had left off yesterday!

It should not be! I would not lose these years! I would show myself a man; they should feel my strength just when they fancied they had crushed me utterly! They might bury me, but I should rise again! - I should rise again more glorious, perhaps to be henceforth immortal, and live upon the lips of men. I would educate myself; I would read --what would I not read? These three years should be a time of sacred retirement and contemplation, as of Thebaid Anchorite, or Mahomet in his Arabian cave. I would write pamphlets that should thunder through the land, and make tyrants tremble on their thrones! All England - at least all crushed and suffering hearts - should break forth at my fiery words into one roar of indignant sympathy. No - I would write a poem; I would concentrate all my experience, my aspirations, all the hopes, and wrongs, and sorrows of the poor, into one garland of thorns - one immortal epic of suffering. What should I call it? And I set to work deliberately — such a thing is man — to think of a title.

I looked up, and my eye caught the close bars of the little window; and then came over me, for the first time, the full meaning of that word — Prison; that word which the rich use so lightly, knowing well that there is no chance, in these days, of their ever finding themselves in one; for the higher classes never break the laws — seeing that they have made them to fit themselves. Ay, I was in prison. I could not go out or come in at will. I was watched, commanded at every turn.

I was a brute animal, a puppet, a doll, that children put away in a cupboard, and there it lies. And yet my whole soul was as wide, fierce, roving, struggling, as ever. Horrible contradiction! The dreadful sense of helplessness, the crushing weight of necessity, seemed to choke me. The smooth white walls, the smooth white ceiling, seemed squeezing in closer and closer on me, and yet dilating into vast inane infinities, just as the merest knot of mould will transform itself, as one watches it, and nothing else, into enormous cliffs, long slopes of moor, and spurs of mountain-range. Oh, those smooth white walls and ceilings! If there had but been a print - a stain of dirt - a cobweb, to fleck their unbroken ghastliness! They stared at me, like grim, impassive, featureless, formless fiends; all the more dreadful for their sleek, hypocritic cleanliness - purity as of a saint-inquisitor watching with spotless conscience the victim on the rack. They choked me - I gasped for breath, stretched out my arms, rolled shrieking on the floor - the narrow chequered glimpse of free blue sky, seen through the window, seemed to fade dimmer and dimmer, farther and farther off. I sprang up, as if to follow it - rushed to the bars, shook and wrenched at them with my thin, puny arms - and stood spell-bound, as I caught sight of the cathedral towers, standing out in grand repose against the horizontal fiery bars of sunset, like great angels at the gates of Paradise, watching in stately sorrow all the wailing and the wrong below. And beneath, beneath - the well-known roofs - Lillian's home, and all its proud and happy memories! It was but a corner of a gable, a scrap of garden, that I could see beyond intervening roofs and trees but could I mistake them? There was the very cedar-tree; I knew its dark pyramid but too well! There I had walked by her; there, just behind that envious group of chestnuts, she was now. The light was fading; it must be six o'clock; she must be in her room now, dressing herself for dinner, looking so beautiful! And as I gazed, and gazed, all the intervening objects became transparent, and vanished before the intensity of my imagination. Were my poems in her room still? Perhaps she had thrown them away - the condemned rioter's poems! Was she thinking of me? Yes -- with horror and contempt. Well, at least she was thinking of me. And she would understand me at last - she must. Some day she would know all I had borne for love of her - the depth.

the might, the purity of my adoration. She would see the world honouring me, in the day of my triumph, when I was appreciated at last; when I stood before the eyes of admiring men, a people's singer, a king of human spirits, great with the rank which genius gives, then she would find out what a man had loved her: then she would know the honour, the privilege of a poet's worship.

- But that trial scene!

Ay-that trial scene. That cold, unmoved smile! - when she knew me, must have known me, not to be the wretch which those hired slanderers had called me. If she had cared for me - if she had a woman's heart in her at all, any pity, any justice, would she not have spoken? Would she not have called on others to speak, and clear me of the calumny? Nonsense! Impossible! She - so frail, tender, retiring how could she speak? How did I know that she had not felt for me? It was woman's nature-duty, to conceal her feelings; perhaps that after all was the true explanation of that smile. Perhaps, too, she might have spoken - might be even now pleading for me in secret; not that I wished to be pardonednot I - but it would be so delicious to have her, her, pleading for me! Perhaps - perhaps I might hear of her - from her! Surely she could not leave me here so close, without some token! And I actually listened, I know not how long, expecting the door to open, and a message to arrive: till, with my eyes riveted on that bit of gable, and my ears listening behind me like a hare's in her form, to catch every sound in the ward outside, I fell fast asleep, and forgot all in the heavy dreamless torpor of utter mental and bodily exhaustion.

I was awakened by the opening of my cell door, and the appearance of the turnkey.

"Well, young man, all right again? You've had a long nap; and no wonder, you've had a hard time of it lately; and a good lesson to you, too."

"How long have I slept? I do not recollect going to bed. And how came I to lie down without undressing?"

"I found you, at lock-up hours, asleep there, kneeling on the chair, with your head on the window-sill; and a mercy you hadn't tumbled off and broke your back. Now, look here. — You seems a civil sort of chap; and civil gets as civil gives with me. Only don't you talk no politics. They ain't no good to nobody, except the big 'uns wot gets their living thereby; and I should think you'd had dose enough on 'em to last for a month of Sundays. So just get yourself tidy, there's a lad, and come along with me to chapel."

I obeyed him, in that and other things; and I never received from him, or, indeed, from any one else there, aught but kindness. I have no complaint to make - but prison is prison. As for talking politics, I never, during those three years, exchanged as many sentences with any of my fellowprisoners. What had I to say to them? Poachers and petty thieves - the scum of misery, ignorance, and rascality throughout the country. If my heart yearned toward them at times, it was generally shut close by the exclusive pride of superior intellect and knowledge. I considered it, as it was, a degradation to be classed with such; never asking myself how far I had brought that degradation on myself: and I loved to show my sense of injustice by walking, moody and silent, up and down a lonely corner of the yard; and at last contrived, under the plea of ill-health (and, truly, I never was ten minutes without coughing), to confine myself entirely to my cell, and escape altogether the company of a class whom I despised, almost hated, as my betrayers, before whom I had cast away my pearls - questionable though they were, according to Mackaye. Oh! there is, in the intellectual workman's heart, as in all others, the root of Pharisaism the lust after self-glorifying superiority, on the ground of "genius." We too are men; frail, selfish, proud as others. The days are past, thank God, when the "gentlemen buttonmakers" used to insist on a separate tap-room from the mere "button-makers," on the ground of earning a few more shillings per week. But we are not yet thorough democrats, my brothers; we do not yet utterly believe our own loud doctrine of equality; nor shall we till - But I must not anticipate the stages of my own experience.

I complain of no one, again I say — neither of judge, jury, gaolers, or chaplain. True, imprisonment was the worst possible remedy for my disease that could have been devised, if, as the new doctrine is, punishments are inflicted only to reform the criminal. What could prison do for me, but embitter and confirm all my prejudices? But I do not see what else they could have done with me while law is what it is, and perhaps ever will be; dealing with the overt acts of the poor, and

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never touching the subtler and more spiritual iniquities of the rich respectable. When shall we see a nation ruled, not by the law, but by the Gospel; not in the letter which kills, but in the spirit which is love, forgiveness, life? When? God knows! And God does know.

But I did work, during those three years, for months at a time, steadily and severely; and, with little profit, alas! to my temper of mind. I gorged my intellect, for I could do nothing else. The political questions which I longed to solve in some way or other, were tabooed by the well-meaning chaplain. He even forbid me a standard English work on political economy, which I had written to Mackaye to borrow for me; he was not so careful, it will be seen hereafter, with foreign books. He meant, of course, to keep my mind from what he considered at once useless and polluting; but the only effect of his method was, that all the doubts and questions remained, rankling and fierce, imperiously demanding my attention, and had to be solved by my own moody and soured meditations, warped and coloured by the strong sense of universal wrong.

Then he deluged me with tracts, weak and well-meaning, which informed me that "Christians," being "not of this world," had nothing to do with politics; and preached to me the divine right of kings, passive obedience to the powers or impotences — that be, &c., &c., with such success as may be imagined. I opened them each, read a few sentences, and laid them by. "They were written by good men, no doubt; but men who had an interest in keeping up the present system;" at all events, by men who knew nothing of my temptations, my creed, my unbelief; who saw all heaven and earth from a station antipodal to my own: I had simply nothing to do with them.

And yet, excellent man! pious, benignant, compassionate! God forbid that I should, in writing these words, allow myself a desire so base as that of disparaging thee! However thy words failed of their purpose, that bright, gentle, earnest face never appeared without bringing balm to the wounded spirit. Hadst thou not recalled me to humanity, those three years would have made a savage and a madman of me. May God reward thee hereafter! Thou hast thy reward on earth in the gratitude of many a broken heart bound up, of drunkards sobered, thieves reclaimed, and outcasts taught to look for a paternal home denied them here on earth! While such thy deeds, what matter thine opinions?

But alas! (for the truth must be told, as a warning to those who have to face the educated working men,) his opinions did matter to himself. The good man laboured under the delusion, common enough, of choosing his favourite weapons from his weakest faculty; and the very inferiority of his intellect prevented him from seeing where his true strength lay. He would argue; he would try and convert me from scepticism by what seemed to him reasoning, the common figure of which was, what logicians, I believe, call begging the question; and the common method, what they call ignoratio elenchi shooting at pigeons, while crows are the game desired. He always started by demanding my assent to the very question which lay at the bottom of my doubts. He would wrangle and wrestle blindly up and down, with tears of earnestness in his eyes, till he had lost his temper, as far as it was possible for one so angel-guarded as he seemed to be; and then, when he found himself confused, contradicting his own words, making concessions at which he shuddered, for the sake of gaining from me assents which he found out the next moment I understood in quite a different sense from his, he would suddenly shift his ground, and try to knock me down authoritatively with a single text of Scripture; when all the while I wanted proof that Scripture had any authority at all.

He carefully confined himself, too, throughout, to the dogmatic phraseology of the pulpit; while I either did not understand, or required justification for, the strange, farfetched, technical meanings, which he attached to his expressions. If he would only have talked English! — if clergymen would only preach in English! — and then they wonder that their sermons have no effect! Their notion seems to be, as my good chaplain's was, that the teacher is not to condescend to the scholar, much less to become all things to all men, if by any means he may save some; but that he has a right to demand that the scholar shall ascend to him before he is taught; that he shall raise himself up of his own strength into the teacher's region of thought as well as feeling; to do for himself, in short, under penalty of being called an unbeliever, just what the preacher professes to do for him.

At last, he seemed dimly to discover that I could not ac-

quiesce in his conclusions, while I denied his premises; and so he lent me, in an ill-starred moment, "Paley's Evidences," and some tracts of the last generation against Deism. I read them, and remained, as hundreds more have done, just where I was before.

"Was Paley," I asked, "a really good and pious man?" The really good and pious man hemmed and hawed.

"Because, if he was not, I can't trust a page of his special pleading, let it look as clever as the whole Old Bailey in one."

Besides, I never denied the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, or his apostles. I doubted the myths and doctrines, which I believed to have been gradually built up round the true story. The fact was, he was, like most of his class, "attacking extinct Satans," fighting manfully against Voltaire, Volney, and Tom Paine; while I was fighting for Strauss, Hennell, and Emerson. And, at last, he gave me up for some weeks as a hopeless infidel, without ever having touched the points on which I disbelieved. He had never read Strauss — hardly even heard of him; and, till clergymen make up their minds to do that, and to answer Strauss also, they will, as he did, leave the heretic artisan just where they found him.

The bad effect which all this had on my mind may easily be conceived. I felt myself his intellectual superior. I tripped him up, played with him, made him expose his weaknesses, till I really began to despise him. May Heaven forgive me for it! But it was not till long afterwards that I began, on looking back, to see how worthless was any superior cleverness of mine before his superior moral and spiritual excellence. That was just what he would not let me see at the time. I was worshipping intellect, mere intellect; and thence arose my doubts; and he tried to conquer them by exciting the very faculty which had begotten them. When will the clergy learn that their strength is in action, and not in argument? If they are to reconvert the masses, it must be by noble deeds, as Carlyle says; "not by noisy theoretic laudation of a Church, but by silent practical demonstration of the Church."

But, the reader may ask, where was your Bible all this time?

Yes — there was a Bible in my cell — and the chaplain read to me, both privately and in chapel, such portions of it as he thought suited my case, or rather his utterly-mistaken

view thereof. But to tell the truth, I cared not to read or listen. Was it not the book of the aristocrats - of kings and priests, passive obedience, and the slavery of the intellect? Had I been thrown under the influence of the more educated Independents in former years, I might have thought differently. They, at least, have contrived, with what logical consistence I know not, to reconcile orthodox Christianity with unflinching democratic opinions. But such was not my lot. My mother, as I said in my first chapter, had become a Baptist; because she believed that sect, and as I think rightly, to be the only one which logically and consistently carries out the Calvinistic theory; and now I looked back upon her delight in Gideon and Barak, Samson and Jehu, only as the mystic application of rare exceptions to the fanaticism of a chosen few - the elect - the saints, who, as the fifth-monarchy men held, were one day to rule the world with a rod of iron. And so I fell - willingly, alas! - into the vulgar belief about the politics of Scripture, common alikestrange unanimity! --- to Infidel and Churchman. The great idea that the Bible is the history of mankind's deliverance from all tyranny, outward as well as inward; of the Jews, as the one free constitutional people among a world of slaves and tyrants; of their ruin, as the righteous fruit of a voluntary return to despotism; of the New Testament, as the good news that freedom, brotherhood, and equality, once confided only to Judæa and to Greece, and dimly seen even there, was henceforth to be the right of all mankind, the law of all society - who was there to tell me that? Who is there now to go forth and tell it to the millions who have suffered, and doubted, and despaired like me, and turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come? Again I ask - who will go forth and preach that Gospel, and save his native land?

But, as I said before, I read, and steadily. In the first place, I, for the first time in my life, studied Shakspeare throughout; and found out now the treasure which I had overlooked. I assure my readers I am not going to give a lecture on him here, as I was minded to have done. Only, as I am asking questions, who will write us a "People's Commentary on Shakspeare?"

Then I waded, making copious notes and extracts, through the whole of Hume, and Hallam's "Middle Ages" and "Con-Alton Locke. stitutional History," and found them barren to my soul. When (to ask a third and last question) will some man, of the spirit of Carlyle— one who is not ashamed to acknowledge the intervention of a God, a Providence, even of a devil, in the affairs of men — arise, and write a "People's History of England?"

Then I laboured long months at learning French, for the mere purpose of reading French political economy after my liberation. But at last, in my impatience, I wrote to Sandy to send me Proudhon and Louis Blanc, on the chance of their passing the good chaplain's censorship - and behold, they passed! He had never heard their names! He was, I suspect, utterly ignorant of French, and afraid of exposing his ignorance by venturing to criticise. As it was, I was allowed peaceable possession of them till within a few months of my liberation, with such consequences as may be imagined; and then, to his unfeigned terror and horror, he discovered, in some periodical, that he had been leaving in my hands books which advocated "the destruction of property," and therefore, in his eyes, of all which is moral or sacred in earth and heaven! I gave them up without a struggle, so really painful was the good soul's concern, and the reproaches which he heaped, not on me - he never reproached me in his life - but on himself, for having so neglected his duty.

'Then I read hard for a few months at physical science at Zoology and Botany, and threw it aside again in bitterness of heart. It was too bitter to be tantalised with the description of Nature's wondrous forms, and I there a prisoner, between those four white walls!

Then I set to work to write an autobiography — at least to commit to paper in regular order the most striking incidents and conversations which I could recollect, and which I had noted down as they occurred in my diary. From that source I have drawn nearly the whole of my history up to this point. For the rest I must trust to memory — and, indeed, the strange deeds and sufferings, and yet stranger revelations, of the last few months, have branded themselves deep enough upon my brain. I need not hope, or fear, that aught of them should slip my memory.

So went the weary time. Week after week, month after month, summer after summer, I scored the days off, like a

lonely school-boy, on the pages of a calendar; and day by day I went to my window, and knelt there, gazing at the gable and the cedar-tree. That was my only recreation. Sometimes, at first, my eyes used to wander over the wide prospect of rich lowlands, and farms, and hamlets, and I used to amuse myself with conjectures about the people who lived in them, and walked where they liked on God's earth: but soon I hated to look at the country; its perpetual change and progress mocked the dreary sameness of my dungeon. It was bitter, maddening, to see the grey boughs grow green with leaves, and the green fade to autumnal yellow, and the grey boughs reappear again, and I still there! The dark sleeping fallows bloomed with emerald blades of corn, and then the corn grew deep and crisp, and blackened before the summer breeze, in "waves of shadow," as Mr. Tennyson says in one of his most exquisite lyrics; and then the fields grew white to harvest day by day, and I saw the rows of sheaves rise one by one, and the carts crawling homeward under their load. could almost hear the merry voices of the children round them - children that could go into the woods, and pick wild flowers, and I still there! No - I would look at nothing but the gable, and the cedar-tree, and the tall cathedral towers; there was no change in them - they did not laugh at me.

But she who lived beneath them? Months and seasons crawled along, and yet no sign or hint of her! I was forgotten; forsaken! And yet I gazed, and gazed. I could not forget her; I could not forget what she had been to me. Eden was still there, though I was shut out from it for ever: and so, like a widower over the grave of her he loves, morning and evening I watched the gable and the cedar-tree.

And my cousin? Ah, that was the thought, the only thought, which made my life intolerable! What might he not be doing in the mean time? I knew his purpose — I knew his power. True, I had never seen a hint, a glance, which could have given him hope; bnt he had three whole years to win her in — three whole years, and I fettered, helpless, absent! "Fool! could I have won her if I had been free? At least, I would have tried: we would have fought it fairly out, on even ground: we would have seen which was the strongest, respectability and cunning, or the simplicity of genius. But now!" — And I tore at the bars of the window, and threw myself on the floor of my cell, and longed to die.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

#### The New Church.

In a poor suburb of the city, which I could see well enough from my little window, a new Gothic church was building. When I first took up my abode in the cell, it was just begun the walls had hardly risen above the neighbouring sheds and garden-fences. But month after month I had watched it growing; I had seen one window after another filled with tracery, one buttress after another finished off with its carved pinnacle; then I had watched the skeleton of the roof gradually clothed in tiling; and then the glazing of the windows - some of them painted, I could see, from the iron network which was placed outside them the same day. Then the doors were put up - were they going to finish that handsome tower? No; it was left with its wooden cap, I supposed for want of further funds. But the nave, and the deep chancel behind it, were all finished, and surmounted by a cross, - and beautifully enough the little sanctuary looked, in the virginpurity of its spotless freestone. For eighteen months I watched it grow before my eyes — and I was still in my cell!

And then there was a grand procession of surplices and lawn sleeves; and among them I fancied I distinguished the old dean's stately figure, and turned my head away, and looked again, and fancied I distinguished another figure - it must have been mere imagination — the distance was far too great for me to identify any one; but I could not get out of my head the fancy - say rather, the instinct - that it was my cousin's; and that it was my cousin whom I saw daily after that, coming out and going in, when the bell rang to morning and evening prayers - for there were daily services there, and saints' day services, and Lent services, and three services on a Sunday, and six or seven on Good Friday and Easterday. The little musical bell above the chancel-arch seemed always ringing; and still that figure haunted me like a nightmare, ever coming in and going out about its priestly calling - and I still in my cell! If it should be he! - so close to her! I shuddered at the thought; and, just because it was so intolerable, it clung to me, and tormented me, and kept me awake at nights, till I became utterly unable to study quietly,

and spent hours at the narrow window, watching for the very figure I loathed to see.

And then a Gothic school-house rose at the churchyard end, and troops of children poured in and out, and women came daily for alms; and when the frosts came on, every morning I saw a crowd, and soup carried away in pitchers, and clothes and blankets given away; the giving seemed endless, boundless; and I thought of the times of the Roman Empire and the "sportula," when the poor had got to live upon the alms of the rich, more and more, year by year - till they devoured their own devourers, and the end came; and I shuddered. And yet it was a pleasant sight, as every new church is to the healthy-minded man, let his religious opinions be what they may. A fresh centre of civilisation, mercy, comfort for weary hearts, relief from frost and hunger; a fresh centre of instruction, humanising, disciplining, however meagre in my eyes, to hundreds of little savage spirits; altogether a pleasant sight, even to me there in my cell. And I used to wonder at the wasted power of the Church - her almost entire monopoly of the pulpits, the schools, the alms of England; and then thank Heaven, somewhat prematurely, that she knew and used so little her vast latent power for the destruction of liberty.

Or for its realisation?

Ay, that is the question! We shall not see it solved — at least, I never shall.

But still that figure haunted me; all through that winter I saw it, chatting with old women, patting children's heads, walking to the church with ladies; sometimes with a tiny, tripping figure. — I did not dare to let myself fancy who that might be.

December passed, and January came. I had now only two months more before my deliverance. One day I seemed to myself to have spent a whole life in that narrow room; and the next, the years and months seemed short and blank as a night's sleep on waking; and there was no salient point in all my memory, since that last sight of Lillian's smile, and the faces and the windows whirling round me as I fell.

At last a letter came from Mackaye. "Ye speired for news o' your cousin — an' I find he's a neebour o' yours; ca'd to a new kirk i' the city o' your captivity — an' na stickit minister he makes, forbye he's ane o' these new Puseyite sectarians, to judge by your uncle's report. I met the auld baillie-bodie on the street, an' I was gaun to pass him by, but he was sae fu' o' good news he could na but stop an' ha' a crack wi' me on politics; for we ha' helpit thegither in certain municipal clanjamfries o' late. An' he told me your cousin wins honour fast, an' maun surely die a bishop — puir bairn! An' besides that, he's gaun be married the spring. I dinna mind the leddy's name; but there's tocher wi' lass o' his, I'll warrant. He's na laird o'Cockpen, for a penniless lass wi' a long pedigree."

As I sat meditating over this news — which made the torment of suspicion and suspense more intolerable than ever — behold a postscript, added some two days after.

"Oh! oh! Sic news! gran' news! news to make baith the ears o' him that heareth it to tingle. God is God, an' no the deevil after a'! Louis Philippe is doun! - doun, doun, like a dog, and the republic's proclaimed, an' the auld villain here in England, they say, a wanderer an' a beggar. I ha' sent ye the paper o' the day. Ps. - 73, 37, 12. Oh, the Psalms are full o't! Never say the Bible's no true, mair. I've been unco faithless mysel', God forgive me! I got grieving to see the wicked in sic prosperity. I did na gang into the sanctuary eneugh, an' therefore I could na see the end of these men how He does take them up suddenly after all, an' cast them doun: vanish they do, perish, an' come to a fearful end. Yea, like as a dream when one awaketh, so shalt thou make their image to vanish out of the city. Oh, but it's a day o' God! An' yet I'm sair afraid for they puir feckless French. I ha' na faith, ye ken, in the Celtic blude, an' its spirit o' lees. The Saxon spirit o' covetize is a grewsome house-fiend, and sae's our Norse speerit o' shifts an' dodges; but the spirit o' lees is warse, Puir lustful Reubens that they are! - unstable as water, they shall not excel. Well, well -- after all, there is a God that judgeth the earth; an' when a man kens that, he's learnt enough to last him till he dies."

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### CHAPTER XXXII.

#### The Tower of Babel.

A glorious people vibrated again The lightning of the nations; Liberty From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er France, Scattering contagious fire into the sky, Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay; And in the rapid plumes of song Clothed itself sublime and strong.

SUBLIME and strong? Alas! not so. An outcast, heartless, faithless, and embittered, I went forth from my prison. But yet Louis Philippe had fallen! And as I whirled back to Babylon and want, discontent and discord, my heart was light, my breath came thick and fierce. — The incubus of France had fallen! and from land to land, like the Beacon fire which leaped from peak to peak proclaiming Troy's downfall, passed on the glare of burning idols, the crash of falling anarchies. Was I mad, sinful? Both - and yet neither. Was I mad and sinful, if on my return to my old haunts, amid the grasp of loving hands, and the caresses of those who called me in their honest flattery a martyr and a hero — what things, as Carlyle says, men will fall down and worship in their extreme need! -- was I mad and sinful, if daring hopes arose, and desperate words were spoken, and wild eyes read in wild eyes the thoughts they dare not utter? "Liberty has risen from the dead, and we too will be free!"

Yes, mad and sinful; therefore are we as we are. Yet God has forgiven us — perhaps so have men whose forgiveness is alone worth having.

Liberty? And is that word a dream, a lie, the watchword only of rebellious fiends, as bigots say even now? Our forefathers spoke not so —

> The shadow of her coming fell On Saxon Alfred's olive-tinctured brow.

Had not freedom, progressive, expanding, descending, been the glory and the strength of England? Were Magna Charta and the Habeas Corpus Act, Hampden's resistance to ship-money, and the calm, righteous might of 1688 — were they all futilities and fallacies? Ever downwards, for seven hundred years, welling from the heaven-watered mountain peaks of wisdom, had spread the stream of liberty. The nobles had gained their charter from John; the middle classes from William of Orange: was not the time at hand, when from a Queen, more gentle, charitable, upright, spotless, than had ever sat on the throne of England, the working masses in their turn should gain their Charter?

If it was given, the gift was hers: if it was demanded to the uttermost, the demand would be made, not on her, but on those into whose hands her power had passed, the avowed representatives neither of the Crown nor of the people, but of the very commercial class which was devouring us.

Such was our dream. Insane and wicked were the passions which accompanied it; insane and wicked were the means we chose; and God in His mercy to us, rather than to Mammon, triumphant in his iniquity, fattening his heart even now for a spiritual day of slaughter more fearful than any physical slaughter which we in our folly had prepared for him — God frustrated them.

We confess our sins. Shall the Chartist alone be excluded from the promise, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness?"

And yet, were there no excuses for us? I do not say for myself — and yet three years of prison might be some excuse for a soured and harshened spirit — but I will not avail myself of the excuse; for there were men, stancher Chartists than ever I had been — men who had suffered not only imprisonment, but loss of health and loss of fortune; men whose influence with the workmen was far wider than my own, and whose temptations were therefore all the greater, who manfully and righteously kept themselves aloof from all those frantic schemes, and now reap their reward, in being acknowledged as the true leaders of the artisans, while the mere preachers of sedition are scattered to the winds.

But were there no excuses for the mass? Was there no excuse in the spirit with which the English upper classes regarded the continental revolutions? No excuse in the undisguised dislike, fear, contempt, which they expressed for that very sacred name of Liberty, which had been for ages the pride of England and her laws —

> The old laws of England, they Whose reverend heads with age are grey — Children of a wiser day — And whose solemp voice must be Thine own echo, Liberty!

for which, according to the latest improvements, is now substituted a bureaucracy of despotic commissions? Shame upon those who sneered at the very name of her to whom they owed the wealth they idolize! who cry down Liberty because God has given it to them in such priceless abundance, boundless as the sunshine and the air of heaven, that they are become unconscious of it as of the elements by which they live! Woe to those who despise the gift of God! Woe to those who have turned His grace into a cloak for tyranny; who, like the Jews of old, have trampled under foot His covenant at the very moment that they were asserting their exclusive right to it, and denying his all-embracing love!

And were there no excuses, too, in the very arguments which nineteen-twentieths of the public press used to deter us from following the example of the Continent? If there had been one word of sympathy with the deep wrongs of France, Germany, Italy, Hungary - one attempt to discriminate the righteous and God-inspired desire of freedom, from man's furious and self-willed perversion of it, we would have listened to them. But, instead, what was the first, last, cardinal, crowning argument? -- "The cost of sedition!" "Revolutions interfered with trade!" and therefore they were damnable! Interfere with the food and labour of the millions? The millions would take the responsibility of that upon themselves. If the party of order cares so much for the millions, why had they left them what they are? No: it was with the profits of the few that revolutions interfered; with the Divine right, not so much of kings, but of money-making. They hampered Mammon, the very fiend who is devouring the masses. The one end and aim of existence was, the maintenance of order - of peace and room to make money in. And therefore Louis' spies might make France one great inquisition-hell; German princelets might sell their country piecemeal to French or Russian; the Hungarian constitution, almost the counterpart of our own, might be sacrificed at the will of an idiot or a villain; Papal misgovernment might continue to render Rome a worse den of thieves than even Papal superstition could have made it without the addition of tyranny; but Order must be maintained, for how else could the few make money out of the labour of the many? These were their own arguments. Whether they were likely to conciliate the workman to the powers that be, by informing him that those powers were avowedly the priests of the very system which was crushing him, let the reader judge.

The maintenance of order — of the order of this order that was to be the new God before whom the working classes were to bow in spell-bound awe: an idol more despicable and empty than even that old divine right of tyrants, newly applied by some well-meaning but illogical personages, not merely as of old to hereditary sovereigns, but to Louis Philippes, usurers, upstarts — why not hereafter to demagogues? Blindfold and desperate bigots! who would actually thus, in the imbecility of terror, deify that very right of the physically strongest and cunningest, which, if anything, is antichrist itself. That argument against sedition, the workmen heard; and, recollecting 1688, went on their way, such as it was, unheeding.

One word more, even at the risk of offending many whom I should be very sorry to offend, and I leave this hateful discussion. Let it ever be remembered that the working classes considered themselves deceived, cajoled, by the passers of the Reform Bill; that they cherished - whether rightly or wrongly it is now too late to ask - a deep-rooted grudge against those who had, as they thought, made their hopes and passions a stepping-stone towards their own selfish ends. They were told to support the Reform Bill, not only on account of its intrinsic righteousness - which God forbid that I should deny - but because it was the first of a glorious line of steps towards their enfranchisement; and now the very men who told them this, talked peremptorily of "finality," showed themselves the most dogged and careless of conservatives, and pooh-poohed away every attempt at further enlargement of the suffrage. They were told to support it as the remedy for their own social miseries; and behold those miseries were year by year becoming deeper, more wide-spread, more hopeless; their entreaties for help and mercy, in 1842, and at other times, had been lazily laid by unanswered; and almost the only practical efforts for their deliverance had been made by a Tory nobleman, the honoured and beloved Lord Ashley. They found that they had, in helping to pass the Reform Bill, only helped to give power to the two very classes who crushed them - the great labour kings, and the small shopkeepers; that they had blindly armed their oppressors with the additional weapon of an ever-increasing political

majority. They had been told, too (let that never be forgotten), that in order to carry the Reform Bill, sedition itself was lawful; they had seen the master-manufacturers themselves give the signal for the plug-riots by stopping their mills. Their vanity, ferocity, sense of talent and fettered power, pride of numbers, and physical strength, had been flattered and pampered by those who now only talked of grape-shot and bayonets. They had heard the Reform Bill carried by the threats of men of rank and power, that "Manchester should march upon London." Were their masters, then, to have a monopoly in sedition, as in everything else? What had been fair in order to compel the Reform Bill, must surely be fairer still to compel the fulfilment of Reform Bill pledges? And so, imitating the example of those whom they fancied had first used and then deserted them, they, in their madness, concocted a rebellion, not primarily against the laws and constitution of their land, but against Mammon - against that accursed system of competition, slavery of labour, absorption of the small capitalists by the large ones, and of the workmen by all, which is, and was, and ever will be, their internecine foe. Silly and sanguinary enough were their schemes, God knows! and bootless enough had they succeeded; for nothing flourishes in the revolutionary atmosphere but that lowest embodiment of Mammon, "the black pool of Agio," and its money-gamblers. But the battle remains still to be fought; the struggle is internecine; only no more with weapons of flesh and blood, but with a mightier weapon - with that association which is the true bane of Mammon - the embodiment of brotherhood and love.

We should have known that before the tenth of April? Most true, reader — but wrath is blindness. You too surely have read more wisdom than you have practised yet; seeing that you have your Bible, and perhaps too, Mill's "Political Economy." Have you perused therein the priceless Chapter "On the probable Futurity of the Labouring Classes?" If not, let me give you the reference — vol. ii., p. 315, of the Second Edition. Read it, thou self-satisfied Mammon, and perpend; for it is both a prophecy and a doom!

But, the reader may ask, how did you, with your experience of the reason, honesty, moderation, to be expected of mobs, join in a plan which, if it had succeeded, must have let loose on those "who had" in London, the whole flood of those "who had not?"

The reader shall hear. My story may be instructive, as a type of the feelings of thousands beside me.

It was the night after I had returned from D\*\*\*\*; sitting in Crossthwaite's little room, I had heard with mingled anxiety and delight the plans of my friends. They were about to present a monster petition in favour of the Charter; to accompany it en masse to the door of the House of Commons; and if it was refused admittance - why then, ulterior measures were the only hope. "And they will refuse it," said Crossthwaite; "they're going, I hear, to revive some old law or other, that forbids processions within such and such a distance of the House of Commons. Let them forbid! To carry arms, to go in public procession, to present petitions openly, instead of having them made a humbug of by being laid on the table unopened by some careless member - they're our rights, and we'll have them. There's no use mincing the matter: it's just like the old fable of the farmer and his wheat - if we want it reaped, we must reap it ourselves. Public opinion, and the pressure from without, are the only things which have carried any measure in England for the last twenty years. Neither Whigs nor Tories deny it: the governed govern their governors - that's the 'ordre du jour' just now - and we'll have our turn at it! We'll give those House of Commons oligarchs -those tools of the squires and shopkeepers - we'll give them a taste of pleasure from without, as shall make the bar of the house crack again. And then to be under arms, day and night, till the Charter's granted."

"And if it is refused?"

"Fight! that's the word, and no other. There's no other hope. No Charter, — No social reforms! We must give them ourselves, for no one else will. Look there, and judge for yourself!"

He pulled a letter out from among his papers, and threw it across to me.

"What's this?"

"That came while you were in gaol. There don't want many words about it. We sent up a memorial to government about the army and police clothing. We told 'em how it was the lowest, most tyrannous, most ill-paid of all the branches of slop-making; how men took to it only when they were starved out of everything else. We entreated them to have mercy on us — entreated them to interfere between the merciless contractors and the poor wretches on whose flesh and blood contractors, sweaters, and colonels, were all fattening; and there's the answer we got. Look at it; read it! Again and again I've been minded to placard it on the walls, that all the world might see the might and the mercies of the government. Read it! 'Sorry to say that it is utterly out of the power of her Majesty's \*\*\*\*s to interfere — as the question of wages rests entirely between the contractor and the workmen.'"

"He lies!" I said. "If it did, the workmen might put a pistol to the contractor's head, and say — 'You shall not tempt the poor, needy, greedy, starving workers to their own destruction, and the destruction of their class; you shall not offer these murderous, poisonous prices. If we saw you offering our neighbour a glass of laudanum, we would stop you at all risks — and we will stop you now.' No! no! John, the question don't lie between workman and contractor, but between workman and contractor-plus-grape-and-bayonets!"

"Look again. There's worse comes after that. 'If government did interfere, it would not benefit the workman, as his rate of wages depends entirely on the amount of competition between the workmen themselves.' Yes, my dear children, you must eat each other; we are far too fond parents to interfere with so delightful an amusement! Curse them — sleek, hard-hearted, impotent do-nothings! They confess themselves powerless against competition — powerless against the very devil that is destroying us, faster and faster every year! They can't help us on a single point. They can't check population; and if they could, they can't get rid of the population which exists. They daren't give us a comprehensive emigration scheme. They daren't lift a finger to prevent gluts in the labour market. They daren't interfere between slave and slave, between slave and tyrant. They are cowards, and like cowards they shall fall!"

"Ay — like cowards they shall fall!" I answered; and from that moment I was a rebel and a conspirator.

"And will the country join us?"

"The cities will; never mind the country. They are too weak to resist their own tyrants — and they are too weak to resist us. The country's always drivelling in the background. A country-party's sure to be a party of imbecile bigots. Nobody minds them."

I laughed. "It always was so, John. When Christianity first spread, it was in the cities — till a pagan, a villager, got to mean a heathen for ever and ever."

"And so it was in the French revolution; when Popery had died out of all the rest of France, the priests and the aristocrats still found their dupes in the remote provinces."

"The sign of a dying system that, be sure. Woe to Toryism and the Church of England, and everything else, when it gets to boasting that its stronghold is still the hearts of the agricultural poor. It is the cities, John, the cities, where the light dawns first — where man meets man, and spirit quickens spirit, and intercourse breeds knowledge, and knowledge sympathy, and sympathy enthusiasm, combination, power irresistible; while the agriculturists remain ignorant, selfish, weak, because they are isolated from each other. Let the country go. The towns shall win the Charter for England! And then for social reform, sanitary reform, ædile reform, cheap food, interchange of free labour, liberty, equality, and brotherhood for ever!"

Such was our Babel-tower, whose top should reach to heaven. To understand the maddening allurement of that dream, you must have lain, like us, for years in darkness and the pit. You must have struggled for bread, for lodging, for cleanliness, for water, for education — all that makes life worth living for — and found them becoming, year by year, more hopelessly impossible, if not to yourself, yet still to the millions less gifted than yourself; you must have sat in darkness and the shadow of death, till you are ready to welcome any ray of light, even though it should be the glare of a volcano.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

### A Patriot's Reward.

I NEVER shall forget one evening's walk, as Crossthwaite and I strode back together from the Convention. We had walked on some way arm in arm in silence, under the crushing and embittering sense of having something to conceal something, which if those who passed us so carelessly in the street had known —! It makes a villain and a savage of a man, that conscioussness of a dark, hateful secret. And it was a hateful one! — a dark and desperate necessity, which we tried to call by noble names, that faltered on our lips as we pronounced them; for the spirit of God was not in us; and instead of bright hope, and the clear fixed lode-star of duty, weltered in our imaginations a wild possible future of tumult, and flame, and blood.

"It must be done! — it shall be done! — it will be done!" burst out John, at last, in that positive, excited tone, which indicated a half disbelief of his own words. "I've been reading Macerone on street-warfare; and I see the way as clear as day."

I felt nothing but the dogged determination of despair. "It must be tried, if the worst comes to the worst — but I have no hope. I read Somerville's answer to that Colonel Macerone. Ten years ago he showed it was impossible. We cannot stand against artillery; we have no arms."

"I'll tell you where to buy plenty. There's a man, Power, or Bower, he's sold hundreds in the last few days; and he understands the matter. He tells us we're certain, safe. There are hundreds of young men in the government-offices ready to join, if we do but succeed at first. It all depends on that. The first hour settles the fate of a revolution."

"If we succeed, yes — the cowardly world will always side with the conquering party; and we shall have every pickpocket and ruffian in our wake, plundering in the name of liberty and order."

"Then we'll shoot them like dogs, as the French did! "Mort aux voleurs' shall be the word!"

"Unless they shoot us. The French had a national guard, who had property to lose, and took care of it. The shopkeepers here will be all against us; they'll all be sworn in special constables, to a man; and between them and the soldiers, we shall have three to one upon us."

"Oh! that Power assures me the soldiers will fraternise. He says there are three regiments at least have promised solemnly to shoot their officers, and give up their arms to the mob."

"Very important, if true — and very scoundrelly, too. I'd sooner be shot myself by fair fighting, than see officers shot by cowardly treason."

"Well, it is ugly. I like fair play as well as any man.

### ALTON LOCKE,

But it can't be done. There must be a surprise, a coup de main, as the French say" (poor Crossthwaite was always quoting French in those days). "Once show our strength burst upon the tyrants like a thunderclap; and then! —

> Men of England, heirs of glory, Heroes of unwritten story, Rise, shake off the chains like dew Which in sleep have fallen on you! Ye are many, they are few!"

"That's just what I am afraid they are not. Let's go and find out this man Power, and hear his authority for the soldier-story. Who knows him?"

"Why, Mike Kelly and he have been a deal together of late. Kelly's a true heart now — a true Irishman — ready for anything. Those Irish are the boys, after all — though I don't deny they do bluster and have their way a little too much in the Convention. But still Ireland's wrongs are England's. We have the same oppressors. We must make common cause against the tyrants."

"I wish to Heaven they would just have stayed at home, and ranted on the other side of the water; they had their own way there, and no Mammonite middle-class to keep them down; and yet they never did an atom of good. Their eloquence is all bombast, and what's more, Crossthwaite, though there are some fine fellows among them, nine-tenths are liars — liars in grain, and you know it —"

Crossthwaite turned angrily to me. "Why, you are getting as reactionary as old Mackaye himself!"

"I am not — and he is not. I am ready to die on a barricade to-morrow, if it comes to that. I haven't six months' lease of life — I am going into a consumption; and a bullet is as easy a death as spitting up my lungs piecemeal. But I despise these Irish, because I can't trust them — they can't trust each other — they can't trust themselves. You know as well as I that you can't get common justice done in Ireland, because you can depend upon no man's oath. You know as well as I, that in Parliament or out, nine out of ten of them will stick at no lie, even if it has been exposed and refuted fifty times over, provided it serves the purpose of the moment; and I often think, that after all, Mackaye's right, and what's the matter with Ireland is just that and nothing else — that from the nobleman in his castle to the beggar on his dunghill, they are a nation of liars, John Crossthwaite!"

"Sandy's a prejudiced old Scotchman."

"Sandy's a wiser man than you or I, and you know it."

"Oh, I don't deny that; but he's getting old, and I think he has been failing in his mind of late.'

"I'm afraid he's failing in his health; he has never been the same man since they hooted him down in John-street. But he hasn't altered in his opinions one jot; and I'll tell you what - I believe he's right. I'll die in this matter like a man, because it's the cause of liberty; but I've fearful misgivings about it, just because Irishmen are at the head of it."

"Of course they are - they have the deepest wrongs; and that makes them most earnest in the cause of right. The sympathy of suffering, as they say themselves, has bound them to the English working man against the same oppressors."

"Then let them fight those oppressors at home, and we'll do the same: that's the true way to show sympathy. Charity begins at home. They are always crying 'Ireland for the Irish;' why can't they leave England for the English?"

"You're envious of O'Connor's power!"

"Say that again, John Crossthwaite, and we part for ever!" And I threw off his arm indignantly.

"No — but — don't let's quarrel, my dear old fellow now, that perhaps, perhaps we may never meet again -but I can't bear to hear the Irish abused. They're noble, enthusiastic, generous fellows. If we English had half as warm hearts, we shouldn't be as we are now; and O'Connor's a glorious man, I tell you. Just think of him, the descendant of the ancient kings, throwing away his rank, his name, all he had in the world, for the cause of the suffering millions!"

"That's a most aristocratic speech, John," said I, smiling, in spite of my gloom. "So you keep a leader because he's descended from ancient kings, do you? I should prefer him just because he was not - just because he was a working man, and come of workmen's blood. We shall see; we shall see whether he's stanch after all. To my mind, little Cuffy's worth a great deal more, as far as earnestness goes."

"Oh! Cuffy's a low-bred, uneducated fellow." Alton Locke. 19

"Aristocrat again, John!" said I, as we went up-stairs to Kelly's room. And Crossthwaite did not answer.

There was so great a hubbub inside Kelly's room, of English, French, and Irish, all talking at once, that we knocked at intervals for full five minutes, unheard by the noisy crew; and I, in despair, was trying the handle, which was fast, when, to my astonishment, a heavy blow was struck on the panel from the inside, and the point of a sharp instrument driven right through, close to my knees, with the exclamation —

"What do you think o' that, now, in a policeman's breadbasket?"

"I think," answered I, as loud as I dare, and as near the dangerous door, "if I intended really to use it, I wouldn't make such a fool's noise about it."

There was a dead silence; the door was hastily opened, and Kelly's nose poked out; while we, in spite of the horribleness of the whole thing, could not help laughing at his face of terror. Seeing who we were, he welcomed us in at once, into a miserable apartment, full of pikes and daggers, brandished by some dozen miserable, ragged, half-starved artisans. Three-fourths, I saw at once, were slop-working tailors. There was a bloused and bearded Frenchman or two; but the majority were, as was to have been expected, the oppressed, the starved, the untaught, the despairing, the insane; "the dangerous classes," which society creates, and then shrinks in horror, like Frankenstein, from the monster her own clumsy ambition has created. Thou Frankenstein Mammon! hast thou not had warnings enough, either to make thy machines like men, or stop thy bungling, and let God make them for Himself?

I will not repeat what I heard there. There is many a frantic ruffian of that night now sitting "in his right mind" — though not yet "clothed" — "waiting for God's deliverance, rather than his own."

We got Kelly out of the room into the street, and began inquiring of him the whereabouts of this said Bower or Power. "He didn't know," — the feather-headed Irishman that he was! — "Faix, by-the-by, he'd forgotten — an' he went to look for him at the place he tould him, and they didn't know sich a one there —" "Oh, oh! Mr. Power has an alibi, then? Perhaps an alias too?"

"He didn't know his name rightly. Some said it was Brown; but he was a broth of a boy — a thrue people's man. Bedad, he gov' away arms afthen and afthen to them that couldn't buy 'em. An' he's as free-spoken — och, but he's put me into the confidence! Come down the street a bit, and I'll tell yees — I'll be Lord-Lieutenant o' Dublin Castle meself, if it succades, as shure as there's no snakes in ould Ireland, an' revenge her wrongs ankle deep in the bhlood o' the Saxon! Whirroo! for the marthyred memory o' the three hundred thousint vargens o' Wexford!"

"Hold your tongue, you ass!" said Crossthwaite, as he clapped his hand over his mouth, expecting every moment to find us all three in the Rhadamanthine grasp of a policeman; while I stood laughing, as people will, for mere disgust at the ridiculous, which almost always intermingles with the horrible.

At last, out it came ---

"Bedad! we're going to do it! London's to be set o' fire in seventeen places at the same moment, an' I'm to light two of them to me own self, and make a hollycrust — ay, that's the word — o' Ireland's scorpions, to sting themselves to death in circling flame — "

"You would not do such a villanous thing?" cried we, both at once.

"Bedad! but I won't harm a hair o' their heads! Shure, we'll save the women and childer alive, and run for the fireingins our blessed selves, and then out with the pikes, and seize the Bank and the Tower —

> An' av' I lives, I lives victhorious, An' av' I dies, my sowl in glory is; Love fa—a—are –well!"

I was getting desperate: the whole thing seemed at once so horrible and so impossible. There must be some villanous trap at the bottom of it.

"If you don't tell me more about this fellow Power, Mike," said I, "I'll blow your brains out on the spot: either you or he are villains." And I valiantly pulled out my only weapon, the door-key, and put it to his head.

"Och! are ye mad, thin? He's a broth of a boy; and I'll tell ye. Shure he knows all about the red-coats, case he's

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an arthilleryman himself, and that's the way he's found out his gran' combustible."

"An artilleryman?" said John. "He told me he was a writer for the press."

"Bedad, thin, he's mistaken himself intirely; for he tould me with his own mouth. And I'll show ye the thing he sowld me as is to do it. Shure, it'll set fire to the stones o' the street, av' ye pour a bit vitriol on it."

"Set fire to stones? I must see that before I believe it."

"Shure an' ye shall then. Where'll I buy a bit? Sorra a shop is there open this time o' night; an' troth I forgot the name o' it intirely! Poker o' Moses, but here's a bit in my pocket!"

And out of his tattered coat-tail he lugged a flask of powder and a lump of some cheap chemical salt, whose name I have, I am ashamed to say, forgotten.

"You're a pretty fellow to keep such things in the same pocket with gunpowder!"

"Come along to Mackaye's," said Crossthwaite. "I'll see to the bottom of this. Be hanged, but I think the fellow's a cursed mouchard — some government spy!"

"Spy is he, thin? Och, the thief o' the world! I'll stab him! I'll murther him! an' burn the town aftherwards, all the same."

"Unless," said I, "just as you've got your precious combustible to blaze off, up he comes from behind the corner and gives you in charge to a policeman. It's a villanous trap, you miserable fool, as sure as the moon's in heaven."

"Upon my word, I am afraid it is - and I'm trapped too."

"Blood and turf! thin, it's he that I'll trap, thin. There's two million free and inlightened Irishmen in London, to avenge my marthyrdom wi' pikes and baggonets like raving salviges, and blood for blood!"

"Like savages, indeed!" said I to Crossthwaite. "And pretty savage company we are keeping. Liberty, like poverty, makes a man acquainted with strange companions!"

"And who's made 'em savages? Who has left them savages? That the greatest nation of the earth has had Ireland in her hands three hundred years — and her people still to be savages! — if that don't justify a revolution, what does? Why, it's just because these poor brutes are what they are, that rebellion becomes a sacred duty. It's for them —

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for such fools, brutes, as that there, and the millions more like him, and likely to remain like him, and I've made up my mind to do or die to-morrow!"

There was a grand half-truth, distorted, miscoloured in the words, that silenced me for the time.

We entered Mackaye's door; strangely enough at that time of night, it stood wide open. What could be the matter? I heard loud voices in the inner room, and ran forward calling his name, when, to my astonishment, out past me rushed a tall man, followed by a steaming kettle, which, missing him, took full effect on Kelly's chest as he stood in the entry, filling his shoes with boiling water, and producing a roar that might have been heard at Temple-bar.

"What's the matter?"

"Have I hit him?" said the old man, in a state of unusual excitement.

"Bedad! it was the man Power! the cursed spy! An' just as I was going to slate the villain nately, came the kittle, and kilt me all over!"

"Power?' He's as many names as a pickpocket, and as many callings, too, I'll warrant. He came sneaking in to tell me the sogers were a' ready to gie up their arms if I'd come forward to them to-morrow. So I tauld him, sin' he was so sure o't, he'd better gang and tak the arms himsel; an' then he let out he'd been a policeman —"

"A policeman!" said both Crossthwaite and Kelly, with strong expletives.

"A policeman doon in Manchester; I thought I kenned his face fra the first. And when the rascal saw he'd let out too much, he wanted to make out that he'd been a' along a spy for the Chartists, while he was makin' believe to be a spy o' the goovernment's. Sae when he came that far, I just up wi' the het water, and bleezed awa at him; an' noo I maun gang and het some mair, for my drap toddy."

Sandy had a little vitriol in the house, so we took the combustible down into the cellar, and tried it. It blazed up; but burnt the stone as much as the reader may expect. We next tried it on a lump of wood. It just scorched the place where it lay, and then went out; leaving poor Kelly perfectly frantic with rage, terror, and disappointment. He dashed up-stairs, and out into the street, on a wild-goose chase after the rascal, and we saw no more of him that night. I relate a simple fact. I am afraid — perhaps, for the poor workmen's sake, I should say I am glad, that it was not an unique one. Villains of this kind, both in April and in June, mixed among the working men, excited their worst passions by bloodthirsty declamations and extravagant promises of success, sold them arms; and then, like the shameless wretch on whose evidence Cuffy and Jones were principally convicted, bore witness against their own victims, unblushingly declaring themselves to have been all along the tools of the government. I entreat all those who disbelieve this apparently prodigious assertion, to read the evidence given on the trial of the John-street conspirators, and judge for themselves.

"The petition's filling faster than ever!" said Crossthwaite, as that evening we returned to Mackaye's little back room.

"Dirt's plenty," grumbled the old man, wo had settled himself again to his pipe, with his feet on the fender, and his head half way up the chimney.

"Now, or never!" went on Crossthwaite, without minding him; "now, or never! The manufacturing districts seem more firm than ever."

"An' words cheap," commented Mackaye, sotto voce.

"Well," I said, "Heaven keep us from the necessity of ulterior measures! But what must be, must."

"The government expect it, I can tell you. They're in a pitiable funk, I hear. One regiment is ordered to Uxbridge already, because they daren't trust it. They'll find soldiers are men, I do believe, after all."

"Men they are," said Sandy; "an' therefore they'll no be fools enough to stan' by an' see ye pu' down a' that is, to build up ye yourselves dinna yet rightly ken what. Men? Ay, and wi' mair common sense in them than some that had mair opportunities."

"I think I've settled everything," went on Crossthwaite, who seemed not to have heard the last speech — "settled everything — for poor Katie, I mean. If anything happens to me, she has friends at Cork — she thinks so at least — and they'd get her out to service somewhere — God knows!" And his face worked fearfully a minute.

"Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori!" said I.

"There are twa methods o'fulfilling that saw, I'm thinkin'. Impreemis, to shoot your neebour; in secundis to hang yoursel."

"What do you mean by grumbling at the whole thing in this way, Mr. Mackaye? Are you, too, going to shrink back from The Cause, now that liberty is at the very doors?"

"Ou, then, I'm stanch eneuch. I ha' laid in my ain stock o' wepons for the fecht at Armageddon."

"You don't mean it? What have you got?"

"A braw new halter, an' a muckle nail. There's a gran' tough beam here ayont the ingle, will haud me a crouse and cantie, when the time comes."

"What on earth do you mean?" asked we, both together. "Ha' ye looked into the monster-petition?"

"Of course we have, and signed it too!"

"Monster? Ay, ferlie! Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum. Desinit in piscem mulier formosa superne. Leeberty, the bonnie lassie, wi'a sealgh's fud to her! I'll no sign it. I dinna consort wi' shoplifters, an' idiots, an' suckin' bairns — wi' long nose, an' short nose, an' pug nose, an' seventeen Deuks o' Wellington, let alone a baker's dizen o' Queens. It's no company, that, for a puir auld patriot!"

"Why, my dear Mackaye," said I, "you know the Reform Bill petitions were just as bad."

"And the Anti-Corn-law ones, too, for that matter," said Crossthwaite. "You know we can't help accidents; the petition will never be looked through."

"It's always been the plan with Whigs and Tories, too!"

"I ken that better than ye, I guess."

"And isn't everything fair in a good cause?" said Crossthwaite. "Desperate men really can't be so dainty."

"How lang ha' ye learnit that deil's lee, Johnnie? Ye were no o' that mind five year agone, lad. Ha' ye been to Exeter a' the while? A's fair in the cause o' Mammon; in the cause o' cheap bread, that means cheap wages; but in the cause o' God — wae's me that ever I suld see this day ower again! ower again! Like the dog to his vomit — just as it was ten, twenty, fifty year agone! I'll just ha' a petition a' alane to mysel — I, an' a twa or three honest men. Besides, ye're just eight days ower time wi' it."

"What do you mean?"

"Suld ha' sent it in the 1st of April, an' no the 10th; a' fool's day wud ha' suited wi' it ferlie!"

"Mr. Mackaye," said Crossthwaite, in a passion, "I shall certainly inform the Convention of your extraordinary language!"

"Do, laddie! do, then! An' tell 'em this, too" - and, as he rose, his whole face and figure assumed a dignity, an awfulness, which I had never seen before in him - "tell them that ha' driven out \* \* \* \* and \* \* \* \*, an' every one that daur speak a word o' common sense, or common humanity - them that stone the prophets, an' quench the Spirit o' God, and love a lie, an' them that mak the same - them that think to bring about the reign o' love an' britherhood wi' pikes an' vitriol bottles, murther an' blasphemy - tell 'em that ane o' fourscore years and mair — ane that has grawn grey in the people's cause — that sat at the feet o' Cartwright, an' knelt by the deathbed o' Rabbie Burns - ane that cheerit Burdett as he went to the Touer, an' spent his wee earnings for Hunt an' Cobbett --- ane that beheld the shaking o' the nations in the Ninety-three, and heard the birth-shriek o' a new-born world - ane that while he was yet a callant saw Liberty afar off, an' seeing her was glad, as for a bonny bride, an' followed her through the wilderness for threescore weary waeful years sends them the last message that e'er he'll send on airth: tell 'em that they're the slaves o' warse than priests and kings the slaves o' their ain lusts an' passions - the slaves o' every loud-tongued knave an' mountebank that'll pamper them in their self-conceit; and that the gude God'll smite 'em down, and bring 'em to nought, and scatter 'em abroad, till they repent, an' get clean hearts and a richt speerit within them, and learn His lesson that he's been trying to teach 'em this threescore years — that the cause o' the people is the cause o' Him that made the people; an' wae to them that tak' the deevil's tools to do his wark wi'! Gude guide us! - What was yon, Alton, laddie?"

"What?"

"But I saw a spunk o' fire fa' into your bosom! I've na faith in siccan heathen omens; but auld carlins wud say it's a sign o' death within the year — save ye from it, my puir misguidit bairn! Aiblins a fire-flaught o' my een, it might be — I've had them unco often the day —" And he stooped down to the fire, and began to light his pipe, muttering to himself —

"Saxty years o' madness! saxty years o' madness! How lang, O Lord, before thou bring these puir daft bodies to their richt mind again?"

We stood watching him, and interchanging looks - expecting something, we knew not what.

Suddenly he sank forward on his knees, with his hands on the bars of the grate; we rushed forward, and caught him up. He turned his eyes up to me, speechless, with a ghastly expression; one side of his face was all drawn aside — and helpless as a child, he let us lift him to his bed, and there he lay staring at the ceiling.

Four weary days passed by — it was the night of the ninth of April. In the evening of that day his speech returned to him on a sudden — he seemed uneasy about something, and several times asked Katie the day of the month.

"Before the tenth — ay, we maun pray for that. I doubt but I'm ower hearty yet — I canna bide to see the shame o' that day —

Na — I'll tak no potions nor pills — gin it were na for scruples o' conscience, I'd apocartereeze a'thegither, after the manner o' the ancient philosophers. But it's no' lawful, I misdoubt, to starve onesel."

"Here is the doctor," said Katie.

"Doctor? Wha ca'd for doctors? Canst thou administer to a mind diseased? Can ye tak long nose, an' short nose, an' snub nose, an' seventeen Deuks o' Wellington out o' my puddins? Will your castor oil, an' your calomel, an' your croton, do that? D'ye ken a medicamentum that'll put brains into workmen —? Non tribus Anticyris! Tons o' hellebore — acres o' strait waistcoats — a hall police-force o' headdoctors, winna do it. Juvat insanire — this their way is their folly, as auld Benjamin o' Tudela saith of the heathen. Heigho! 'Forty years lang was he greivit wi' this generation, an' swore in his wrath that they suldna enter into his rest.' Pulse? tongue? ay, shak your lugs, an' tak your fee, an' dinna keep auld folk out o' their graves. Can ye sing?"

The doctor meekly confessed his inability.

"That's pity - or I'd gar ye sing Auld-lang-syne, -

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We twa hae paidlit in the burn -

Aweel, aweel, aweel -"

Weary and solemn was that long night, as we sat there, with the crushing weight of the morrow on our minds, watching by that death-bed, listening hour after hour to the rambling soliloquies of the old man, as "he babbled of green fields;" yet I verily believe that to all of us, especially to poor little Katie, the active present interest of tending him kept us from going all but mad with anxiety and excitement. But it was weary work: — and yet, too, strangely interesting, as at times there came scraps of old Scotch love-poetry, contrasting sadly with the grim withered lips that uttered them — hints to me of some sorrow long since suffered, but never healed. I had never heard him allude to such an event before but once, on the first day of our acquaintance.

> "I went to the kirk, My luve sat afore me; I trow my twa een Tauld him a sweet story. Aye wakin o' — Wakin aye and weary — I thocht a' the kirk Saw me and my deary.

"'Aye wakin o'!' — Do ye think, noo, we sall ha'knowledge in the next warld o' them we loved on earth? I askit that same o' Rab Burns ance, sitting up a' canty at 'Tibbie Shiel's in Meggot Vale, an' he said, puir chiel, he 'didna ken ower well, we maun bide and see;' — bide and see — that's the gran' philosophy o' life, after a'. Aiblins folk'll ken their true freens there; an' there 'll be na mair luve coft and sauld for siller —

> Gear and tocher is needit nane I' the countrie whaur my luve is gane.

Gin I had a true freen the noo! to gang down the wynd, an' find if it war but an auld Abraham o' a blue-gown, wi' a bit crowd, or a fizzle-pipe, to play me the Bush aboon Traquair! Na, na, na; it's singing the Lord's song in a strange land, that wad be; an' I hope the application's no irreverent, for ane that was rearit amang the hills o' God, an' the trees o' the forest which He hath planted. Oh the broom, and the bonny yellow broom, The broom o' the Cowden-knowes!

# Hech, but she wud lilt that bonnily!

Did ye ever gang listering saumons by nicht? Ou, but it's braw sport, wi' the scars an' the birks a' glowering out bludered i' the torchlight, and the bonnie hizzies skelping an' skirling on the bank —

There was a gran' leddy, a bonny leddy, cam in and talked like an angel o' God to puir auld Sandy, anent the salvation o' his soul. But I tauld her no' to fash hersel. It's no my view o' human life, that a man's sent into the warld just to save his soul, an' creep out again. An' I said I wad leave the savin' o' my soul to Him that made my soul; it was in richt gude keepin' there, I'd warrant. An' then she was unco fleyed when she found I didna haud wi' the Athanasian creed. An' I tauld her, na; if He that died on cross was sic a ane as she and I teuk him to be, there was na that pride nor spite in him, be sure, to send a puir auld sinful, guideless body to eternal fire, because he didna a'thegither understand the honour due to His name."

"Who was this lady?"

He did not seem to know; and Katie had never heard of her before — "some district visitor" or other?

"I sair misdoubt but the auld creeds are in the right anent Him, after a'. I'd gie muckle to think it — there's na comfort as it is. Aiblins there might be a wee comfort in that, for a poor auld worn-out patriot. But it's ower late to change. I tauld her that, too, ance. It's ower late to put new wine into auld bottles. I was unco drawn to the high doctrines ance, when I was a bit laddie, an' sat in the wee kirk by my minnie an' my daddie — a richt stern auld Cameronian sort o' body he was, too; but as I grew, and grew, the bed was ower short for a man to stretch himsel thereon, an' the plaidie ower strait for a man to fauld himsel therein; and so I had to gang my gate a' nacked in the matter o' formulæ, as Maister Tummas has it."

"Ah! do send for a priest, or a clergyman!" said Katie, who partly understood his meaning.

"Parson? He canna pit new skin on auld scars. Na bit

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# ALTON LOCKE,

stickit curate-laddie for me, to gang argumentin' wi' ane that's auld enough to be his gran'father. When the parsons will hear me anent God's people, then I'll hear them anent God.

> --- Sae I'm wearing awa, Jean, To the land o' the leal ---

Gin I ever get thither. Katie, here, hauds wi' purgatory, ye ken! where souls are burnt clean again — like baccy-pipes —

When Razor-brigg is ower and past, Every night and alle; To Whinny Muir thou comest at last, And God receive thy sawle.

Gin hosen an' shoon thou gavest nane Every night and alle; The whins shall pike thee intil the bane, And God receive thy sawle.

Amen. There's mair things aboon, as well as below, than are dreamt o' in our philosophy. At least, where'er I go, I'll meet no long nose, nor short-nose, nor snub-nose patriots there; nor puir gowks stealing the deil's tools to do God's wark wi'. Out among the eternities an' the realities — it's no that dreary outlook, after a', to find truth an' fact — naught but truth an' fact — e'en beside the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched!"

"God forbid!" said Katie.

"God do whatsoever shall please Him, Katie — an' that's aye gude, like Himsel. Shall no the Judge of all the earth do right — right — right?"

And murmuring that word of words to himself, over and over, more and more faintly, he turned slowly over, and seemed to slumber —

Some half-hour passed before we tried to stir him. He was dead.

And the candles waned grey, and the great light streamed in through every crack and cranny, and the sun had risen on the Tenth of April. What would be done before that sun had set?

What would be done? Just what we had the might to do; and therefore, according to the formula on which we were about to act, that mights are rights, just what we had the right to do — nothing. Futility, absurdity, vanity, and vexation of spirit. I shall make my next a short chapter. It is a day to be forgotten — and forgiven.

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# CHAPTER XXXIV.

### The tenth of April.

AND he was gone at last! Kind women, whom his unknown charities had saved from shame, laid him out duly, and closed his eyes, and bound up that face that never would beam again with genial humour, those lips that would never again speak courage and counsel to the sinful, the oppressed, the forgotten. And there he lay, the old warrior, dead upon his shield; worn out by long years of manful toil in The People's Cause; and, saddest thought of all, by disappointment in those for whom he spent his soul. True, he was aged; no one knew how old. He had said, more than eigthy years; but we had shortened his life, and we knew it. He would never see that deliverance for which he had been toiling ever since the days when as a boy he had listened to Tooke and Cartwright, and the patriarchs of the people's freedom. Bitter, bitter, were our thoughts, and bitter were our tears, as Crossthwaite and I stood watching that beloved face, now in death refined to a grandeur, to a youthful simplicity and delicacy, which we had never seen on it before - calm and strong - the square jaws set firm even in death - the lower lip still clenched above the upper, as if in a divine indignation and everlasting protest, even in the grave, against the devourers of the earth. Yes, he was gone - the old lion, worn out with many wounds, dead in his cage. Where could we replace him? There were gallant men amongst us, eloquent, well-read, earnest - men whose names will ring through this land ere long - men who had been taught wisdom, even as he, by the sinfulness, the apathy, the ingratitude, as well as by the sufferings of their fellows. But where should we two find again the learning, the moderation, the long experience, above all the more than woman's tenderness of him whom we had lost? And at that time, too, of all others! Alas! we had despised his counsel; wayward and fierce, we would have none of his reproof; and now God has withdrawn him from us; the righteous was taken away from the evil to come. For we knew that evil was coming. We felt all along that we should not succeed. But we were desperate; and his death made us more desperate; still at the moment it drew us nearer to each other. Yes - we were rudderless upon a roaring sea, and all before us blank with lurid blinding mist; but still we were together, to live and die; and as we looked into each other's eyes, and clasped each other's hands above the dead man's face, we felt that there was love between us, as of Jonathan and David, passing the love of woman.

Few words passed. Even our passionate artisan-nature, so sensitive and voluble in general, in comparison with the cold reserve of the field-labourer and the gentleman, was hushed in silent awe between the thought of the past and the thought of the future. We felt ourselves trembling between two worlds. We felt that to-morrow must decide our destiny — and we felt rightly, though little we guessed what that destiny would be!

But it was time to go. We had to prepare for the meeting. We must be at Kennington Common within three hours at furthest; and Crossthwaite hurried away, leaving Katie and me to watch the dead.

And then came across me the thought of another death-bed - my mother's - How she had lain and lain, while I was far away - And then I wondered whether she had suffered much, or faded away at last in a peaceful sleep, as he had - And then I wondered how her corpse had looked; and pictured it to myself, lying in the little old room day after day, till they screwed the coffin down - before I came! - Cruel! Did she look as calm, as grand in death, as he who lay there? And as I watched the old man's features, I seemed to trace in them the strangest likeness to my mother's. The strangest likeness! I could not shake it off. It became intense - miraculous. Was it she, or was it he, who lay there? I shook myself and rose. My loins ached, my limbs were heavy; my brain and eyes swam round. I must be overfatigued by excitement and sleeplessness. I would go down stairs into the fresh air, and shake it off.

As I came down the passage, a woman, dressed in black, was standing at the door, speaking to one of the lodgers. "And he is dead! Oh, if I had but known sooner that he was even ill!"

That voice — that figure — surely, I knew them! — them, at least, there was no mistaking! Or, was it another phantom of my disordered brain? I pushed forward to the door, and as I did so, she turned, and our eyes met full. It was she — Lady Ellerton! sad, worn, transformed by widow's weeds, but that face was like no other's still. Why did I drop my eyes and draw back at the first glance like a guilty coward? She beckoned me towards her, went out into the street, and herself began the conversation, from which I shrank, I know not why.

"When did he die?"

"Just at sunrise this morning. But how came you here to visit him. Were you the lady who, as he said, came to him a few days since?"

She did not answer my question. "At sunrise this morning? — A fitting time for him to die, before he sees the ruin and disgrace of those for whom he laboured. And you too, I hear, are taking your share in this projected madness and iniquity?"

"What right have you," I asked, bristling up at a sudden suspicion that crossed me, "to use such words about me?"

"Recollect," she answered, mildly but firmly, "your conduct, three years ago, at D\*\*\*\*."

"What," I said, "was it not proved upon my trial, that I exerted all my powers, endangered my very life, to prevent outrage in that case?"

"It was proved upon your trial," she replied, in a marked tone; "but we were informed, and alas! from authority only too good, namely, from that of an ear-witness, of the sanguinary and ferocious language which you were not afraid to use at the meeting in London, only two nights before the riot."

I turned white with rage and indignation.

"Tell me," I said — "tell me, if you have any honour, who dared forge such an atrocious calumny! No! you need not tell me. I see well enough now. He should have told you that I exposed myself that night to insult, not by advocating, but by opposing violence, as I have always done as I would now, were not I desperate — hopeless of any other path to liberty. And as for this coming struggle, have I not written to my cousin, humiliating as it was to me, to beg him to warn you all from me, lest —"

I could not finish the sentence.

"You wrote? He has warned us, but he never mentioned your name. He spoke of his knowledge as having been picked up by himself at personal risk to his clerical character."

"The risk, I presume, of being known to have actually received a letter from a Chartist; but I wrote — on my honour I wrote — a week ago; and received no word of answer!" "Is this true?" she asked.

"A man is not likely to deal in useless falsehoods, who knows not whether he shall live to see the set of sun!"

"Then you are implicated in this expected insurrection?"

"I am implicated," I answered, "with the people; what they do I shall do. Those who once called themselves the patrons of the tailor-poet, left the mistaken enthusiast to languish for three years in prison, without a sign, a hint of mercy, pity, remembrance. Society has cast me off; and, in casting me off, it has sent me off to my own people, where I should have stayed from the beginning. Now I am at my post, because I am among my class. If they triumph peacefully, I triumph with them. If they need blood to gain their rights, be it so. Let the blood be upon the head of those who refuse, not those who demand. At least, I shall be with my own people. And if I die, what better thing on earth can happen to me?"

"But the law?" she said.

"Do not talk to me of law! I know it too well in practice to be moved by any theories about it. Laws are no law, but tyranny, when the few make them, in order to oppress the many by them."

"Oh!" she said, in a voice of passionate earnestness, which I had never heard from her before, "stop — for God's sake, stop! You know not what you are saying — what you are doing. Oh! that I had met you before — that I had had more time to speak to poor Mackaye! Oh! wait, wait there is a deliverance for you! but never in this path — never. And just while I, and nobler far than I, are longing and struggling to find the means of telling you your deliverance, you, in the madness of your haste, are making it impossibe!"

There was a wild sincerity in her words — an almost imploring tenderness in her tone.

"So young!" said she; "so young to be lost thus!"

I was intensely moved. I felt, I knew, that she had a message for me. I felt that hers was the only intellect in the world to which I would have submitted mine; and, for one moment, all the angel and all the devil in me wrestled for the mastery. If I could but have trusted her one moment..... No! all the pride, the spite, the suspicion, the prejudice of years, rolled back upon me. "An aristocrat! and she, too, the one who has kept me from Lillian!" And in my bitterness, not daring to speak the real thought within me, I answered with a flippant sneer —

"Yes, madam! like Cordelia, so young, yet so untender! Thanks to the mercies of the upper classes!"

Did she turn away in indignation? No, by Heaven! there was nothing upon her face but the intensest yearning pity. If she had spoken again, she would have conquered; but before those perfect lips could open, the thought of thoughts flashed across me.

"Tell me one thing! Is my cousin George to be married to —" and I stopped.

"He is."

"And yet," I said, "you wish to turn me back from dying on a barricade!" And without waiting for a reply, I hurried down the street in all the fury of despair.

I have promised to say little about the Tenth of April, for indeed I have no heart to do so. Every one of Mackaye's predictions came true. We had arrayed against us, by our own folly, the very physical force to which we had appealed. The dread of general plunder and outrage by the savages of London, the national hatred of that French and Irish interference of which we had boasted, armed against us thousands of special constables, who had in the abstract little or no objection to our political opinions. The practical common sense of England, whatever discontent it might feel with the existing system, refused to let it be hurled rudely down, on the mere chance of building up on its ruins something as yet untried, and even undefined. Above all, the people would not rise. Whatever sympathy they had with us, they did not care to show it. And then futility after futility exposed itself. The meeting which was to have been counted by hundreds of thousands, numbered hardly its tens of thousands; and of them a frightful proportion were of those very rascal classes, against whom we ourselves had offered to be sworn in as special constables O'Connor's courage failed him after all. He contrived to be called away, at the critical moment, by some problematical superintendent of police. Poor Cuffy, the honestest, if not the wisest, speaker there, leapt off the waggon, exclaiming that we were all "humbugged and betrayed;" and the meeting broke up pitiably piecemeal, drenched and cowed, body and soul, by pouring rain on its Alton Locke. 20

### ALTON LOCKE,

way home — for the very heavens mercifully helped to quench our folly — while the monster-petition crawled ludicrously away in a hack cab, to be dragged to the floor of the House of Commons amid roars of laughter — "inextinguishable laughter," as of Tennyson's Epicurean Gods —

#### Careless of mankind.

For they lie beside their nectar, and their bolts are hurled Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curled Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world. There they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands, Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands, Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands. But they smile, they find a music, centred in a doleful song, Steaming up, a lamentation, and an ancient tale of wrong, Like a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong; Chanted by an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil, Sow the seed and reap the harvest with enduring toil, Storing little yearly dues of wheat, and wine, and oil; Till they perish, and they suffer — some, 'tis whispered, down in hell Suffer endless anguish! ——

Truly — truly, great poets' words are vaster than the singers themselves suppose!

# CHAPTER XXXV.

#### The Lowest Deep.

SULLEN, disappointed, desperate, I strode along the streets that evening, careless whither I went. The People's Cause was lost - the Charter a laughing-stock. That the party which monopolises wealth, rank, and, as it is fancied, education and intelligence, should have been driven, degraded, to appeal to brute force for self-defence - that thought gave me a savage joy; but that it should have conquered by that last, lowest resource! - That the few should be still stronger than the many, or the many still too cold-hearted and coward to face the few - that sickened me. I hated the well-born young special constables whom I passed, because they would have fought. I hated the gent and shopkeeper special constables, because they would have run away. I hated my own party, because they had gone too far — because they had not gone far enough. I hated myself, because I had not produced some marvellous effect - though what that was to have been I could not tell - and hated myself all the more for that ignorance.

A group of effeminate shopkeepers passed me, shouting, "God save the Queen!" "Hypocrites!" I cried in my heart - "they mean 'God save our shops!' Liars! They keep up willingly the useful calumny, that their slaves and victims are disloyal as well as miserable!"

I was utterly abased — no, not utterly; for my selfcontempt still vented itself — not in forgiveness, but in universal hatred and defiance. Suddenly I perceived my cousin, laughing and jesting with a party of fashionable young specials: I shrank from him; and yet, I know not why, drew as near him as I could, unobserved — near enough to catch the words.

"Upon my honour, Locke, I believe you are a Chartist yourself at heart."

"At least I am no Communist," said he, in a significant tone. "There is one little bit of real property which I have no intention of sharing with my neighbours."

"What, the little beauty somewhere near Cavendishsquare?"

"That's my business."

"Whereby you mean that you are on your way to her now? Well, I am invited to the wedding, remember."

He pushed on laughingly, without answering. I followed him fast — "near Cavendish-square!" — the very part of the town where Lillian lived! I had had, as yet, a horror of going near it; but now, an intolerable suspicion scourged me forward, and I dogged his steps, hiding behind pillars, and at the corners of streets, and then running on, till I got sight of him again. He went through Cavendish-square, up Harleystreet — was it possible? I gnashed my teeth at the thought. But it must be so. He stopped at the dean's house, knocked, and entered without parley.

In a minute I was breathless on the door-step, and knocked. I had no plan, no object, except the wild wish to see my own despair. I never thought of the chances of being recognised by the servants, or of anything else, except of Lillian by my cousin's side.

The footman came out smiling. "What did I want?"

"I-I-Mr. Locke."

"Well, you needn't be in such a hurry!" (with a significant grin.) "Mr. Locke's likely to be busy for a few minutes yet, I expect." Evidently the man did not know me.

"Tell him that — that a person wishes to speak to him on particular business." Though I had no more notion what that business was than the man himself.

"Sit down in the hall."

And I heard the fellow, a moment afterwards, gossiping and laughing with the maids below about the "young couple."

To sit down was impossible; my only thought was-where was Lillian?

Voices in an adjoining room caught my ear. His! yes and hers too — soft and low. What devil prompted me to turn eavesdropper? to run headlong into temptation? I was close to the dining-room door, but they were not there evidently they were in the back room, which, as I knew, opened into it with folding-doors. I — I must confess all. — Noiselessly, with craft like a madman's, I turned the handle, slipped in as stealthily as a cat — the folding-doors were slightly open. I had a view of all that passed within. A horrible fascination seemed to keep my eyes fixed on them, in spite of myself. Honour, shame, despair, bade me turn away, but in vain.

I saw them. — How can I write it? Yet I will. — I saw them sitting together on the sofa. Their arms were round each other. Her head lay upon his breast; he bent over her with an intense gaze, as of a basilisk, I thought; how do I know that it was not the fierceness of his love? Who could have helped loving her?

Suddenly she raised her head, and looked up in his face — her eyes brimming with tenderness, her cheeks burning with mingled delight and modesty — their lips met, and clung together..... It seemed a life — an eternity — before they parted again. Then the spell was broken, and I rushed from the room.

Faint, giddy, and blind, I just recollect leaning against the wall of the staircase. He came hastily out, and started as he saw me. My face told all.

"What? Eavesdropping?" he said, in a tone of unutterable scorn. I answered nothing, but looked stupidly and fixedly in his face, while he glared at me with that keen, burning, intolerable eye. I longed to spring at his throat, but that eye held me as the snake's holds the deer. At last I found words. "Traitor! everywhere — in everything — tricking me supplanting me — in my friends — in my love!"

"Your love? Yours?" And the fixed eye still glared upon me. "Listen, cousin Alton! The strong and the weak have been matched for the same prize: and what wonder, if the strong man conquers? Go and ask Lillian how she likes the thought of being a Communist's love!"

As when, in a nightmare, we try by a desperate effort to break the spell, I sprang forward, and struck at him; he put my hand by carelessly, and felled me bleeding to the ground. I recollect hardly anything more, till I found myself thrust into the street by sneering footmen, and heard them call after me "Chartist" and "Communist" as I rushed along the pavement, careless where I went.

I strode and staggered on through street after street, running blindly against passengers, dashing under horses' heads, heedless of warnings and execrations, till I found myself, I know not how, on Waterloo Bridge. I had meant to go there when I left the door. — I knew that at least — and now I was there.

I buried myself in a recess of the bridge, and stared around and up and down.

I was alone — deserted even by myself. Mother, sister, friends, love, the idol of my life, were all gone. I could have borne that. But to be shamed, and know that I deserved it; to be deserted by my own honour, self-respect, strength of will — who can bear that?

I could have borne it, had one thing been left — faith in my own destiny — the inner hope that God had called me to do a work for him.

"What drives the Frenchman to suicide?" I asked myself, arguing ever even in the face of death and hell — "His faith in nothing but his own lusts and pleasures; and when they are gone, then comes the pan of charcoal — and all is over. What drives the German? His faith in nothing but his own brain. He has fallen down and worshipped that miserable 'Ich' of his, and made that, and not God's will, the centre and root of his philosophy, his poetry, and his selfidolising æsthetics; and when it fails him, then for prussic acid, and nonentity. Those old Romans, too — why, they are the very experimentum crucis of suicide! As long as they fancied that they had a calling to serve the state, they could live on and suffer. But when they found no more work left for them, then they could die — as Porcia died — as Cato as I ought. What is there left for me to do? outcast, disgraced, useless, decrepit —"

I looked out over the bridge into the desolate night. Below me the dark moaning river-eddies hurried downward. The wild westwind howled past me, and leapt over the parapet downward. The huge reflexion of Saint Paul's, the great tap-roots of light from lamp and window that shone upon the lurid stream, pointed down - down - down. A black wherry shot through the arch beneath me, still and smoothly downward. My brain began to whirl madly - I sprang upon the step. - A man rushed past me, clambered on the parapet, and threw up his arms wildly. - A moment more, and he would have leapt into the stream. The sight recalled me to my senses - say, rather, it reawoke in me the spirit of mankind. I seized him by the arm, tore him down upon the pavement, and held him, in spite of his frantic struggles. It was Jemmy Downes! Gaunt, ragged, sodden, blear-eyed, drivelling, the worn-out gin-drinker stood, his momentary paroxysm of strength gone, trembling and staggering.

"Why won't you let a cove die? Why won't you let a cove die? They're all dead — drunk, and poisoned, and dead! What is there left?" — he burst out suddenly in his old ranting style — "what is there left on earth to live for? The prayers of liberty are answered by the laughter of tyrants; her sun is sunk beneath the ocean wave, and her pipe put out by the raging billows of aristocracy! Those starving millions of Kennington Common — where are they? Where? I axes you," he cried fiercely, raising his voice to a womanish scream — "where are they?"

"Gone home to bed, like sensible people; and you had better go too."

"Bed! I sold ours a month ago; but we'll go. Come along, and I'll show you my wife and family; and we'll have a tea-party — Jacob's Island tea. Come along!

Flea, flea, unfortunate flea! Bereft of his wife and his small family!"

He clutched my arm, and dragging me off towards the Surrey side, turned down Stamford-street.

I followed half perforce; and the man seemed quite demented -- whether with gin or sorrow I could not tell. As he strode along the pavement, he kept continually looking back, with a perplexed terrified air, as if expecting some fearful object.

"The rats! — the rats! don't you see 'em coming out of the gullyholes, atween the area railings — dozens and dozens?"

"No; I saw none."

"You lie; I hear their tails whisking; there's their shiny hats a glistening, and every one on 'em with peelers' staves! Quick! quick! or they'll have me to the station-house."

"Nonsense!" I said; "we are free men! What are the policemen to us?"

"You lie!" cried he, with a fearful oath, and a wrench at my arm which almost threw me down. "Do you call a sweater's man a free man?"

"You a sweater's man?"

"Ay!" with another oath. "My men ran away — folks said I drank, too; but here I am; and I, that sweated others, I'm sweated myself — and I'm a slave! I'm a slave — a negro slave, I am, you aristocrat villain!"

"Mind me, Downes; if you will go quietly, I will go with you; but if you do not let go of my arm, I give you in charge to the first policeman I meet."

"Oh, don't don't!" whined the miserable wretch, as he almost fell on his knees, gin-drinkers' tears running down his face, "or I shall be too late. — And then the rats 'll get in at the roof, and up through the floor, and eat 'em all up, and my work too — the grand new three-pound coat that I've been stitching at this ten days, for the sum of one half-crown sterling — and don't I wish I may see the money? Come on, quick; there are the rats, close behind!" And he dashed across the broad roaring thoroughfare of Bridge-street, and hurrying almost at a run down Tooley-street, plunged into the wildernesses of Bermondsey.

He stopped at the end of a miserable blind alley, where a dirty gas-lamp just served to make darkness visible, and show the patched windows and rickety doorways of the crazy houses, whose upper stories were lost in a brooding cloud of fog; and the pools of stagnant water at our feet; and the huge heap of cinders which filled up the waste end of the alley — a dreary, black, formless mound, on which two or three spectral dogs prowled up and down after the offal, appearing and vanishing like dark imps in and out of the black misty chaos beyond.

The neighbourhood was undergoing, as it seemed, "improvements" of that peculiar metropolitan species which consists in pulling down the dwellings of the poor, and building up rich men's houses instead; and great buildings, within high temporary palings, had already eaten up half the little houses; as the great fish, and the great estates, and the great shopkeepers, eat up the litte ones of their species — by the law of competition, lately discovered to be the true creator and preserver of the universe. There they loomed up, the tall bullies, against the dreary sky, looking down with their grim, proud, stony visages, on the misery which they were driving out of one corner, only to accumulate and intensify it in another.

The house at which we stopped was the last in the row; all its companions had been pulled down; and there it stood, leaning out with one naked ugly side into the gap, and stretching out long props, like feeble arms and crutches, to resist the work of demolition.

A group of slatternly people were in the entry, talking loudly, and as Downes pushed by them, a woman seized him by the arm.

"Oh! you unnatural villain! — To go away after your drink, and leave all them poor dear dead corpses locked up, without even letting a body go in to stretch them out!"

"And breeding the fever, too, to poison the whole house!" growled one.

"The relieving officer's been here, my cove," said another; "and he's gone for a peeler and a search warrant to break open the door, I can tell you!"

But Downes pushed past unheeding, unlocked a door at the end of the passage, thrust me in, locked it again, and then rushed across the room in chase of two or three rats, who vanished into cracks and holes.

And what a room! A low lean-to with wooden walls, without a single article of furniture; and through the broad chinks of the floor shone up as it were ugly glaring eyes, staring at us. — They were the reflexions of the rushlight in the sewer below. The stench was frightful — the air heavy with pestilence. The first breath I drew made my heart sink, and my stomach turn. But I forgot everything in the object which lay before me, as Downes tore a half-finished coat off three corpses laid side by side on the bare floor.

There was his little Irish wife; — dead — and naked; the wasted white limbs gleamed in the lurid light; the unclosed eyes stared, as if reproachfully, at the husband whose drunkenness had brought her there to kill her with the pestilence; and on each side of her a little, shrivelled, impish, child-corpse, — the wretched man had laid their arms round the dead mother's neck — and there they slept, their hungering and wailing over at last for ever: the rats had been busy already with them — but what matter to them now?

"Look!" he cried; "I watched 'em dying! Day after day I saw the devils come up through the cracks, like little maggots and beetles, and all manner of ugly things, creeping down their throats; and I asked 'em, and they said they were the fever devils."

It was too true; the poisonous exhalations had killed them. The wretched man's delirium tremens had given that horrible substantiality to the poisonous fever gases.

Suddenly Downes turned on me, almost menacingly. "Money! money! I want some gin!"

I was thoroughly terrified — and there was no shame in feeling fear, locked up with a madman far my superior in size and strength, in so ghastly a place. But the shame, and the folly too, would have been in giving way to my fear; and with a boldness half assumed, half the real fruit of excitement and indignation at the horrors I beheld, I answered —

"If I had money, I would give you none. What do you want with gin? Look at the fruits of your accursed tippling. If you had taken my advice, my poor fellow," I went on, gaining courage as I spoke, "and become a water-drinker, like me ---"

"Curse you and your water-drinking! If you had had no water to drink or wash with for two years but that — that," pointing to the foul ditch below — "if you had emptied the slops in there with one hand, and filled your kettle with the other — "

"Do you actually mean that that sewer is your only drinking water?"

"Where else can we get any? Everybody drinks it; and you shall, too — you shall!" he cried, with a fearful oath, "and then see if you don't run off to the gin-shop, to take the taste of it out of your mouth. Drink? and who can help drinking, with his stomach turned with such hell-broth as that — or such a hell's blast as this air is here, ready to vomit from morning till night with the smells? I'll show you. You shall drink a bucket full of it, as sure as you live, you shall."

And he ran out of the back door, upon a little balcony, which hung over the ditch.

I tried the door, but the key was gone, and the handle too. I beat furiously on it, and called for help. Two gruff authoritative voices were heard in the passage.

"Let us in; I'm the policeman!"

"Let me out, or mischief will happen!"

The policeman made a vigorous thrust at the crazy door; and just as it burst open, and the light of his lantern streamed into the horrible den, a heavy splash was heard outside.

"He has fallen into the ditch!"

"He'll be drowned, then, as sure as he's a born man," shouted one of the crowd behind.

We rushed out on the balcony. The light of the policeman's lantern glared over the ghastly scene - along the double row of miserable house-backs, which lined the sides of the open tidal ditch - over strange rambling jetties, and balconies, and sleeping-sheds, which hung on rotting piles over the black waters, with phosphorescent scraps of rotten fish gleaming and twinkling out of the dark hollows, like devilish grave-lights - over bubbles of poisonous gas, and bloated carcases of dogs, and lumps of offal, floating on the stagnant olive-green hell-broth - over the slow sullen rows of oily ripple which were dying away into the darkness far beyond, sending up, as they stirred, hot breaths of miasma - the only sign that a spark of humanity, after years of foul life, had quenched itself at last in that foul death. almost fancied that I could see the haggard face staring up at me through the slimy water; but no, it was as opaque as stone.

I shuddered and went in again, to see slatternly ginsmelling women stripping off their clothes — true women even there — to cover the poor naked corpses; and pointing to the bruises which told a tale of long tyranny and cruelty; and mingling their lamentations with stories of shrieks and

beating, and children locked up for hours to starve; and the men looked on sullenly, as if they too were guilty, or rushed out to relieve themselves by helping to find the drowned body. Ugh! it was the very mouth of hell, that room. And in the midst of all the rout, the relieving officer stood impassive, jotting down scraps of information, and warning us to appear the next day, to state what we knew before the magistrates. Needless hypocrisy of law! Too careless to save the woman and children from brutal tyranny, nakedness, starvation! -Too superstitious to offend its idol of vested interests, by protecting the poor man against his tyrants, the house-owning shopkeepers under whose greed the dwellings of the poor become nests of filth and pestilence, drunkenness and degradation. Careless, superstitious, imbecile law! - leaving the victims to die unhelped, and then, when the fever and the tyranny has done its work, in thy sanctimonious prudishness, drugging thy respectable conscience by a "searching inquiry" as to how it all happened — lest, forsooth, there should have been "foul play!" Is the knife or the bludgeon, then, the only foul play, and not the cesspool and the curse of Rabshakeh? Go through Bermondsey or Spitalfields, St. Giles's or Lambeth, and see if there is not foul play enough already - to be tried hereafter at a more awful coroner's inquest than thou thinkest of!

# CHAPTER XXXVI.

## Dreamland.

IT must have been two o'clock in the morning before I reached my lodgings. Too much exhausted to think, I hurried to my bed. I remember now that I reeled strangely as I went up-stairs. I lay down, and was asleep in an instant.

How long I had slept I know not, when I awoke with a strange confusion and whirling in my brain, and an intolerable weight and pain about my back and loins. By the light of the gas-lamp I saw a figure standing at the foot of my bed. I could not discern the face, but I knew instinctively that it was my mother. I called to her again and again, but she did not answer. She moved slowly away, and passed out through the wall of the room.

I tried to follow her, but could not. An enormous, unut-

terable weight seemed to lie upon me. The bed-clothes grew and grew before me, and upon me, into a vast mountain, millions of miles in height. Then it seemed all glowing red, like the cone of a volcano. I heard the roaring of the fires within, the rattling of the cinders down the heaving slope. A river ran from its summit; and up that river-bed it seemed I was doomed to climb and climb for ever, millions and millions of miles upwards, against the rushing stream. The thought was intolerable, and I shrieked aloud. A raging thirst had seized me. I tried to drink the river-water: but it was boiling hot — sulphureous — reeking of putrefaction. Suddenly I fancied that I could pass round the foot of the mountain; and jumbling, as madmen will, the sublime and the ridiculous, I sprang up to go round the foot of my bed, which was the mountain.

I recollect lying on the floor. I recollect the people of the house, who had been awoke by my shriek and my fall, rushing in and calling to me. I could not rise or answer. I recollect a doctor; and talk about brain fever and delirium. It was true. I was in a raging fever. And my fancy, long pent-up and crushed by circumstances, burst out in uncontrollable wildness, and swept my other faculties with it helpless away over all heaven and earth, presenting to me, as in a vast kaleidoscope, fantastic symbols of all I had ever thought, or read, or felt.

That fancy of the mountain returned; but I had climbed it now. I was wandering along the lower ridge of the Himalaya. On my right the line of snow peaks showed like a rosy saw against the clear blue morning sky. Raspberries and cyclamens were peeping through the snow around me. As I looked down the abysses, I could see far below, through the thin veils of blue mist that wandered in the glens, the silver spires of giant deodars, and huge rhododendrons glowing like trees of flame. The longing of my life to behold that cradle of mankind was satisfied. My eyes revelled in vastness, as they swept over the broad flat jungle at the mountain foot, a desolate sheet of dark gigantic grasses, furrowed with the paths of the buffalo and rhinoceros, with barren sandy watercourses, desolate pools, and here and there a single tree, stunted with malaria, shattered by mountain floods; and far beyond, the vast plains of Hindostan, enlaced with myriad silver rivers and canals, tanks and rice-fields, cities with their

mosques and minarets, gleaming among the stately palmgroves along the boundless horizon. Above me was a Hindoo temple, cut out of the yellow sandstone. I climbed up to the higher tier of pillars among monstrous shapes of gods and fiends, that mouthed and writhed and mocked at me, struggling to free themselves from their bed of rock. The bull Nundi rose and tried to gore me; hundred-handed gods brandished quoits and sabres round my head; and Kali dropped the skull from her gore-dripping jaws, to clutch me for her prey. Then my mother came, and seizing the pillars of the portico, bent them like reeds: an earthquake shook the hills - great sheets of woodland slid roaring and crashing into the valleys - a tornado swept through the temple halls, which rocked and tossed like a vessel in a storm: a crash - a cloud of yellow dust which filled the air - choked me blinded me - buried -

And Eleanor came by, and took my soul in the palm of her hand, as the angels did Faust's, and carried it to a cavern by the seaside, and dropped it in; and I fell and fell for ages. And all the velvet mosses, rock flowers, and sparkling spars and ores, fell with me, round me, in showers of diamonds, whirlwinds of emerald and ruby, and pattered into the sea that moaned below, and were quenched; and the light lessened above me to one small spark, and vanished; and I was in darkness, and turned again to my dust.

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And I was at the lowest point of created life; a madrepore rooted to the rock, fathoms below the tide-mark; and worst of all, my individuality was gone. I was not one thing, but many things — a crowd of innumerable polypi; and I grew and grew, and the more I grew the more I divided, and multiplied thousand and ten thousand-fold. If I could have thought, I should have gone mad at it; but I could only feel.

And I heard Eleanor and Lillian talking, as they floated past me through the deep, for they were two angels; and Lillian said, "When will he be one again?"

And Eleanor said, "He who falls from the golden ladder must climb through ages to its top. He who tears himself in pieces by his lusts, ages only can make him one again. The

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madrepore shall become a shell, and the shell a fish, and the fish a bird, and the bird a beast; and then he shall become a man again, and see the glory of the latter days."

And I was a soft crab. under a stone on the sea-shore. With infinite starvation, and struggling, and kicking, I had got rid of my armour, shield by shield, and joint by joint, and cowered, naked and pitiable, in the dark, among dead shells and ooze. Suddenly the stone was turned up; and there was my cousin's hated face laughing at me, and pointing me out to Lillian. She laughed too, as I looked up, sneaking, ashamed, and defenceless, and squared up at him with my soft useless claws. Why should she not laugh? Are not crabs, and toads, and monkeys, and a hundred other strange forms of animal life, jests of nature — embodiments of a divine humour, at which men are meant to laugh and be merry? But, alas! my cousin, as he turned away, thrust the stone back with his foot, and squelched me flat.

And I was a remora, weak and helpless, till I could attach myself to some living thing; and then I had power to stop the largest ship. And Lillian was a flying fish, and skimmed over the crests of the waves on gauzy wings. And my cousin was a huge shark, rushing after her, greedy and openmouthed; and I saw her danger, and clung to him, and held him back; and just as I had stopped him, she turned and swam back into his open jaws.

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Sand — sand — nothing but sand! The air was full of sand, drifting over granite temples, and painted kings and triumphs, and the skulls of a former world; and I was an ostrich, flying madly before the simoon wind, and the giant sand pillars, which stalked across the plains, hunting me down. And Lillian was an Amazon queen, beautiful, and cold, and cruel; and she rode upon a charmed horse, and carried behind her on her saddle a spotted ounce, which was my cousin; and, when I came near her, she made him leap down and course me. And we ran for miles and for days through the interminable sand, till he sprung on me, and dragged me down. And as I lay quivering and dying, she

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reined in her horse above me, and looked down at me with beautiful, pitiless eyes; and a wild Arab tore the plumes from my wings, and she took them and wreathed them in her golden hair. The broad and blood-red sun sank down beneath the sand, and the horse and the Amazon and the ostrich plumes shone blood-red in his lurid rays.

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I was a mylodon among South American forests - a vast sleepy mass, my elephantine limbs and yard-long talons contrasting strangely with the little meek rabbit's head, furnished with a poor dozen of clumsy grinders, and a very small kernel of brains, whose highest consciousness was the enjoyment of muscular strength. Where I had picked up the sensation which my dreams realised for me, I know not: my waking life, alas! had never given me experience of it. Has the mind power of creating sensations for itself? Surely it does so, in those delicious dreams about flying which haunt us poor wingless mortals, which would seem to give my namesake's philosophy the lie. However that may be, intense and new was the animal delight, to plant my hinder claws at some treefoot deep into the black rotting vegetable-mould which steamed rich gases up wherever it was pierced, and clasp my huge arms round the stem of some palm or tree-fern; and then slowly bring my enormous weight and muscle to bear upon it, till the stem bent like a withe, and the laced bark cracked, and the fibres groaned and shrieked, and the roots sprung up out of the soil; and then, with a slow circular wrench, the whole tree was twisted bodily out of the ground, and the maddening tension of my muscles suddenly relaxed, and I sank sleepily down upon the turf, to browse upon the crisp tart foliage, and fall asleep in the glare of sunshine which streamed through the new gap in the green forest roof. Much as I had envied the strong, I had never before suspected the delight of mere physical exertion. I now understood the wild gambols of the dog, and the madness which makes the horse gallop and strain onwards till he drops and dies. They fulfil their nature, as I was doing, and in that is always happiness.

But I did more — whether from mere animal destructiveness, or from the spark of humanity which was slowly rekindling in me, I began to delight in tearing up trees for its

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own sake. I tried my strength daily on thicker and thicker boles. I crawled up to the high palm-tops, and bowed them down by my weight. My path through the forest was marked, like that of a tornado, by snapped and prostrate stems and withering branches. Had I been a few degrees more human, I might have expected a retribution for my sin. I had fractured my own skull three or four times already. I used often to pass the carcases of my race, killed, as geologists now find them, by the fall of the trees they had overthrown; but still I went on, more and more reckless, a slave, like many a socalled man, to the mere sense of power.

One day I wandered to the margin of the woods, and climbing a tree, surveyed a prospect new to me. For miles and miles, away to the white line of the smoking Cordillera, stretched a low rolling plain; one vast thistle-bed, the down of which flew in grey gauzy clouds before a soft fitful breeze; innumerable finches fluttered and pecked above it, and bent the countless flower-heads. Far away, one tall tree rose above the level thistle-ocean. A strange longing seized me to go and tear it down. The forest leaves seemed tasteless; my stomach sickened at them; nothing but that tree would satisfy me; and descending, I slowly brushed my way, with halfshut eyes, through the tall thistles which buried even my bulk.

At last, after days of painful crawling, I dragged my unwieldiness to the tree-foot. Around it the plain was bare, and scored by burrows and heaps of earth, among which gold, some in dust, some in great knots and ingots, sparkled everywhere in the sun, in fearful contrast to the skulls and bones which lay bleaching round. Some were human, some were those of vast and monstrous beasts. I knew (one knows everything in dreams) that they had been slain by the winged ants, as large as panthers, who snuffed and watched around over the magic treasure. Of them I felt no fear; and they seemed not to perceive me, as I crawled, with greedy, hungersharpened eyes, up to the foot of the tree. It seemed miles in height. Its stem was bare and polished like a palm's, and above a vast feathery crown of dark green velvet slept in the still sunlight. But, wonders of wonders! from among the branches hung great sea-green lilies, and, nestled in the heart of each of them, the bust of a beautiful girl. Their white bosoms and shoulders gleamed rosy-white against the emerald petals, like conch-shells half-hidden among sea-weeds, while their delicate waists melted mysteriously into the central sanctuary of the flower. Their long arms and golden tresses waved languishingly downward in the breeze; their eyes glittered like diamonds; their breaths perfumed the air. A blind ecstasy seized me — I awoke again to humanity, and fiercely clasping the tree, shook and tore at it, in the blind hope of bringing nearer to me the magic beauties above: for I knew that I was in the famous land of Wak-Wak, from which the Eastern merchants used to pluck those flower-born beauties, and bring them home to fill the harems of the Indian kings. Suddenly I heard a rustling in the thistles behind me, and looking round saw again that dreaded face — my cousin!

He was dressed — strange jumble that dreams are! — like an American backwoodsman. He carried the same revolver and bowie-knife which he had showed me the fatal night that he intruded on the Chartist club. I shook with terror; but he, too, did not see me. He threw himself on his knees, and began fiercely digging and scraping for the gold.

The winged ants rushed on him, but he looked up, and "held them with his glittering eye," and they shrank back abashed into the thistle covert; while I strained and tugged on, and the faces of the dryads above grew sadder and older, and their tears fell on me like a fragrant rain.

Suddenly the tree-bole cracked — it was tottering. I looked round, and saw that my cousin knelt directly in the path of its fall. I tried to call to him to move; but how could a poor edentate like myself articulate a word? I tried to catch his attention by signs — he would not see. I tried, convulsively, to hold the tree up, but it was too late; a sudden gust of air swept by, and down it rushed, with a roar like a whirlwind, and leaving my cousin untouched, struck me full across the loins, broke my backbone, and pinned me to the ground in mortal agony. I heard one wild shriek rise from the flower fairies, as they fell each from the lily cup, no longer of full human size, but withered, shrivelled, diminished a thousand-fold, and lay on the bare sand, like little rosy humming-birds' eggs, all crushed and dead.

The great blue heaven above me spoke, and cried, "Selfish and sense-bound! thou hast murdered beauty!"

Alton Locke.

The sighing thistle-ocean answered, and murmured, "Discontented! thou hast murdered beauty!"

One flower fairy alone lifted up her tiny cheek from the goldstrewn sand, and cried, "Presumptuous! thou hast murdered beauty!"

It was Lillian's face — Lillian's voice! My cousin heard it too, and turned eagerly; and as my eyes closed in the last death-shiver, I saw him coolly pick up the little beautiful figure, which looked like a fragment of some exquisite cameo, and deliberately put it away in his cigar-case, as he said to himself, "A charming tit-bit for me, when I return from the diggings!"

When I awoke again, I was a baby-ape in Borneon forests, perched among fragrant trailers and fantastic orchis flowers; and as I looked down, beneath the green roof, into the clear waters paved with unknown water-lilies on which the sun had never shone, I saw my face reflected in the pool - a melancholy, thoughtful countenance, with large projecting brow it might have been a negro child's. And I felt stirring in me germs of a new and higher consciousness - yearnings of love towards the mother ape, who fed me and carried me from tree to tree. But I grew and grew; and then the weight of my destiny fell upon me. I saw year by year my brow recede, my neck enlarge, my jaw protrude; my teeth became tusks; skinny wattles grew from my cheeks — the animal faculties in me were swallowing up the intellectual. I watched in myself, with stupid self-disgust, the fearful degradation which goes on from youth to age in all the monkey race, especially in those which approach nearest to the human form. Long melancholy mopings, fruitless strugglings to think, were periodically succeeded by wild frenzies, agonies of lust and aimless ferocity. I flew upon my brother apes, and was driven off with wounds. I rushed howling down into the village gardens, destroying everything I met. I caught the birds and insects, and tore them to pieces with savage glee. One day, as I sat among the boughs, I saw Lillian coming along a flowery path - decked as Eve might have been, the day she turned from Paradise. The skins of gorgeous birds were round her waist; her hair was wreathed with fragrant tropic flowers. On her bosom lay a baby - it was my cousin's.

I knew her, and hated her. The madness came upon me. I longed to leap from the bough and tear her limb from limb; but brutal terror, the dread of man which is the doom of beasts, kept me rooted to my place. Then my cousin came — a hunter missionary; and I heard him talk to her with pride of the new world of civilisation and Christianity which he was organising in that tropic wilderness. I listened with a dim jealous understanding - not of the words, but of the facts. I saw them instinctively, as in a dream. She pointed up to me in terror and disgust, as I sat gnashing and gibbering overhead. He threw up the muzzle of his rifle carelessly, and fired - I fell dead, but conscious still. I knew that my carcase was carried to the settlement; and I watched while a smirking, chuckling surgeon dissected me, bone by bone, and nerve by nerve. And as he was fingering at my heart, and discoursing sneeringly about Van Helmont's dreams of the Archæus, and the animal spirit which dwells within the solar plexus, Eleanor glided by again, like an angel, and drew my soul out of the knot of nerves, with one velvet finger-tip.

Child-dreams - more vague and fragmentary than my animal ones; and yet more calm and simple, and gradually, as they led me onward through a new life, ripening into detail, coherence, and reflection. Dreams of a hut among the valleys of Thibet - the young of forest animals, wild cats, and dogs, and fowls, brought home to be my playmates, and grow up tame around me. Snow-peaks which glittered white against the nightly sky, barring in the horizon of the narrow valley, and yet seeming to beckon upwards, outwards. Strange unspoken aspirations; instincts which pointed to unfulfilled powers, a mighty destiny. A sense, awful and yet cheering, of a wonder and a majesty, a presence and a voice around, in the cliffs and the pine forests, and the great blue rainless heaven. The music of loving voices, the sacred names of child and father, mother, brother, sister, first of all inspirations. - Had we not an All-Father, whose eyes looked down upon us from among those stars above; whose hand upheld the mountain roots below us? Did He not love us, too, even as we loved each other?

The noise of wheels crushing slowly through meadows of 21 \*

tall marigolds and asters, orchises and fragrant lilies. I lay, a child, upon a woman's bosom. Was she my mother, or Eleanor, or Lillian? Or was she neither, and yet all - some ideal of the great Arian tribe, containing in herself all future types of European women? So I slept and woke, and slept again, day after day, week after week, in the lazy bullockwaggon, among herds of grey cattle, guarded by huge lopeared mastiffs; among shaggy white horses, heavy-horned sheep, and silky goats; among tall, barelimbed men, with stone axes on their shoulders, and horn bows at their backs. Westward, through the boundless steppes, whither or why we knew not; but that the All-Father had sent us forth. And behind us the rosy snow-peaks died into ghastly grey, lower and lower as every evening came; and before us the plains spread infinite, with gleaming salt-lakes, and ever fresh tribes of gaudy flowers. Behind us dark lines of living beings streamed down the mountain slopes; around us dark lines crawled along the plains - all westward, westward ever. -The tribes of the Holy Mountain poured out like water to replenish the earth and subdue it - lava-streams from the crater of that great soul-volcano - Titan babies, dumb angels of God, bearing with them in their unconscious pregnancy the law, the freedom, the science, the poetry, the Christianity of Europe and the world.

Westward ever — who could stand against us? We met the wild asses on the steppe, and tamed them, and made them our slaves. We slew the bison herds, and swam broad rivers on their skins. The Python snake lay across our path; the wolves and the wild dogs snarled at us out of their coverts; we slew them and went on. The forest rose in black tangled barriers; we hewed our way through them and went on. Strange giant tribes met us, and eagle-visaged hordes, fierce and foolish; we smote them hip and thigh, and went on, westward ever. Days and weeks and months rolled on, and our wheels rolled on with them. New alps rose up before us; we climbed and climbed them, till, in lonely glens, the mountain walls stood up, and barred our path.

Then one arose and said, "Rocks are strong, but the All-Father is stronger. Let us pray to Him to send the earthquakes, and blast the mountains asunder."

So we sat down and prayed, but the earthquake did not come.

Then another arose and said, "Rocks are strong, but the All-Father is stronger. If we are the children of the All-Father, we, too, are stronger than the rocks. Let us portion out the valley, to every man an equal plot of ground; and bring out the sacred seeds, and sow, and build, and come up with me and bore the mountain."

And all said, "It is the voice of God. We will go up with thee, and bore the mountain; and thou shalt be our king, for thou art wisest, and the spirit of the All-Father is on thee; and whosoever will not go up with thee shall die as a coward and an idler."

So we went up; and in the morning we bored the mountain, and at night we came down and tilled the ground, and sowed wheat and barley, and planted orchards. And in the upper glens we met the mining dwarfs, and saw their tools of iron and copper, and their rock-houses and forges, and envied them. But they would give us none of them: then our king said —

"The All-Father has given all things and all wisdom. Woe to him who keeps them to himself: we will teach you to sow the sacred seeds; and do you teach us your smith-work, or you die."

Then the dwarfs taught us smith-work; and we loved them, for they were wise; and they married our sons and daughters; and we went on boring the mountain.

Then some of us arose and said, "We are stronger than our brethren, and can till more ground than they. Give us a greater portion of land, to each according to his power."

But the king said, "Wherefore? that ye may eat and drink more than your brethren? Have you larger stomachs, as well as stronger arms? As much as a man needs for himself, that he may do for himself. The rest is the gift of the All-Father, and we must do his work therewith. For the sake of the women and the children, for the sake of the sick and the aged, let him that is stronger go up and work the harder at the mountain." And all men said, "It is well spoken."

So we were all equal—for none took more than he needed; and we were all free, because we loved to obey the king by whom the spirit spoke; and we were all brothers, because we had one work, and one hope, and one All-Father.

But I grew up to be a man; and twenty years were past, and the mountain was not bored through; and the king grew old, and men began to love their flocks and herds better than quarrying, and they gave up boring through the mountain. And the strong and the cunning said, "What can we do with all this might of ours?" So, because they had no other way of employing it, they turned it against each other, and swallowed up the heritage of the weak: and a few grew rich, and many poor; and the valley was filled with sorrow, for the land became too narrow for them.

Then I arose and said, "How is this?" And they said, "We must make provision for our children."

And I answered, "The All-Father meant neither you nor your children to devour your brethren. Why do you not break up more waste ground? Why do you not try to grow more corn in your fields?"

And they answered, "We till the ground as our forefathers did: we will keep to the old traditions."

And I answered, "Oh ye hypocrites! have ye not forgotten the old traditions, that each man should have his equal share of ground, and that we should go on working at the mountain, for the sake of the weak and the children, the fatherless and the widow?"

And they answered nought for a while.

Then one said, "Are we not better off as we are? We buy the poor man's ground for a price, and we pay him his wages for tilling it for us — and we know better how to manage it than he."

And I said, "Oh ye hypocrites! See how your lie works! Those who were free are now slaves. Those who had peace of mind are now anxious from day to day for their daily bread. And the multitude gets poorer and poorer, while ye grow fatter and fatter. If ye had gone on boring the mountain, ye would have had no time to eat up your brethren." Then they laughed and said, "Thou art a singer of songs,

Then they laughed and said, "Thou art a singer of songs, and a dreamer of dreams. Let those who want to get through the mountain go up and bore it; we are well enough here. Come now, sing us pleasant songs, and talk no more foolish dreams, and we will reward thee."

Then they brought out a veiled maiden, and said, "Look! her feet are like ivory, and her hair like threads of gold; and she is the sweetest singer in the whole valley. And she shall be thine, if thou wilt be like other people, and prophesy smooth things unto us, and torment us no more with talk about liberty, equality, and brotherhood; for they never were, and never will be, on this earth. Living is too hard work to give in to such fancies."

And when the maiden's veil was lifted, it was Lillian. And she clasped me round the neck, and cried, "Come! I will be your bride, and you shall be rich and powerful; and all men shall speak well of you, and you shall write songs, and we will sing them together, and feast and play from dawn to dawn."

And I wept; and turned me about, and cried, "Wife and child, song and wealth, are pleasant; but blessed is the work which the All-Father has given the people to do. Let the maimed and the halt and the blind, the needy and the fatherless, come up after me, and we will bore the mountain."

But the rich drove me out, and drove back those who would have followed me. So I went up by myself, and bored the mountain seven years, weeping; and every year Lillian came to me, and said, "Come, and be my husband, for my beauty is fading, and youth passes fast away." But I set my heard steadfastly to the work.

And when seven years were over, the poor were so multiplied, that the rich had not wherewith to pay their labour. And there came a famine in the land, and many of the poor died. Then the rich said, "If we let these men starve, they will turn on us, and kill us, for hunger has no conscience, and they are all but like the beasts that perish." So they all brought, one a bullock, another a sack of meal, each according to his substance, and fed the poor therewith; and said to them, "Behold our love and mercy towards you!" But the more they gave, the less they had wherewithal to pay their labourers; and the more they gave, the less the poor liked to work; so that at last they had not wherewithal to pay for tilling the ground, and each man had to go and till his own, and knew not how; so the land lay waste, and there was great perplexity.

Then I went down to them and said, "If you had hearkened to me, and not robbed your brethren of their land, you would never have come into this strait; for by this time the mountain would have been bored through."

Then they cursed the mountain, and me, and Him who made them, and came down to my cottage at night, and cried, "One-sided and left-handed! father of confusion, and disciple of dead donkeys, see to what thou hast brought the land, with thy blasphemous doctrines! Here we are starving, and not only we, but the poor misguided victims of thy abominable notions!"

"You have become wondrous pitiful to the poor," said I, "since you found that they would not starve that you might wanton."

Then once more Lillian came to me, thin and pale and worn. "See, I, too, am starving! and you have been the cause of it; but I will forgive all if you will help us but this once."

"How shall I help you?"

"You are a poet and an orator, and win over all hearts with your talk and your songs. Go down to the tribes of the plain, and persuade them to send us up warriors, that we may put down these riotous and idle wretches; and you shall be king of all the land, and I will be your slave, by day and night."

But I went out, and quarried steadfastly at the mountain.

And when I came back the next evening, the poor had risen against the rich, one and all, crying, "As you have done to us, so will we do to you;" and they hunted them down like wild beasts, and slew many of them, and threw their carcases on the dunghill, and took possession of their land and houses, and cried, "We will be all free and equal as our forefathers were, and live here, and eat and drink, and take our pleasure."

Then I ran out, and cried to them, "Fools! will you do as these rich did, and neglect the work of God? If you do to them as they have done to you, you will sin as they sinned, and devour each other at the last, as they devoured you. The old paths are best. Let each man, rich or poor, have his equal share of the land, as it was at first, and go up and dig through the mountain, and possess the good land beyond, where no man need jostle his neighbour, or rob him, when the land becomes too small for you. Were the rich only in fault? Did not you, too, neglect the work which the All-Father had given you, and run every man after his own comfort? So you entered into a lie, and by your own sin raised up the rich man to be your punishment. For the last time, who will go up with me to the mountain?"

Then they all cried with one voice, "We have sinned! We will go up and pierce the mountain, and fulfil the work which God set to our forefathers." We went up, and the first stroke that I struck a crag fell out; and behold, the light of day! and far below us the good land and large, stretching away boundless towards the western sun.

I sat by the cave's mouth at the dawning of the day. Past me the tribe poured down, young and old, with their waggons, and their cattle, their seeds, and their arms, as of old — yet not as of old — wiser and stronger, taught by long labour and sore affliction. Downward they streamed from the cave's mouth into the glens, following the guidance of the silver water-courses; and as they passed me, each kissed my hands and feet, and cried, "Thou hast saved us — thou hast given up all for us. Come and be our king!"

"Nay," I said, "I have been your king this many a year; for I have been the servant of you all."

I went down with them into the plain, and called them round me. Many times they besought me to go with them and lead them.

"No," I said; "I am old and grey-headed, and I am not as I have been. Choose out the wisest and most righteous among you, and let him lead you. But bind him to yourselves with an oath, that whenever he shall say to you, 'Stay here, and let us sit down and build, and dwell here for ever,' you shall cast him out of his office, and make him a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, and choose one who will lead you forwards in the spirit of God."

The crowd opened, and a woman came forward into the circle. Her face was veiled, but we all knew her for a prophetess. Slowly she stepped into the midst, chanting a mystic song. Whether it spoke of past, present, or future, we knew not; but it sank deep into all our hearts.

> "True freedom stands in meekness — True strength in utter weakness — Justice in forgiveness lies — Riches in self-sacrifice — Own no rank but God's own spirit — Wisdom rule! — and worth inherit! Work for all, and all employ — Share with all, and all enjoy — God alike to all has given, Heaven as Earth, and Earth as Heaven, When the land shall find her king again, And the reign of God is come,"

We all listened, awe-struck. She turned to us and continued:

"Hearken to me, children of Japhet, the unresting!

"On the holy mountain of Paradise, in the Asgard of the Hindoo-Koh, in the cup of the four rivers, in the womb of the mother of nations, in brotherhood, equality, and freedom, the sons of men were begotten, at the wedding of the heaven and the earth. Mighty infants, you did the right you knew not of, and sinned not, because there was no temptation. By selfishness you fell, and became beasts of prey. Each man coveted the universe for his own lusts, and not that he might fulfil in it God's command to people and subdue it. Long have you wandered - and long will you wander still. For here you have no abiding city. You shall build cities, and they shall crumble; you shall invent forms of society and religion, and they shall fail in the hour of need. You shall call the lands by your own names, and fresh waves of men shall sweep you forth, westward, westward ever, till you have travelled round the path of the sun, to the place from whence you came. For out of Paradise you went, and unto Paradise you shall return; you shall become once more as little children, and renew your youth like the eagle's. Feature by feature, and limb by limb, ye shall renew it; age after age, gradually and painfully, by hunger and pestilence, by super-stitions and tyrannies, by need and blank despair, shall you be driven back to the All-Father's home, till you become as you were before you fell, and left the likeness of your father for the likeness of the beasts. Out of Paradise you came, from liberty, equality, and brotherhood, and unto them you shall return again. You went forth in unconscious infancy you shall return in thoughtful manhood. You went forth in ignorance and need — you shall return in science and wealth, philosophy and art. You went forth with the world a wilderness before you - you shall return when it is a garden behind you. You went forth selfish savages - you shall return as the brothers of the Son of God.

"And for you," she said, looking on me, "your penance is accomplished. You have learned what it is to be a man. You have lost your life and saved it. He that gives up house, or land, or wife, or child, for God's sake, it shall be repaid him an hundredfold. Awake!" Surely I knew that voice. She lifted her veil. The face was Lillian's? No! - Eleanor's!

Gently she touched my hand — I sank down into soft, weary, happy sleep.

The spell was snapped. My fever and my dreams faded away together, and I woke to the twittering of the sparrows, and the scent of the poplar leaves, and the sights and sounds of childhood, and found Eleanor and her uncle sitting by my bed, and with them Crossthwaite's little wife.

I would have spoken, but Eleanor laid her finger on her lips, and taking her uncle's arm, glided from the room. Katie kept stubbornly a smiling silence, and I was fain to obey my new-found guardian angels.

What need of many words? Slowly, and with relapses into insensibility, I passed, like one who recovers from drowning, through the painful gate of birth into another life. The fury of passion had been replaced by a delicious weakness. The thunder-clouds had passed roaring down the wind, and the calm bright holy evening was come. My heart, like a fretful child, had stamped and wept itself to sleep. I was past gratitude; infinite submission and humility, feelings too long forgotten, absorbed my whole being. Only I never dared meet Eleanor's eye. Her voice was like an angel's when she spoke to me — friend, mother, sister, all in one. But I had a dim recollection of being unjust to her — of some bar between us.

Katie and Crossthwaite, as they sat by me, tender and careful nurses both, told me, in time, that to Eleanor I owed all my comforts. I could not thank her — the debt was infinite, inexplicable. I felt as if I must speak all my heart or none; and I watched her lavish kindness with a sort of sleepy, passive wonder, like a newborn babe.

At last, one day, my kind nurses allowed me to speak a little. I broached to Crossthwaite the subject which filled my thoughts. "How came I here? How came you here? and Lady Ellerton? What is the meaning of it all?"

"The meaning is, that Lady Ellerton, as they call her, is an angel out of heaven. Ah, Alton! she was your true friend, after all, if you had but known it, and not that other one at all."

I turned my head away.

"Whisht - howld then, Johnny darlint! and don't go

tormenting the poor dear sowl, just when he's comin' round again."

"No, no! tell me all. I must — I ought — I deserve to bear it. How did she come here?"

"Why then, it's my belief, she had her eye on you ever since you came out of that Bastille, and before that, too; and she found you out at Mackaye's, and me with you, for I was there looking after you. If it hadn't been for your illness, I'd have been in Texas now, with our friends, for all's up with the Charter, and the country's too hot, at least for me. I'm sick of the whole thing together, patriots, aristocrats, and everybody else, except this blessed angel. And I've got a couple of hundred to emigrate with; and what's more, so have you."

"How's that?"

"Why, when poor dear old Mackaye's will was read, and you raving mad in the next room, he had left all his stock-intrade, that was, the books, to some of our friends, to form a workmen's library with, and 400*l*. he'd saved, to be parted between you and me, on condition that we'd G.T.T., and cool down across the Atlantic, for seven years come the tenth of April."

So then, by the lasting love of my adopted father, I was at present at least out of the reach of want! My heart was ready to overflow at my eyes; but I could not rest till I had heard more of Lady Ellerton. What brought her here, to nurse me as if she had been a sister?

"Why, then, she lives not far off by. When her husband died, his cousin got the estate and title, and so she came, Katie tells me, and lived for one year down somewhere in the East-end among the needlewomen; and spent her whole fortune on the poor, and never kept a servant, so they say, but made her own bed and cooked her own dinner, and got her bread with her own needle, to see what it was really like. And she learnt a lesson there, I can tell you, and God bless her for it. For now she's got a large house here by, with fifty or more in it, all at work together, sharing the earnings among themselves, and putting into their own pockets the profits which would have gone to their tyrants; and she keeps the accounts for them, and gets the goods sold, and manages everything, and reads to them while they work, and teaches them every day." "And takes her victuals with them," said Katie, "share and share alike. She that was so grand a lady, to demane herself to the poor unfortunate young things! She's as blessed a saint as any a one in the Calendar, if they'll forgive me for saying so."

"Ay! demeaning, indeed! for the best of it is, they're not the respectable one only, though she spends hundreds on them -"

"And sure, haven't I seen it with my own eyes, when I've been there charing?"

"Ay, but those she lives with are the fallen and the lost ones — those that the rich would not set up in business, or help them to emigrate, or lift them out of the gutter with a pair of tongs, for fear they should stain their own whitewash in handling them."

"And sure they're as dacent as meself now, the poor darlints! It was misery druv 'em to it, every one; perhaps it might hav' druv me the same way if I'd a lot o' childer, and Johnny gone to glory — and the blessed saints save him from that same at all at all!"

"What! from going to glory?" said John.

"Och, thin, and wouldn't I just go mad if ever such ill luck happened to yees as to be taken to heaven in the prime of your days, asthore?"

And she began sobbing, and hugging and kissing the little man; and then suddenly recollecting herself, scolded him heartily for making such a "whillybaloo," and thrust him out of my room, to recommence kissing him in the next, leaving me to many meditations.

# CHAPTER XXXVII.

The true Demagogue.

I USED to try to arrange my thoughts, but could not; the past seemed swept away and buried, like the wreck of some drowned land after a flood. Ploughed by affliction to the core, my heart lay fallow for every seed that fell. Eleanor understood me, and gently and gradually, beneath her skilful hand, the chaos began again to bloom with verdure. She and Crossthwaite used to sit and read to me — from the Bible, from poets, from every book which could suggest soothing,

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graceful, or hopeful fancies. Now, out of the stillness of the darkened chamber, one or two priceless sentences of a Kempis, or a spirit-stirring Hebrew psalm, would fall upon my ear: and then there was silence again; and I was left to brood over the words in vacancy, till they became a fibre of my own soul's core. Again and again the stories of Lazarus and the Magdalene alternated with Milton's Penseroso, or with Wordsworth's tenderest and most solemn strains. Exquisite prints from the history of our Lord's life and death were hung one by one, each for a few days, opposite my bed, where they might catch my eye the moment that I woke, the moment before I fell asleep. I heard one day the good dean remonstrating with her on the "sentimentalism" of her mode of treatment.

"Poor drowned butterfly!" she answered, smiling, "he must be fed with honey-dew. Have I not surely had practice enough already?"

"Yes, angel that you are!" answered the old man. "You have indeed had practice enough!" And lifting her hand reverentially to his lips, he turned and left the room.

She sat down by me as I lay, and began to read from Tennyson's Lotus-Eaters. But it was not reading — it was rather a soft dreamy chant, which rose and fell like the waves of sound on an Æolion harp.

> "There is sweet music here that softer falls Than petals from blown roses on the grass, Or night dews on still waters between walls Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass; Music that gentlier on the spirit lies Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes; Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies. Here are cool mosses deep, And through the moss the ivies creep, And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep, And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep. Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,

And utterly consumed with sharp distress, While all things else have rest from weariness? All things have rest: why should we toil alone? We only toil, who are the first of things, And make perpetual moan, Still from one sorrow to another thrown: Nor ever fold our wings, And cease from wanderings; Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm; Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,

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'There is no joy but calm !' Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?"

She paused -

My soul was an enchanted boat Which, like a sleeping swan, did float Upon the silver waves of her sweet singing.

Half unconscious, I looked up. Before me hung a copy of Raffaelle's cartoon of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes. As my eye wandered over it, it seemed to blend into harmony with the feelings which the poem had stirred. I seemed to float upon the glassy lake. I watched the vista of the waters and mountains, receding into the dreamy infinite of the still summer sky. Softly from distant shores came the hum of eager multitudes; towers and palaces slept quietly beneath the eastern sun. In front, fantastic fishes, and the birds of the mountain and the lake, confessed His power, who sat there in His calm godlike beauty, His eye ranging over all that still infinity of His own works, over all that wondrous line of figures, which seemed to express every gradation of spiritual consciousness, from the dark self-condemned dislike of Judas's averted and wily face, through mere animal greediness to the first dawnings of surprise, and on to the manly awe and gratitude of Andrew's majestic figure, and the selfabhorrent humility of Peter, as he shrank down into the bottom of the skiff, and with convulsive palms and bursting brow seemed to press out from his inmost heart the words, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Truly, pictures are the books of the unlearned, and of the mislearned too. Glorious Raffaelle! Shakspeare of the South! Mighty preacher, to whose blessed intuition it was given to know all human hearts, to embody in form and colour all spiritual truths, common alike to Protestant and Papist, to workman and to sage - oh that I may meet thee before the throne of God, if it be but to thank thee for that one picture, in which thou didst reveal to me, in a single glance, every step of my own spiritual history!

She seemed to follow my eyes, and guess from them the workings of my heart; for now, in a low, half-abstracted voice, as Diotima may have talked of old, she began to speak of rest and labour, of death and life; of a labour which is perfect rest — of a daily death, which is but daily birth — of weakness, which is the strength of God; and so she wandered

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on in her speech to Him who died for us. And gradually she turned to me. She laid one finger solemnly on my listless palm, as her words and voice became more intense, more personal. She talked of Him, as Mary may have talked just risen from His feet. She spoke of Him as I had never heard Him spoken of before — with a tender passionate loyalty, kept down and softened by the deepest awe. The sense of her intense belief, shining out in every lineament of her face, carried conviction to my heart more than ten thousand arguments could do. It must be true! — Was not the power of it around her like a glory? She spoke of Him as near us watching us — in words of such vivid eloquence that I turned half-startled to her, as if I expected to see Him standing by her side.

She spoke of Him as the great Reformer; and yet as the true conservative; the inspirer of all new truths, revealing in His Bible to every age abysses of new wisdom, as the times require; and yet the vindicator of all which is ancient and eternal — the justifier of His own dealings with man from the beginning. She spoke of Him as the true demagogue — the champion of the poor; and yet as the true King, above and below all earthly rank; on whose will alone all real superiority of man to man, all the time-justified and time-honoured usages of the family, the society, the nation, stand and shall stand for ever.

And then she changed her tone: and in a voice of infinite tenderness she spoke of Him as the Creator, the Word, the Inspirer, the only perfect Artist, the Fountain of all Genius.

She made me feel — would that His ministers had made me feel it before, since they say that they believe it — that He had passed victorious through my vilest temptations, that He sympathised with my every struggle.

She told me how He, in the first dawn of manhood, full of the dim consciousness of His own power, full of strange yearning presentiments about his own sad and glorious destiny, went up into the wilderness, as every youth, above all every genius, must, there to be tempted of the devil. She told how alone with the wild beasts, and the brute powers of nature, He saw into the open secret — the mystery of man's twofold life, His kingship over earth, His sonship under God: and conquered in the might of His knowledge. How He was

tempted, like every genius, to use His creative powers for selfish ends - to yield to the lust of display and singularity, and break through those laws which He came to reveal and to fulfil — to do one little act of evil, that He might secure thereby the harvest of good which was the object of His life: and how he had conquered in the faith that He was the son of God. She told me how He had borne the sorrows of genius; how the slightest pang that I had ever felt was but a dim faint pattern of His; how He, above all men, had felt the agony of calumny, misconception, misinterpretation; how He had fought with bigotry and stupidity, casting His pearls before swine, knowing full well what it was to speak to the deaf and the blind; how He had wept over Jerusalem, in the bitterness of disappointed patriotism, when He had tried in vain to awaken within a nation of slavish and yet rebellious bigots the consciousness of their glorious calling.....

It was too much — I hid my face in the coverlet, and burst out into long, low, and yet most happy weeping. She rose and went to the window, and beckoned Katie from the room within.

"I am afraid," she said, "my conversation has been too much for him."

"Showers sweeten the air," said Katie; and truly enough, as my own lightened brain told me.

Eleanor — for so I must call her now — stood watching me for a few minutes, and then glided back to the bed-side, and sat down again.

"You find the room quiet?"

"Wonderfully quiet. The roar of the city outside is almost soothing, and the noise of every carriage seems to cease suddenly, just as it becomes painfully near."

"We have had straw laid down," she answered, "all along this part of the street."

This last drop of kindness filled the cup to overflowing: a veil fell from before my eyes -- it was she who had been my friend, my guardian angel, from the beginning!

"You — you — idiot that I have been! I see it all now. It was you who laid that paper to catch my eye on that first evening at D \* \* \* \*! — you paid my debt to my cousin! you visited Mackaye in his last illness!"

She made a sign of assent.

"You saw from the beginning my danger, my weakness! Alton Locke. 22

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— you tried to turn me from my frantic and fruitless passion! — you tried to save me from the very gulf into which I forced myself! — and I — I have hated you in return — cherished suspicions too ridiculous to confess, only equalled by the absurdity of that other dream!"

"Would that other dream have ever given you peace, even if it had ever become reality?"

She spoke gently, slowly, seriously; waiting between each question for the answer which I dared not give.

"What was it that you adored? a soul, or a face? The inward reality, or the outward symbol, which is only valuable as a sacrament of the loveliness within?"

"Ay!" thought I, "and was that loveliness within? What was that beauty but a hollow mask?" How barren, borrowed, trivial, every thought and word of hers seemed now, as I looked back upon them, in comparison with the rich luxuriance, the startling originality, of thought and deed and sympathy, in her who now sat by me, wan and faded, beautiful no more as men call beauty, but with the spirit of an archangel gazing from those clear fiery eyes! And as I looked at her, an emotion utterly new to me arose; utter trust, delight, submission, gratitude, awe — if it was love, it was love as of a dog towards his master.

"Ay," I murmured, half unconscious that I spoke aloud, "her I loved, and love no longer; but you, you I worship, and for ever!"

"Worship God," she answered. "If it shall please you hereafter to call me friend, I shall refuse neither the name nor its duties. But remember always, that whatsoever interest I feel in you, and, indeed, have felt from the first time I saw your poems, I cannot give or accept friendship upon any ground so shallow and changeable as personal preference. The time was, when I thought it a mark of superior intellect and refinement to be as exclusive in my friendships as in my theories. Now I have learnt that that is most spiritual and noble which is also most universal. If we are to call each other friends, it must be for a reason which equally includes the outcast and the profligate, the felon and the slave."

"What do you mean?" I asked, half disappointed.

"Only for the sake of Him who died for all alike."

Why did she rise and call Crossthwaite from the next room where he was writing? Was it from the womanly tact and delicacy which feared lest my excited feelings might lead me on to some too daring expression, and give me the pain of a rebuff, however gentle; or was it that she wished him, as well as me, to hear the memorable words which followed, to which she seemed to have been all along alluring me, and calling up in my mind, one by one, the very questions to which she had prepared the answers?

"That name!" I answered. "Alas! has it not been in every age the watchword, not of an all-embracing charity, but of selfconceit and bigotry, excommunication and persecution?"

"That is what men have made it; not God, or He who bears it, the Son of God. Yes, men have separated from each other, slandered each other, murdered each other in that name, and blasphemed it by that very act. But when did they unite in any name but that? Look all history through -from the early churches, unconscious and infantile ideas of God's kingdom, as Eden was of the human race, when love alone was law, and none said that aught that he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common - Whose name was the bond of unity for that brotherhood, such as the earth had never seen --- when the Roman lady and the Negro slave partook together at the table of the same bread and wine, and sat together at the feet of the Syrian tent-maker ?---'One is our Master, even Christ, who sits at the right hand of God, and in Him we are all brothers.' Not self-chosen preference for His precepts, but the overwhelming faith in His presence, His rule, His love, bound those rich hearts together. Look onward, too, at the first followers of St. Bennet and St. Francis, at the Cameronians among their Scottish hills, or the little persecuted flock who in a dark and godless time gathered around Wesley by pit-mouths and on Cornish cliffs - Look, too, at the great societies of our own days, which, however imperfectly, still lovingly and earnestly de their measure of God's work at home and abroad; and say, when was there ever real union, co-operation, philanthropy, equality, brotherhood, among men, save in loyalty to Him --Jesus, who died upon the cross?"

And she bowed her head reverently before that unseen Majesty; and then looked up at us again — Those eyes, now brimming full of earnest tears, would have melted stonier hearts than ours that day. "Do you not believe me? Then I must quote against you one of your own prophets — a ruined angel — even as you might have been.

"When Camille Desmoulins, the revolutionary, about to die, as is the fate of such, by the hands of revolutionaries, was asked his age, he answered, they say, that it was the same as that of the 'bon sans-culotte Jesus.' I do not blame those who shrink from that speech as blasphemous. I, too, have spoken hasty words and hard, and prided myself on breaking the bruised reed, and quenching the smoking flax. Time was, when I should have been the loudest in denouncing poor Camille; but I have long since seemed to see in those words the distortion of an almighty truth - a truth that shall shake thrones and principalities and powers, and fill the earth with its sound, as with the trump of God; a prophecy like Balaam's of old - 'I shall see Him, but not nigh; I shall prophets, poets, philosophers - where will you find the true demagogue - the speaker to man simply as man - the friend of publicans and sinners, the stern foe of the scribe and the Pharisee - with whom was no respect of persons - where is he? Socrates and Plato were noble; Zerdusht and Confutzee, for aught we know, were nobler still; but what were they but the exclusive mystagogues of an enlightened few, like our own Emersons and Strausses, to compare great with small? What gospel have they, or Strauss, or Emerson, for the poor, the suffering, the oppressed? The People's Friend? Where will you find him, but in Jesus of Nazareth?"

"We feel that; I assure you, we feel that," said Crossthwaite. "There are thousands of us who delight in His moral teaching, as the perfection of human excellence."

"And what gospel is there in a moral teaching? What good news is it to the savage of St. Giles's, to the artisan, crushed by the competition of others and his own evil habits, to tell him that he can be free — if he can make himself free? — That all men are his equals — if he can rise to their level, or pull them down to his? — All men his brothers — if he can only stop them from devouring him, or making it necessary for him to devour them? Liberty, equality, and brotherhood? Let the history of every nation, of every revolution — let your own sad experience, speak — have they been aught as yet but delusive phantoms — angels that turned to fiends the moment you seemed about to clasp them? Remember the tenth of April, and the plots thereof, and answer your own hearts!" Crossthwaite buried his face in his hands.

"What!" I answered, passionately, "will you rob us poor creatures of our only faith, our only hope, on earth? Let us be deceived, and deceived again; yet we will believe! We will hope on in spite of hope. We may die, but the idea lives for ever. Liberty, equality, and fraternity must come. We know, we know, that they must come; and woe to those who seek to rob us of our faith!"

"Keep, keep your faith," she cried; "for it is not yours, but God's, who gave it! But do not seek to realise that idea for yourselves."

"Why, then, in the name of reason and mercy?"

"Because it is realised already for you. You are free; God has made you free. You are equals - you are brothers; for He is your king, who is no respecter of persons. He is your king, who has bought for you the rights of sons of God. He is your king, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth; who reigns, and will reign, till He has put all enemies under His feet. That was Luther's charter - with that alone he freed half Europe. That is your charter, and mine; the everlasting ground of our rights, our mights, our duties, of ever-gathering storm for the oppressor, of ever-brightening sunshine for the oppressed. Own no other. Claim your investiture as free men from none but God. His will, His love, is a stronger ground, surely, than abstract rights and ethnological opinions. Abstract rights? What ground, what root have they, but the ever-changing opinions of men, born anew and dying anew with each fresh generation? - while the word of God stands sure - 'You are mine, and I am yours, bound to you in an everlasting covenant.'

"Abstract rights? They are sure to end, in practice, only in the tyranny of their father — opinion. In favoured England here, the notions of abstract right among the many are not so incorrect, thanks to three centuries of Protestant civilisation; but only because the right notions suit the many at this moment. But in America, even now, the same ideas of abstract right do not interfere with the tyranny of the white man over the black. Why should they? The white man is handsomer, stronger, cunninger, worthier than the black. The black is more like an ape than the white man —

he is - the fact is there; and no notions of an abstract right will put that down: nothing but another fact - a mightier. more universal fact - Jesus of Nazareth died for the negro as well as for the white. Looked at apart from Him, each race, each individual of mankind, stands separate and alone, owing no more brotherhood to each other than wolf to wolf, or pike to pike - himself a mightier beast of prey - even as he has proved himself in every age. Looked at as he is, as joined into one family in Christ, his archetype and head, even the most frantic declamations of the French democrat, about the majesty of the people, the divinity of mankind, become rational, reverent, and literal. God's grace outrivals all man's boasting - 'I have said, ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the Most Highest:' -- 'children of God, members of Christ, of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,'-'kings and priests to God,' - free inheritors of the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of prudence and courage, of reverence and love, the spirit of Him who has said. 'Behold, the days come, when I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh and no one shall teach his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know Him, from the least even unto the greatest. Ay, even on the slaves and on the handmaidens in those days will I pour out my spirit, saith the Lord!'"

"And that is really in the Bible?" asked Crossthwaite.

"Ay" - she went on, her figure dilating, and her eyes flashing, like an inspired prophetess - "that is in the Bible! What would you more than that? That is your charter; the only ground of all charters. You, like all mankind, have had dim inspirations, confused yearnings after your future destiny, and, like all the world from the beginning, you have tried to realise, by self-willed methods of your own, what you can only do by God's inspiration, by God's method. Like the builders of Babel in old time, you have said, 'Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top shall reach to heaven' - And God has confounded you as he did them. By mistrust, division, passion, and folly, you are scattered abroad. Even in these last few days, the last dregs of your late plot have exploded miserably and ludierously - your late companions are in prison, and the name of Chartist is a laughing-stock as well as an abomination."

"Good Heavens! Is this true?" asked I, looking at Crossthwaite for confirmation. "Too true, dear boy, too true: and if it had not been for these two angels here, I should have been in Newgate now!"

"Yes," she went on. "The Charter seems dead, and liberty further off than ever."

"That seems true enough, indeed," said I, bitterly.

"Yes. But it is because Liberty is God's beloved child, that He will not have her purity sullied by the touch of the profane. Because He loves the people, He will allow none but Himself to lead the people. Because He loves the people, He will teach the people by afflictions. And even now, while all this madness has been destroying itself, He has been hiding you in His secret place from the strife of tongues, that you may have to look for a state founded on better things than acts of parliament, social contracts, and abstract rights — a city whose foundations are in the eternal promises, whose builder and maker is God."

She paused. - "Go on, go on," cried Crossthwaite and I in the same breath.

"That state, that city, Jesus said, was come - was now within us, had we eyes to see. And it is come. Call it the church, the gospel, civilisation, freedom, democracy, association, what you will - I shall call it by the name by which my Master spoke of it - the name which includes all these, and more than these - the kingdom of God. "Without observation,' as he promised, secretly, but mightily, it has been growing, spreading, since that first Whitsuntide; civilising, humanising, uniting this distracted earth. Men have fancied they found it in this system or in that, and in them only. They have cursed it in its own name, when they found it too wide for their own narrow notions. They have cried, 'Lo here!' and 'Lo there!' 'To this communion!' or 'To that set of opinions!' But it has gone its way - the way of Him who made all things, and redeemed all things to Himself. In every age it has been a gospel to the poor. In every age it has, sooner or later, claimed the steps of civilisation, the discoveries of science, as God's inspirations, not man's inventions. In every age, it has taught men to do that by God which they had failed in doing without Him. It is now ready, if we may judge by the signs of the times, once again to penetrate, to convert, to reorganise, the political and social life of England, perhaps of the world; to vindicate democracy

as the will and gift of God. Take it for the ground of your rights. If, henceforth, you claim political enfranchisement, claim it not as mere men, who may be villains, savages, animals, slaves of their own prejudices and passions; but as members of Christ, children of God, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, and therefore bound to realise it on earth. All other rights are mere mights - mere selfish demands to become tyrants in your turn. If you wish to justify your Charter, do it on that ground. Claim your share in national life, only because the nation is a spiritual body, whose king is the son of God; whose work, whose national character and powers, are allotted to it by the Spirit of Christ. Claim universal suffrage, only on the ground of the universal redemption of mankind - the universal priesthood of Christians. That argument will conquer, when all have failed; for God will make it conquer. Claim the disenfranchisement of every man, rich or poor, who breaks the laws of God and man, not merely because he is an obstacle to you, but because he is a traitor to your common King in heaven, and to the spiritual kingdom of which he is a citizen. Denounce the effete idol of property-qualification, not because it happens to strengthen class interests against you, but because, as your mystic dream reminded you, and, therefore, as you knew long ago, there is no real rank, no real power, but worth; and worth consists not in property, but in the grace of God. Claim, if you will, annual parliaments, as a means of enforcing the responsibility of rulers to the Christian community, of which they are to be, not the lords, but the ministers - the servants of all. But claim these, and all else for which you long, not from man, but from God, the King of men. And therefore, before you attempt to obtain them, make yourselves worthy of them perhaps by that process you will find some of them have become less needful. At all events, do not ask, do not hope, that He will give them to you before you are able to profit by them. Believe that he has kept them from you hitherto, because they would have been curses, and not blessings. Oh! look back, look back, at the history of English Radicalism for the last half century, and judge by your own deeds, your own words; were you fit for those privileges which you so frantically demanded? Do not answer me, that those who had them were equally unfit; but thank God, if the case be indeed so, that your incapacity was not added to theirs, to make confusion worse confounded! Learn a new lesson. Believe at last that you are in Christ, and become new creatures. With those miserable, awful farce-tragedies of April and June, let old things pass away, and all things become new. Believe that your kingdom is not of this world, but of One whose servants must not fight. He that believeth, as the prophet says, will not make haste. Beloved suffering brothers! — are not your times in the hand of One who loved you to the death, who conquered, as you must do, not by wrath, but by martyrdom? Try no more to meet Mammon with his own weapons, but commit your cause to Him who judges righteously, who is even now coming out of his place to judge the earth, and to help the fatherless and poor unto their right, that the man of the world may be no more exalted against them — the poor man of Nazareth, crucified for you!"

She ceased, and there was silence for a few moments, as if angels were waiting, hushed, to carry our repentance to the throne of Him we had forgotten.

Crossthwaite had kept his face fast buried in his hands; now he looked up with brimming eyes -

"I see it — I see it all now. Oh, my God! my God! What infidels we have been!"

# CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### Miracles and Science.

SUNRISE, they say, often at first draws up and deepens the very mists which it is about to scatter: and even so, as the excitement of my first conviction cooled, dark doubts arose to dim the new-born light of hope and trust within me. The question of miracles had been ever since I had read Strauss my greatest stumbling-block — perhaps not unwillingly, for my doubts pampered my sense of intellectual acuteness and scientific knowledge; and "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." But now that they interfered with nobler, more important, more immediately practical ideas, I longed to have them removed — I longed even to swallow them down on trust -- to take the miracles "into the bargain" as it were, for the sake of that mighty gospel of deliverance for the people which accompanied them. Mean subterfuge! which would not, could not, satisfy me. The thing was too precious, too allimportant, to take one tittle of it on trust. I could not bear the consciousness of one hollow spot — the nether fires of doubt glaring through, even at one little crevice. I took my doubts to Lady Ellerton — Eleanor, as I must now call her, for she never allowed herself to be addressed by her title and she referred me to her uncle —

"I could say somewhat on that point myself. But since your doubts are scientific ones, I had rather that you should discuss them with one whose knowledge of such subjects you, and all England with you, must revere."

"Ah, but - pardon me; he is a clergyman."

"And therefore bound to prove, whether he believe in his own proof or not. Unworthy suspicion!" she cried, with a touch of her old manner. "If you had known that man's literary history for the last thirty years, you would not suspect him, at least, of sacrificing truth and conscience to interest, or to fear of the world's insults."

I was rebuked; and not without hope and confidence, I broached the question to the good dean when he came in — as he happened to do that very day.

"I hardly like to state my difficulties," I began — "for I am afraid that I must hurt myself in your eyes by offending your — prejudices, if you will pardon so plain-spoken an expression."

"If," he replied, in his bland courtly way, "I am so unfortunate as to have any prejudices left, you cannot do me a greater kindness than by offending them — or by any other means, however severe — to make me conscious of the locality of such a secret canker."

"But I am afraid that your own teaching has created, or at least corroborated, these doubts of mine."

"How so?"

"You first taught me to revere science. You first taught me to admire and trust the immutable order, the perfect harmony of the laws of Nature."

"Ah! I comprehend now!" he answered, in a somewhat mournful tone — "How much we have to answer for! How often, in our carelessness, we offend those little ones, whose souls are precious in the sight of God! I have thought long and earnestly on the very subject which now distresses you; perhaps every doubt which has passed through your mind, has exercised my own; and, strange to say, you first set me on that new path of thought. A conversation which passed between us years ago at D \* \* \* \* on the antithesis of natural and revealed religion — perhaps you recollect it?"

Yes, I recollected it better than he fancied, and recollected too — I thrust the thought behind me — it was even yet intolerable.

"That conversation first awoke in me the sense of an hitherto unconscious inconsistency — a desire to reconcile two lines of thought — which I had hitherto considered as parallel, and impossible to unite. To you, and to my beloved niece here, I owe gratitude for that evening's talk; and you are freely welcome to all my conclusions, for you have been, indirectly, the originator of them all."

"Then, I must confess, that miracles seem to me impossible, just because they break the laws of Nature. Pardon me — but there seems something blasphemous in supposing that God can mar His own order: His power I do not call in question, but the very thought of His so doing is abhorrent to me."

"It is as abhorrent to me as it can be to you, to Goethe, or to Strauss; and yet I believe firmly in our Lord's miracles."

"How so, if they break the laws of Nature?"

"Who told you, my dear young friend, that to break the customs of Nature, is to break her laws? A phenomenon, an appearance, whether it be a miracle or a comet, need not contradict them because it is rare, because it is as yet not referable to them. Nature's deepest laws, her only true laws, are her invisible ones. All analyses (I think you know enough to understand my terms), whether of appearances, of causes, or of elements, only lead us down to fresh appearances - we cannot see a law, let the power of our lens be ever so immense. The true causes remain just as impalpable, as unfathomable as ever, eluding equally our microscope and our induction ever tending towards some great primal law, as Mr. Grove has well shown lately in his most valuable pamphlet - some great primal law, I say, manifesting itself, according to circumstances, in countless diverse and unexpected forms - till all that the philosopher as well as the divine can say, is - The Spirit of Life, impalpable, transcendental, direct from God, is the only real cause. It 'bloweth where it listeth, and thou

#### ALTON LOCKE,

hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.' What, if miracles should be the orderly results of some such deep, most orderly, and yet most spiritual law?"

"I feel the force of your argument, but -"

"But you will confess, at least, that you, after the fashion of the crowd, have begun your argument by begging the very question in dispute, and may have, after all, created the very difficulty which torments you."

"I confess it; but I cannot see how the miracles of Jesus — of our Lord — have anything of order in them."

"Tell me, then — to try the Socratic method — is disease, or health, the order and law of Nature?"

"Health, surely; we all confess that by calling diseases disorders."

"Then, would one who healed diseases be a restorer, or a breaker of order?"

"A restorer, doubtless; but -"

"Like a patient scholar, and a scholarly patient, allow me to 'exhibit' my own medicines according to my own notion of the various crises of your distemper. I assure you I will not play you false, or entrap you by quips and special pleading. You are aware that our Lord's miracles were almost exclusively miracles of healing - restorations of that order of health which disease was breaking - that when the Scribes and Pharisees, superstitious and sense-bound, asked him for a sign from heaven, a contra-natural prodigy, he refused them as peremptorily as he did the fiend's 'Command these stones that they be made bread.' You will quote against me the water turned into wine, as an exception to this rule. St. Augustine answered that objection centuries ago, by the same argument as I am now using. Allow Jesus to have been the Lord of Creation, and what was he doing then, but what he does in the maturing of every grape - transformed from air and water even as that wine in Cana? Goethe himself, unwittingly, has made Mephistopheles even see as much as that .

Wine is sap, and grapes are wood, The wooden board yields wine as good."

"But the time? — so infinitely shorter than that which Nature usually occupies in the process!"

"Time and space are no Gods, as a wise German says;

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and as the electric telegraph ought already to have taught you. They are customs, but who has proved them to be laws of Nature? No: analyse these miracles one by one, fairly, carefully, scientifically, and you will find that if you want prodigies really blasphemous and absurd, infractions of the laws of Nature, amputated limbs growing again, and dead men walking away with their heads under their arms, you must go to the Popish legends, but not to the miracles of the Gospels. And now for your 'but' —"

"The raising of the dead to life? Surely death is the appointed end of every animal — ay, of every species, and of man among the rest."

"Who denies it? But is premature death? — the death of Jairus's daughter, of the widow's son at Nain, the death of Jesus himself, in the prime of youth and vigour — or rather that gradual decay of ripe old age, through which I now, thank God, so fast am travelling? What nobler restoration of order, what clearer vindication of the laws of Nature from the disorder of diseases, than to recal the dead to their natural and normal period of life?"

I was silent a few moments, having nothing to answer; then —

"After all, these may have been restorations of the law of Nature. But why was the law broken in order to restore it? The Tenth of April has taught me, at least, that disorder cannot cast disorder out."

"Again I ask, why do you assume the very point in question? Again I ask, who knows what really are the laws of Nature? You have heard Bacon's golden rule — 'Nature is conquered by obeying her?'"

"I have."

"Then who more likely, who more certain, to fulfil that law to hitherto unattained perfection, than He who came to obey, not outward nature merely, but, as Bacon meant, the inner ideas, the spirit of Nature, which is the will of God? — He who came to do utterly, not His own will, but the will of the Father who sent Him? Who is so presumptuous as to limit the future triumphs of science? Surely no one who has watched her giant strides during the last century. Shall Stephenson and Faraday, and the inventors of the calculating machine, and the electric telegraph, have fulfilled such wonders by their weak and partial obedience to the 'Will of God expressed in things' - and he who obeyed, even unto the death, have possessed no higher power than theirs?"

"Indeed," I said, "your words stagger me. But there is another old objection which they have reawakened in my mind. You will say I am shifting my ground sadly. But you must pardon me."

"Let us hear. They need not be irrelevant. The unconscious logic of association is often deeper and truer than any syllogism."

"These modern discoveries in medicine seem to show that Christ's miracles may be attributed to natural causes."

"And thereby justify them. For what else have I been arguing. The difficulty lies only in the rationalist's shallow and sensuous view of Nature, and in his ambiguous slip-slop trick of using the word natural to mean, in one sentence, 'material,' and in the next, as I use it, only 'normal and orderly.' Every new wonder in medicine which this great age discovers — what does it prove, but that Christ need have broken no natural laws to do that of old, which can be done now without breaking them — if you will but believe that these gifts of healing are all inspired and revealed by Him who is the Great Physician, the Life, the Lord of that vital energy by whom all cures are wrought.

"The surgeons of St. George's make the boy walk who has been lame from his mother's womb. But have they given life to a single bone or muscle of his limbs? They have only put them into that position — those circumstances, in which the God-given life in them can have its free and normal play, and produce the cure which they only assist. I claim that miracle of science, as I do all future ones, as the inspiration of Him who made the lame to walk in Judea, not by producing new organs, but by His creative will — quickening and liberating those which already existed.

"The mesmerist, again, says that he can cure a spirit of infirmity, an hysteric or paralytic patient, by shedding forth on them his own vital energy; and, therefore he will have it, that Christ's miracles were but mesmeric feats. I grant, for the sake of argument, that he possesses the power which he claims; though I may think his facts too new, too undigested, often too exaggerated, to claim my certain assent. But, I say, I take you on your own ground; and, indeed, if man be the image of God, his vital energy may, for aught I know, be able, like God's, to communicate some spark of life — But then, what must have been the vital energy of Him, who was the life itself; who was filled without measure with the spirit, not only of humanity, but with that of God the Lord and Giver of life? Do but let the Bible tell its own story; grant, for the sake of argument, the truth of the dogmas which it asserts throughout, and it becomes a consistent whole. When a man begins, as Strauss does, by assuming the falsity of its conclusions, no wonder if he finds its premises a fragmentary chaos of contradictions."

"And what else," asked Eleanor, passionately — "what else is the meaning of that highest human honour, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but a perennial token that the same life-giving spirit is the free right of all?"

And thereon followed happy, peaceful, hopeful words, which the reader, if he call himself a Christian, ought to be able to imagine for himself. I am afraid that writing from memory, I should do as little justice to them as I have to the dean's arguments in this chapter. Of the consequences which they produced in me, I will speak anon.

### Which I idolized in my folly !" \* Thank God, thank God! that you see that at last: row it all alor.XIXXX STTAHD as nothing there for

# t to rest apon -- teismen to satisfy your intellect --

IT was a month or more before I summoned courage to ask after my cousin.

Eleanor looked solemnly at me.

"Did you not know it? He is dead." down days and the second

"Dead!" I was almost stunned by the announcement.

"Of typhus fever. He died three weeks ago; and not only he, but the servant who brushed his clothes, and the shopman, who had, a few days before, brought him a new coat home."

"How did you learn all this?" doe you doe of

"From Mr. Crossthwaite. But the strangest part of the sad story is to come. Crossthwaite's suspicions were aroused by some incidental circumstance, and knowing of Downes's death, and the fact that you most probably caught your fever in that miserable being's house, he made such inquiries as satisfied him that it was no other than your cousin's coat —" "Which covered the corpses in that fearful chamber?" "It was indeed."

Just, awful God! And this was the consistent Nemesis of all poor George's thrift and cunning, of his determination to carry the buy-cheap-and-sell-dear commercialism, in which he had been brought up, into every act of life! Did I rejoice? No; all revenge, all spite had been scourged out of me. I mourned for him as for a brother, till the thought flashed across me — Lillian was free. Half unconscious, I stammered her name inquiringly.

"Judge for yourself," answered Eleanor, mildly, yet with a deep severe meaning in her tone.

I was silent.

The tempest in my heart was ready to burst forth again; but she, my guardian-angel, soothed it for me.

"She is much changed; sorrow and sickness — for she, too, has had the fever, and, alas! less resignation or peace within, than those who love her would have wished to see have worn her down. Little remains now of that loveliness—"

"Which I idolized in my folly!"

"Thank God, thank God! that you see that at last: I knew it all along. I knew that there was nothing there for your heart to rest upon — nothing to satisfy your intellect and, therefore, I tried to turn you from your dream. I did it harshly, angrily, too sharply, yet not explicitly enough. I ought to have made allowances for you. I should have known how enchanting, intoxicating, mere outward perfections must have been to one of your perceptions, shut out so long as you had been from the beautiful in art and nature. But I was cruel. Alas! I had not then learnt to sympathise; and I have often since felt with terror that I, too, may have many of your sins to answer for; that I, even I, helped to drive you on to bitterness and despair."

"Oh, do not say so! You have done to me, meant to me, nothing but good."

"Be not too sure of that. You little know me. You little know the pride which I have fostered — even the mean anger against you, for being the protégé of any one but myself. That exclusiveness, and shyness, and proud reserve, is the bane of our English character — it has been the bane of mine — daily I strive to root it out. Come — I will do so now. You wonder why I am here. You shall hear somewhat of my story; and do not fancy that I am showing you a peculiar mark of honour or confidence. If the history of my life can be of use to the meanest, they are welcome to the secrets of my inmost heart.

"I was my parents' only child, an heiress, highly born, and highly educated. Every circumstance of humanity which could pamper pride was mine, and I battened on the poison. I painted, I sang, I wrote in prose and verse - they told me, not without success. Men said that I was beautiful - I knew that myself, and revelled and gloried in the thought. Accustomed to see myself the centre of all my parents' hopes and fears, to be surrounded by flatterers, to indulge in secret the still more fatal triumph of contempt for those I thought less gifted than myself, self became the centre of my thoughts. Pleasure was all I thought of. But not what the vulgar call That I disdained, while, like you, I worshipped all pleasure. that was pleasurable to the intellect and the taste. The beautiful was my God. I lived, in deliberate intoxication, on poetry, music, painting, and every antitype of them which I could find in the world around. At last I met with - one whom you once saw. He first awoke in me the sense of the vast duties and responsibilities of my station — his example first taught me to care for the many rather than for the few. It was a blessed lesson: yet even that I turned to poison, by making self, still self, the object of my very benevolence. To be a philanthropist, a philosopher, a feudal queen, amid the blessings and the praise of dependent hundreds — that was my new ideal; for that I turned the whole force of my intellect to the study of history, of social and economic questions. From Bentham and Malthus to Fourier and Proudhon, I read them all. I made them all fit into that idol-temple of self which I was rearing, and fancied that I did my duty, by becoming one of the great ones of the earth. My ideal was not the crucified Nazarene, but some Hairoun Alraschid, in luxurious splendour, pampering his pride by bestowing as a favour those mercies which God commands as the right of all. I thought to serve God, forsooth, by serving Mammon and myself. Fool that I was! I could not see God's handwriting on the wall against me. 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven!'

"You gave me, unintentionally, a warning hint. The capa-Alton Locke. 23

bilities which I saw in you made me suspect that those below might be more nearly my equals than I had yet fancied. Your vivid descriptions of the misery among whole classes of workmen - misery caused and ever increased by the very system of society itself-gave a momentary shock to my fairy palace. They drove me back upon the simple old question, which has been asked by every honest heart, age after age, 'What right have I to revel in luxury, while thousands are starving? Why do I pride myself on doling out to them small fractions of that wealth, which, if sacrificed utterly and at once, might help to raise hundreds to a civilisation as high as my own?' I could not face the thought; and angry with you for having awakened it, however unintentionally, I shrank back behind the pitiable worn-out fallacy, that luxury was necessary to give employment. I knew that it was a fallacy; I knew that the labour spent in producing unnecessary things for one rich man may just as well have gone in producing necessaries for a hundred poor, or employ the architect and the painter for public bodies as well as private individuals. That even for the production of luxuries, the monopolising demand of the rich was not required — that the appliances of real civilisation, the landscapes, gardens, stately rooms, baths, books, pictures, works of art, collections of curiosities, which now went to pamper me alone - me, one single human soul - might be helping, in an associate society, to civilise a hundred families, now debarred from them by isolated poverty, without robbing me of an atom of the real enjoyment or benefit of them. I knew it, I say, to be a fallacy, and yet I hid behind it from the eye of God. Besides, 'it always had been so - the few rich, and the many poor. I was but one more among millions.'"

She paused a moment, as if to gather strength, and then continued:

"The blow came. My idol — for he, too, was an idol — To please him I had begun — To please myself in pleasing him, I was trying to become great — and with him went from me that sphere of labour which was to witness the triumph of my pride. I saw the estate pass into other hands; a mighty change passed over me, as impossible, perhaps, as unfitting, for me to analyse. I was considered mad. Perhaps I was so: there is a divine insanity, a celestial folly, which conquers worlds. At least, when that period was past, I had done, and

suffered so strangely, that nothing henceforth could seem strange to me. I had broken the yoke of custom and opinion. My only ground was now the bare realities of human life and duty. In poverty and loneliness I thought out the problems of society, and seemed to myself to have found the one solution - self-sacrifice. Following my first impulse, I had given largely to every charitable institution I could hear of - God forbid that I should regret those gifts - yet the money, I soon found, might have been better spent. One by one, every institution disappointed me; they seemed, after all, only mean for keeping the poor in their degradation, by making it just not intolerable to them — means for enabling Mammon to draw fresh victims into his den, by taking off his hands those whom he had already worn out into uselessness. Then I tried association among my own sex — among the most miserable and degraded of them. I simply tried to put them into a position in which they might work for each other, and not for a single tyrant; in which that tyrant's profits might be divided among the slaves themselves. Experienced men warned me that I should fail; that such a plan would be destroyed by the innate selfishness and rivalry of human nature; that it demanded what was impossible to find, good faith, fraternal love, overruling moral influence. I answered, that I knew that already; that nothing but Christianity alone could supply that want, but that it could and should supply it; that I would teach them to live as sisters, by living with them as their sister myself. To become the teacher, the minister, the slave of those whom I was trying to rescue, was now my one idea; to lead them on, not by machinery, but by precept, by example, by the influence of every gift and talent which God had bestowed upon me; to devote to them my enthusiasm, my eloquence, my poetry, my art, my science; to tell them who had bestowed their gifts on me, and would bestow, to each according to her measure, the same on them; to make my workrooms, in one word, not a machinery, but a family. And I have succeeded — as others will succeed, long after my name, my small endeavours, are forgotten amid the great new world - new Church I should have said - of enfranchised and fraternal labour."

And this was the suspected aristocrat! Oh, my brothers, my brothers! little you know how many a noble soul, among those ranks which you consider only as your foes, is yearning

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to love, to help, to live and die for you, did they but know the way! Is it their fault, if God has placed them where they are? Is it their fault, if they refuse to part with their wealth, before they are sure that such a sacrifice would really be a mercy to you? Show yourselves worthy of association. Show that you can do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God, as brothers before one Father, subjects of one crucified King — and see then whether the spirit of self-sacrifice is dead among the rich! See whether there are not left in England yet seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Mammon, who will not fear to "give their substance to the free," if they find that the Son has made you free — free from your own sins, as well as from the sins of others!

# CHAPTER XL.

#### Priests and People.

"Bur after all," I said one day, "the great practical objection still remains unanswered — the clergy? Are we to throw ourselves into their hands after all? Are we, who have been declaiming all our lives against priestcraft, voluntarily to forge again the chains of our slavery to a class whom we neither trust nor honour?"

She smiled. "If you will examine the Prayer-Book, you will not find, as far as I am aware, anything which binds a man to become the slave of the priesthood, voluntarily or otherwise. Whether the people become priest-ridden or not, hereafter, will depend, as it always has done, utterly on themselves. As long as the people act upon their spiritual liberty, and live with eyes undimmed by superstitious fear, fixed in loving boldness on their Father in heaven, and their King, the first-born among many brethren, the priesthood will remain, as God intended them, only the interpreters and witnesses of His will and His kingdom. But let them turn their eyes from Him to aught in earth or heaven beside, and there will be no lack of priestcraft, of veils to hide Him from them, tyrants to keep them from Him, idols to ape His likeness. A sinful people will be sure to be a priest-ridden people; in reality, though not in name; by journalists and demagogues, if not by

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class-leaders and popes: and of the two, I confess I should prefer a Hildebrand to an O'Flynn."

"But," I replied, "we do not love, we do not trust, we do not respect the clergy. Has their conduct to the masses for the last century deserved that we should do so. Will you ask us to obey the men whom we despise?"

"God forbid!" she answered. "But you must surely be aware of the miraculous, ever-increasing improvement in the clergy."

"In morals," I said, "and in industry, doubtless; but not upon those points which are to us just now dearer than their morals or their industry, because they involve the very existence of our own industry and our own morals — I mean, social and political subjects. On them the clergy seem to me as ignorant, as bigoted, as aristocratic as ever."

"But, suppose that there were a rapidly-increasing class among the clergy, who were willing to help you to the uttermost — and you must feel that their help would be worth having — towards the attainment of social reform, if you would waive for a time merely political reform?"

"What!" I said, "give up the very ideas for which we have struggled, and sinned, and all but died? and will struggle, and, if need be, die for still, or confess ourselves traitors to the common weal?"

"The Charter, like its supporters, must die to itself before it lives to God. Is it not even now farther off than ever?"

"It seems so indeed — but what do you mcan?"

"You regarded the Charter as an absolute end. You made a selfish and a self-willed idol of it. And therefore God's blessing did not rest on it or you."

"We want it as a means as well as an end — as a means for the highest and widest social reform, as well as a right dependent on eternal justice."

"Let the working classes prove that, then," she replied, "in their actions now. If it be true, as I would fain believe it to be, let them show that they are willing to give up their will to God's will; to compass those social reforms by the means which God puts in their way, and wait for His own good time to give them, or not to give them, those means which they in their own minds prefer. This is what I meant by saying that Chartism must die to itself before it has a chance of living to God. You must feel, too, that Chartism has sinned — has defiled itself in the eyes of the wise, the good, the gentle. Your only way now to soften the prejudice against it is to show that you can live like men and brothers and Christians without it. You cannot wonder if the clergy shall object awhile to help you towards that Charter, which the majority of you demanded for the express purpose of destroying the creed which the clergy do believe, however badly they may have acted upon it."

"It is all true enough—bitterly true. But yet, why do we need the help of the clergy?"

"Because you need the help of the whole nation; because there are other classes to be considered besides yourselves; because the nation is neither the few nor the many, but the all; because it is only by the co-operation of all the members of a body, that any one member can fulfil its calling in health and freedom; because, as long as you stand aloof from the clergy, or from any other class, through pride, self-interest, or wilful ignorance, you are keeping up those very class distinctions of which you and I too complain, as 'hateful equally to God and to his enemies;' and, finally, because the clergy are the class which God has appointed to unite all others: which, in as far as it fulfils its calling, and is indeed a priesthood, is above and below all rank, and knows no man after the flesh, but only on the ground of his spiritual worth, and his birthright in that kingdom which is the heritage of all."

"Truly," I answered, "the idea is a noble one — But look at the reality! Has not priestly pandering to tyrants made the Church, in every age, a scoff and a byword among free men?"

"May it ever do so," she replied, "whenever such a sin exists! But yet, look at the other side of the picture. Did not the priesthood, in the first ages, glory not in the name, but, what is better, in the office, of democrats? Did not the Roman tyrants hunt them down as wild beasts, because they were democrats, proclaiming to the slave and to the barbarian a spiritual freedom and a heavenly citizenship, before which the Roman well knew his power must vanish into nought? Who, during the invasion of the barbarians, protected the poor against their conquerors? Who, in the middle age, stood between the baron and his serfs? Who, in their monasteries, realised spiritual democracy, — the nothingness of rank and wealth, the practical might of co-operation

and self-sacrifice? Who delivered England from the Pope? Who spread throughout every cottage in the land the Bible and Protestantism, the book and the religion which declares that a man's soul is free in the sight of God? Who, at the martyr's stake in Oxford, 'lighted the candle in England that shall never be put out?' Who, by suffering, and not by rebellion, drove the last perjured Stuart from his throne, and united every sect and class in one of the noblest steps in England's progress? You will say these are the exceptions; I say nay; they are rather a few great and striking manifestations of an influence which has been, unseen though not unfelt, at work for ages, converting, consecrating, organising, every fresh invention of mankind, and which is now on the eve of christianising democracy, as it did Mediæval Feudalism, Tudor Nationalism, Whig Constitutionalism; and which will succeed in christianising it, and so alone making it rational, human, possible; because the priesthood alone, of all human institutions, testifies of Christ the king of men, the Lord of all things, the inspirer of all discoveries; who reigns, and will reign, till He has put all things under His feet, and the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. Be sure, as it always has been, so will it be now. Without the priesthood there is no freedom for the people. Statesmen know it; and, therefore, those who would keep the people fettered, find it necessary to keep the priesthood fettered also. The people never can be themselves without co-operation with the priesthood; and the priesthood never can be themselves without co-operation with the people. They may help to make a sect-Church for the rich, as they have been doing, or a sect-Church for paupers (which is also the most subtle form of a sect-Church for the rich), as a party in England are trying now to do - as I once gladly would have done myself: but if they would be truly priests of God, and priests of the Universal Church, they must be priests of the people, priests of the masses, priests after the likeness of Him who died on the cross."

"And are there any men," I said, "who believe this? and, what is more, have courage to act upon it, now in the very hour of Mammon's triumph?"

"There are those who are willing, who are determined, whatever it may cost them, to fraternise with those whom they take shame to themselves for having neglected; to preach and

to organise, in concert with them, a Holy War against the social abuses which are England's shame; and, first and foremost, against the fiend of competition. They do not want to be dictators to the working men. They know that they have a message to the artisan, but they know, too, that the artisan has a message to them; and they are not afraid to hear it. They do not wish to make him a puppet for any system of their own; they only are willing, if he will take the hand they offer him, to devote themselves, body and soul, to the great end of enabling the artisan to govern himself; to produce in the capacity of a free man, and not of a slave; to eat the food he earns, and wear the clothes he makes. Will your working brothers co-operate with these men? Are they, do you think, such bigots as to let political differences stand between them and those who fain would treat them as their brothers; or will they fight manfully side by side with them in the battle against Mammon, trusting to God, that if in anything they are otherwise minded, He will, in His own good time, reveal even that unto them? Do you think, to take one instance, the men of your own trade would heartily join a handful of these men in an experiment of associate labour, even though there should be a clergyman or two among them?"

"Join them?" I said. "Can you ask the question? I, for one, would devote myself, body and soul, to any enterprise so noble. Crossthwaite would ask for nothing higher, than to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water to an establishment of associate workmen. But, alas! his fate is fixed for the New World; and mine, I verily believe, for sickness and the grave. And yet I will answer for it, that, in the hopes of helping such a project, he would give up Mackaye's bequest, for the mere sake of remaining in England; and for me, if I have but a month of life, it is at the service of such men as you describe."

"Ah!" she said, musingly, "if poor Mackaye had but had somewhat more faith in the future, that fatal condition would perhaps never have been attached to his bequest. And yet, perhaps, it is better as it is. Crossthwaite's mind may want, quite as much as yours does, a few years of a simpler and brighter atmosphere to soften and refresh it again. Besides, your health is too weak, your life, I know, too valuable to your class, for us to trust you on such a voyage alone. He must go with you."

"With me?" I said. "You must be misinformed; I have no thought of leaving England."

"You know the opinion of the physicians?"

"I know that my life is not likely to be a long one; that immediate removal to a southern, if possible to a tropical, climate, is considered the only means of preserving it. For the former, I care little; non est tanti vivere. And, indeed, the latter, even if it would succeed, is impossible. Crossthwaite will live and thrive by the labour of his hands; while, for such a helpless invalid as I to travel, would be to dissipate the little capital which poor Mackaye has left me."

"The day will come, when society will find it profitable, as well as just, to put the means of preserving life by travel within the reach of the poorest. But individuals must always begin by setting the examples, which the state too slowly, though surely (for the world is God's world after all), will learn to copy. All is arranged for you. Crossthwaite, you know, would have sailed ere now, had it not been for your fever. Next week you start with him for Texas. No; make no objections. All expenses are defrayed — no matter by whom."

"By you! by you! Who else?"

"Do you think that I monopolise the generosity of England? Do you think warm hearts beat only in the breasts of working men? But, if it were I, would not that be only another reason for submitting? You must go. You will have, for the next three years, such an allowance as will support you in comfort, whether you choose to remain stationary, or, as I hope, to travel southward into Mexico. Your passagemoney is already paid."

Why should I attempt to describe my feelings? I gasped for breath, and looked stupidly at her for a minute or two. — The second darling hope of my life within my reach, just as the first had been, snatched from me! At last I found words.

"No, no, noble lady! Do not tempt me! Who am I, the slave of impulse, useless, worn out in mind and body, that you should waste such generosity upon me? I do not refuse from the honest pride of independence; I have not man enough left in me even for that. But will you, of all people, ask me to desert the starving suffering thousands, to whom my heart, my honour are engaged; to give up the purpose of my life, and pamper my fancy in a luxurious paradise, while they are slaving here?"

"What? Cannot God find champions for them when you are gone? Has he not found them already? Believe me, that Tenth of April, which you fancied the death-day of liberty, has awakened a spirit in high as well as in low life, which children yet unborn will bless."

"Oh, do not mistake me! Have I not confessed my own weakness? But if I have one healthy nerve left in me, soul or body, it will retain its strength only as long as it thrills with devotion to the People's Cause. If I live, I must live among them, for them. If I die, I must die at my post. I could not rest, except in labour. I dare not fly, like Jonah, from the call of God. In the deepest shade of the virgin forests, on the loneliest peak of the Cordilleras, He would find me out; and I should hear His still small voice reproving me, as it reproved the fugitive patriot-seer of old — What doest thou here, Elijah?"

I was excited, and spoke, I am afraid, after my custom, somewhat too magniloquently. But she answered only with a quiet smile:

"So you are a Chartist still?

"If by a Chartist you mean one who fancies that a change in mere political circumstances will bring about a millennium, I am no longer one. That dream is gone — with others. But if to be a Chartist is to love my brothers with every faculty of my soul — to wish to live and die struggling for their rights, endeavouring to make them, not electors merely, but fit to be electors, senators, kings, and priests to God and to His Christ — if that be the Chartism of the future, then am I sevenfold a Chartist, and ready to confess it before men, though I were thrust forth from every door in England."

She was silent a moment.

"'The stone which the builders rejected is become the headstone of the corner.' Surely the old English spirit has cast its madness, and begins to speak once more as it spoke in Naseby fights and Smithfield fires!"

"And yet you would quench it in me amid the enervating climate of the tropics." "Need it be quenched there? Was it quenched in Drake, in Hawkins, in the conquerors of Hindostan? Weakness, like strength, is from within, of the spirit, and not of the sunshine. I would send you thither, that you may gain new strength, new knowledge to carry out your dream and mine. Do not refuse me the honour of preserving you. Do not forbid me to employ my wealth in the only way which reconciles my conscience to the possession of it. I have saved many a woman already; and this one thing remained — the highest of all my hopes and longings — that God would allow me, ere I died to save a man. I have longed to find some noble soul, as Carlyle says, fallen down by the wayside, and lift it up, and heal its wounds, and teach it the secret of its heavenly birthright, and consecrate it to its King in heaven. I have longed to find a man of the people, whom I could train to be the poet of the people."

"Me, at least, you have saved, have taught, have trained! Oh that your care had been bestowed on some more worthy object!"

"Let me at least, then, perfect my own work. You do not — it is a sign of your humility that you do not appreciate the value of this rest. You underrate at once your own powers, and the shock which they have received."

"If I must go, then, why so far? Why put you to so great expense? If you must be generous, send me to some place nearer home — to Italy, to the coast of Devon, or the Isle of Wight, where invalids like me are said to find all the advantages which are so often, perhaps too hastily, sought in foreign lands."

"No," she said, smiling; "you are my servant now, by the laws of chivalry, and you must fulfil my quest. I have long hoped for a tropic poet; one who should leave the routine imagery of European civilisation, its meagre scenery, and physically decrepit races, for the grandeur, the luxuriance, the infinite and strongly-marked variety of tropic nature, the paradisiac beauty and simplicity of tropic humanity. I am tired of the old images; of the barren alternation between Italy and the Highlands. I had once dreamt of going to the tropics myself; but my work lay elsewhere. Go for me, and for the people. See if you cannot help to infuse some new blood into the aged veins of English literature; see if you cannot, by observing man in his mere simple and primeval state bring home fresh conceptions of beauty, fresh spiritual and physical laws of his existence, that you may realise them here at home — (how, I see as yet but dimly; but He who teaches the facts will surely teach their application) — in the cottages, in the playgrounds, the reading-rooms, the churches of working men."

"But I know so little - I have seen so little!"

"That very fact, I flatter myself, gives you an especial vocation for my scheme. Your ignorance of cultivated English scenery, and of Italian art, will enable you to approach with a more reverent, simple, and unprejudiced eye the primeval forms of beauty - God's work, not man's. Sin you will see there, and anarchy, and tyranny: but I do not send you to look for a society, but for nature. I do not send you to become a barbarian settler, but to bring home to the realms of civilisation those ideas of physical perfection, which as yet, alas! barbarism, rather than civilisation, has preserved. Do not despise your old love for the beautiful. Do not fancy that because you have let it become an idol and a tyrant, it was not therefore the gift of God. Cherish it, develop it to the last; steep your whole soul in beauty; watch it in its most vast and complex harmonies, and not less in its most faint and fragmentary traces. Only, hitherto you have blindly worshipped it; now you must learn to comprehend, to master, to embody it; to show it forth to men as the sacrament of Heaven, the finger-mark of God!"

Who could resist such pleading from those lips? I at least could not.

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## CHAPTER XLI.

## Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood.

BEFORE the same Father, the same King, crucified for all alike, we had partaken of the same bread and wine, we had prayed for the same spirit. Side by side, around the chair on which I lay propped up with pillows, coughing my span of life away, had knelt the high-born countess, the cultivated philosopher, the repentant rebel, the wild Irish girl, her slavish and exclusive creed exchanged for one more free and all-embracing; and that no extremest type of human condition might be wanting, the reclaimed Magdalene was there — two pale worn girls from Eleanor's asylum, in whom I recognised the needlewomen to whom Mackaye had taken me, on a memorable night, seven years before. Thus— and how better? had God rewarded their loving care of that poor dying fellowslave.

Yes — we had knelt together: and I had felt that we were one — that there was a bond between us, real, eternal, independent of ourselves, knit not by man, but God; and the peace of God, which passes understanding, came over me like the clear sunshine after weary rain.

One by one they shook me by the hand, and quitted the room; and Eleanor and I were left alone.

"See!" she said, "Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood are come; but not as you expected."

Blissful, repentant tears blinded my eyes, as I replied, not to her, but Him who spoke by her —

"Lord! not as I will, but as thou wilt!"

"Yes," she continued, "Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood are here. Realise them in thine own self, and so alone thou helpest to make them realities for all. Not from without, from Charters and Republics, but from within, from The Spirit working in each; not by wrath and haste, but by patience made perfect through suffering, canst thou proclaim their good news to the groaning masses, and deliver them, as thy Master did before thee, by the cross, and not the sword.

Divine paradox! - Folly to the rich and mighty - the watchword of the weak, in whose weakness is God's strength made perfect. 'In your patience possess ye your souls, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.' Yes - He came then, and the Babel-tyranny of Rome fell, even as the more fearful, more subtle, and more diabolic tyranny of Mammon shall fall ere long - suicidal, even now crumbling by its innate decay. Yes — Babylon the Great — commercial world of selfish competition, drunken with the blood of God's people, whose merchandise is the bodies and souls of men - her doom is gone forth. And then - then - when they, the tyrants of the earth, who lived delicately with her, rejoicing in her sins, the plutocrats and bureaucrats, the moneychangers and devourers of labour, are crying to the rocks to hide them, and to the hills to cover them, from the wrath of Him that sitteth on the throne - then labour shall be free at last, and the poor shall eat and be satisfied, with things that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, but which God has prepared for those who love Him. Then the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, and mankind at last shall own their King - Him in whom they are all redeemed into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, and He shall reign indeed on earth, and none but His saints shall rule beside Him. And then shall this sacrament be an everlasting sign to all the nations of the world, as it has been to you this day, of freedom, equality, brotherhood, of Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men. Do you believe?"

Again I answered, not her, but Him who sent her -

"Lord, I believe! Help thou mine unbelief!"

"And now, farewell. I shall not see you again before you start — and ere you return — My health has been fast declining lately."

I started — I had not dared to confess to myself how thin her features had become of late. I had tried not to hear the dry and hectic cough, or see the burning spot on either cheek

- but it was too true; and with a broken voice, I cried:

"Oh that I might die, and join you!"

"Not so — I trust that you have still a work to do. But if not, promise me that, whatever be the event of your voyage, you will publish, in good time, an honest history of your life; extenuating nothing, exaggerating nothing, ashamed to confess or to proclaim nothing. It may perhaps awaken some rich man to look down and take pity on the brains and hearts more noble than his own, which lie struggling in poverty and misguidance, among these foul sties, which civilisation rears — and calls them cities. Now, once again, farewell!"

She held out her hand — I would have fallen at her feet, but the thought of that common sacrament withheld me. I seized her hand, covered it with adoring kisses — Slowly she withdrew it, and glided from the room —

What need of more words? I obeyed her — sailed — and here I am.

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Yes! I have seen the land! Like a purple fringe upon the golden sea, "while parting day dies like the dolphin," there it lay upon the far horizon — the great young free New World! — and every tree, and flower, and insect on it new! — a wonder and a joy — which I shall never see.....

No, — I shall never reach the land. I felt it all along. Weaker and weaker, day by day, with bleeding lungs and failing limbs, I have travelled the ocean-paths. The iron has entered too deeply into my soul.....

Hark! Merry voices on deck are welcoming their future home. Laugh on, happy ones! — come out of Egypt and the house of bondage, and the waste and howling wilderness of slavery and competition, workhouses and prisons, into a good land and large, a land flowing with milk and honey, where you will sit every one under his own vine and his own fig-tree, and look into the faces of your rosy children — and see in them a blessing and not a curse! Oh, England! stern motherland, when wilt thou renew thy youth? — Thou wilderness of man's making, not God's!.... Is it not written, that the days shall come when the forest shall break forth into singing, and the wilderness shall blossom like the rose?

Hark! again, sweet and clear, across the still night sea, ring out the notes of Crossthwaite's bugle — the first luxury, poor fellow, he ever allowed himself; and yet not a selfish one, for music, like mercy, is twice blessed —

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

#### ALTON LOCKE,

There is the spirit-stirring marching air of the German workmen students:

> Thou, thou, thou, and thou, Sir Master, fare thee well. -

Perhaps a half reproachful hint to the poor old England he is leaving. What a glorious metre! warming one's whole heart into life and energy! If I could but write in such a metre one true people's song, that should embody all my sorrow, indignation, hope — fitting last words for a poet of the people for they will be my last words — Well — thank God! at least I shall not be buried in a London churchyard! It may be a foolish fancy — but I have made them promise to lay me up among the virgin woods, where, if the soul ever visits the place of its body's rest, I may snatch glimpses of that natural beauty from which I was barred out in life, and watch the gorgeous flowers that bloom above my dust, and hear the forest birds sing around the Poet's grave.

Hark to the grand lilt of the "Good Time Coming!" — Song which has cheered ten thousand hearts; which has already taken root, that it may live and grow for ever — fitting melody to soothe my dying ears! Ah! how should there not be A Good Time Coming? — Hope, and trust, and infinite deliverance! — a time such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive! coming surely, soon or late, to those for whom a God did not disdain to die!

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Our only remaining duty is to give an extract from a letter written by John Crossthwaite, and dated

#### "Galveston, Texas, Oct., 1848.

\*\*\*\* "I am happy. Katie is happy. There is peace among us here, like 'the clear downshining after rain.' But I thirst and long already for the expiration of my seven years' exile, wholesome as I believe it to be. My only wish is to return and assist in the Emancipation of Labour, and give my small aid in that fraternal union of all classes which I hear is surely, though slowly, spreading in my mother-land.

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"And now for my poor friend, whose papers, according to my promise to him, I transmit to you. On the very night on which he seems to have concluded them — an hour after we had made the land — we found him in his cabin, dead, his head resting on the table as peacefully as if he had slumbered. On a sheet of paper by him were written the following verses; the ink was not yet dry:

#### "' 'MY LAST WORDS.

I.

"'Weep, weep, weep, and weep, For pauper, dolt, and slave; Hark! from wasted moor and fen, Feverous alley, workhouse den, Swells the wail of Englishmen: "Work! or the grave!"

#### п.

"Down, down, down, and down, With idler, knave, and tyrant; Why for sluggards stint and moil? He that will not live by toil
Has no right on English soil; God's word's our warrant!

#### III.

" 'Up, up, up, and up, Face your game, and play it! The night is past — behold the sun! — The cup is full, the web is spun, The Judge is set, the doom begun; Who shall stay it? "

THE END.

#### WHEN WAR ADDAY

or promitie to inter a transmit to you.

PRINTING OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHER.

# YEAST:

A Problem.

# THE AUTHOR OF ALTON LOCKE.

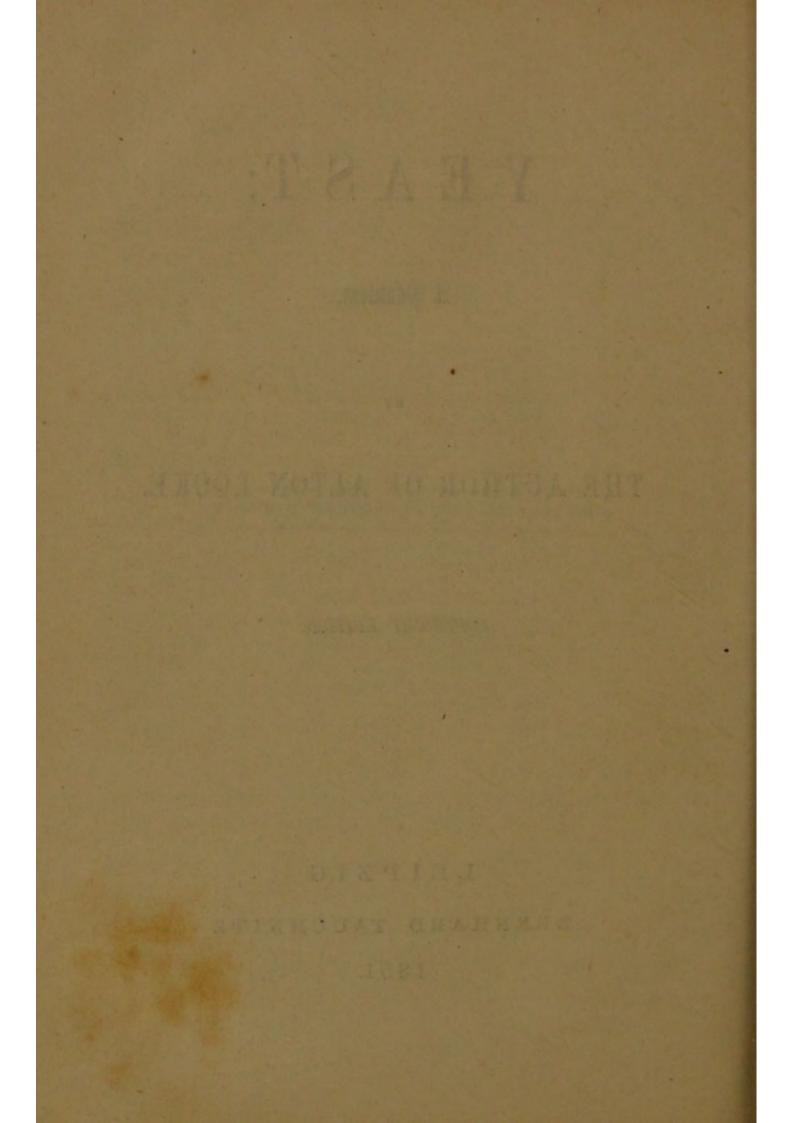
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## LEIPZIG

# BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1851.



## PREFACE.

South and Share - Sandy - Part in

This little tale was written between two and three years ago, in the hope that it might help to call the attention of wiser and better men than I am, to the questions which are now agitating the minds of the rising generation, and to the absolute necessity of solving them at once and earnestly, unless we would see the faith of our forefathers crumble away beneath the combined influence of new truths which are fancied to be incompatible with it, and new mistakes as to its real essence. That this can be done, I believe and know: if I had not believed it, I would never have put pen to paper on the subject.

I believe that the ancient Creed, the eternal Gospel, will stand, and conquer, and prove its might in this age, as it has in every other for eighteen hundred years, by claiming, and subduing, and organizing those young anarchic forces, which now, unconscious of their parentage, rebel against Him to whom they owe their being.

But for the time being, the young men and women of our day are fast parting from their parents and each other; the more thoughtful are wandering either towards Rome, towards sheer materialism, or towards an unchristian and unphilosophic spiritualist Epicurism which, in my eyes, is the worst evil spirit of the three, precisely because it looks at first sight most like an angel of light. The mass, again, are fancying that they are still adhering to the old creeds, the old church, to the honoured patriarchs of English Protestantism. I wish I could agree with them in their belief about themselves. To me they seem -with a small sprinkling of those noble and cheering exceptions to popular error which are to be found in every age of Christ's church - to be losing most fearfully and rapidly the living spirit of Christianity, and to be, for that very reason, clinging all the more convulsively — and who can blame them? — to the outward letter of it, whether High Church or Evangelical; unconscious, all the while, that they are sinking out of real living belief, into that dead self-deceiving beliefin-believing, which has been always heretofore, and is becoming in England now, the parent of the most blind, dishonest, and pitiless bigotry.

In the following pages I have attempted to show what some at least of the young in these days are really thinking and feeling. I know well that my

#### PREFACE.

sketch is inadequate and partial: I have every reason to believe, from the criticisms which I have received since its first publication, that it is, as far as it goes, correct. I put it as a problem. It would be the height of arrogance in me to do more than indicate the direction in which I think a solution may be found. I fear that my elder readers may complain that I have no right to start doubts, without answering them. I can only answer, - Would that I had started them! would that I was not seeing them daily around me, under some form or other, in just the very hearts for whom one would most wish the peace and strength of a fixed and healthy faith. To the young this book can do no harm; for it will put into their minds little but what is there already. To the elder, it may do good; for it may teach some of them, as I earnestly hope, something of the real, but too often utterly unsuspected, state of their own children's minds; something of the reasons of that calamitous estrangement between themselves and those who will succeed them which is often too painful and oppressive to be confessed to their own hearts. Whatever amount of obloquy this book may bring upon me, I shall think that a light price to pay, if by it I shall have helped, even in a single case, to "turn the hearts of the parents to the children, and the hearts of the children to the parents, before the great and terrible

day of the Lord come," — as come it surely will, if we persist much longer in substituting denunciation for sympathy, instruction for education, and Pharisaism for the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

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# YEAST:

A PROBLEM.

## CHAPTER I.

#### The Philosophy of Fox-hunting.

As this my story will probably run counter to more than one fashion of the day, literary and other, it is prudent to bow to those fashions wherever I honestly can; and therefore to begin with a scrap of description.

The edge of a great fox-cover; a flat wilderness of low leafless oaks, fortified by a long dreary thorncapped clay ditch, with sour red water oozing out at every yard; a broken gate leading into a strait wood-ride, ragged with dead grasses and black with fallen leaves, the centre mashed into a quagmire by innumerable horse-hoofs; some forty red coats, and some four black; a sprinkling of young farmers, resplendent in gold buttons and green; a pair of sleek drab stable-keepers, showing off horses for sale; the surgeon of the union, in Macintosh and antigropelos; two holiday schoolboys with trousers strapped down to bursting point, like a penny steamer's safety-valve; a midshipman, the only merry one in the field, bumping about on a fretting, sweating hack, with its nose a foot above its ears; and Lancelot Smith,

Yeast.

who then kept two good horses, and "rode forward," as a fine young fellow of three-and-twenty who can afford it, and "has nothing else to do," has a very good right to ride.

But what is a description, without a sketch of the weather? — In these Pantheist days especially, when a hero or heroine's moral state must entirely depend on the barometer, and authors talk as if Christians were cabbages, and a man's soul as well as his lungs might be saved by sea-breezes and sunshine, or his character developed by wearing guano in his shoes, and training himself against a south wall — we must have a weather-description, though, as I shall presently show, one in flat contradiction of the popular theory. Luckily for our information, Lancelot was very much given to watch both the weather and himself, and had indeed, while in his teens, combined the two in a sort of soul-almanack on the principles just mentioned — somewhat in this style: —

"Monday, 21st. — Wind S. W., bright sun, mercury at  $30_{2}$  inches. Felt my heart expanded towards the universe. Organs of veneration and benevolence pleasingly excited; and gave a shilling to a tramp. An inexpressible joy bounded through every vein, and the soft air breathed purity and self-sacrifice through my soul. As I watched the beetles, those children of the sun, who, as divine Shelley says, 'laden with light and odour, pass over the gleam of the living grass,' I gained an Eden-glimpse of the pleasures of virtue.

"N. B. Found the tramp drunk in a ditch. I could not have degraded myself on such a day — ah! how could he?

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"Tuesday, 22nd. — Barometer rapidly falling. Heavy clouds in the south-east. My heart sank into gloomy forebodings. Read *Manfred*, and doubted whether I should live long. The leaden weight of destiny seemed to crush down my aching forehead, till the thunder-storm burst, and peace was restored to my troubled soul."

This was very bad; but to do justice to Lancelot, he had grown out of it at the time when my story begins. He was now in the fifth act of his "Werterean" stage, that sentimental measles which all clever men must catch once in their lives, and which, generally, like the physical measles, if taken early, settles their constitution for good or evil; if taken late, goes far towards killing them. Lancelot had found Byron and Shelley pall on his taste, and commenced devouring Bulwer and worshipping Ernest Maltravers. He had left Bulwer for old ballads and romances, and Mr. Carlyle's reviews; was next alternately chivalry-mad, and Germany-mad; was now reading hard at physical science; and on the whole trying to become a great man, without any very clear notion of what a great man ought to be. Real education he never had had. Bred up at home under his father, a rich merchant, he had gone to college with a large stock of general information, and a particular mania for dried plants, fossils, butterflies, and sketching, and some such creed as this: --

That he was very clever.

That he ought to make his fortune.

That a great many things were very pleasant beautiful things among the rest.

1\*

That it was a fine thing to be "superior," gentlemanlike, generous, and courageous.

That a man ought to be religious.

And left college with a good smattering of classics and mathematics, picked up in the intervals of boatracing and hunting, and much the same creed as he brought with him, except in regard to the last article. The scenery-and-natural-history mania was now somewhat at a discount. He had discovered a new natural object, including in itself all — more than all — yet found beauties and wonders — woman!

Draw, draw the veil and weep, guardian angel! if such there be. What was to be expected? Pleasant things were pleasant — there was no doubt of that, whatever else might be doubtful. He had read Byron by stealth; he had been flogged into reading Ovid and Tibullus; and commanded by his private tutor to read Martial and Juvenal "for the improvement of his style." All conversation on the subject of love had been prudishly avoided, as usual, by his parents and teacher. The parts of the Bible which spoke of it had been always kept out of his sight. Love had been to him, practically, ground tabooed and "carnal." What was to be expected? Just what happened — if woman's beauty had nothing holy in it, why should his fondness for it? Just what happens every day - that he had to sow his wild oats for himself, and eat the fruit thereof, and the dirt thereof also.

O fathers! fathers! and you, clergymen, who monopolise education! either tell boys the truth about love, or do not put into their hands, without note or comment, the foul devil's lies about it, which make up the mass of the Latin poets — and then go, fresh from teaching Juvenal and Ovid, to declaim at Exeter Hall against poor Peter Dens' well-meaning prurience! Had we not better take the beam out of our own eye before we meddle with the mote in the Jesuit's?

But where is my description of the weather all this time?

I cannot, I am sorry to say, give any very cheerful account of the weather that day. But what matter? Are Englishmen hedge-gnats, who only take their sport when the sun shines? Is it not, on the contrary, symbolical of our national character, that almost all our field amusements are wintry ones? Our fowling, our hunting, our punt-shooting (pastime for Hymir himself and the frost giants) - our golf and skating, - our very cricket, and boat racing, and jack and grayling fishing, carried on till we are fairly frozen out. We are a stern people, and winter suits us. Nature then retires modestly into the back-ground, and spares us the obtrusive glitter of summer, leaving us to think and work; and therefore it happens that in England, it may be taken as a general rule, that when-. ever all the rest of the world is in-doors, we are out and busy, and on the whole, the worse the day, the better the deed.

The weather that day, the first day Lancelot ever saw his beloved, was truly national. A silent, dim, distanceless, steaming, rotting day in March. The last brown oak-leaf, which had stood out the winter's frost, spun and quivered plump down, and then lay; as if ashamed to have broken for a moment the ghastly stillness, like an awkward guest at a great dumb dinner-party. A cold suck of wind just proved its existence, by toothaches on the north side of all faces. The spiders, having been weather-bewitched the night before, had unanimously agreed to cover every brake and brier with gossamer-cradles, and never a fly to be caught in them; like Manchester cotton-spinners madly glutting the markets in the teeth of "no demand." The steam crawled out of the dank turf, and reeked off the flanks and nostrils of the shivering horses, and clung with clammy paws to frosted hats and dripping boughs. — A soulless, skyless, catarrhal day, as if that bustling dowager, old mother Earth — what with match-making in spring, and *fêtes champêtres* in summer, and dinnergiving in autumn — was fairly worn out, and put to bed with the influenza, under wet blankets and the cold-water cure.

There sat Lancelot by the cover-side, his knees aching with cold and wet, thanking his stars that he was not one of the whippers-in, who were lashing about in the dripping cover, laying up for themselves, in catering for the amusement of their betters, a probable old age of bed-ridden torture, in the form of rheumatic gout. Not that he was at all happy - indeed, he had no reason to be so; for first the hounds would not find; next, he had left half-finished at home a review article on the Silurian System, which he had solemnly promised an abject and beseeching editor to send to post that night; next, he was on the windward side of the cover, and dare not light a cigar; and lastly, his mucous membrane in general was not in the happiest condition, seeing that he had been dining the evening before with Mr. Vaurien of Rottenpalings, a young gentleman of a convivial and melodious turn of mind, who sang - and played also as singing men are wont — in more senses than one, and had "ladies and gentlemen" down from town to stay with him; and they sang and played too; and so somehow between vingt-un and champagne-punch, Lancelot had not arrived at home till seven o'clock that morning, and was in a fit state to appreciate the feelings of our grandfathers, when after the third bottle of port, they used to put the black silk tights into their pocket, slip on the leathers and boots, and ride the croptailed hack thirty miles on a winter's night, to meet the hounds in the next county by ten in the morning. They are "gone down to Hades, even many stalwart souls of heroes," with John Warde of Squerries at their head — the fathers of the men who conquered at Waterloo; and we their degenerate grandsons are left instead, with puny arms, and polished leather boots, and a considerable taint of hereditary disease, to sit in club-houses, and celebrate the progress of the species.

Whether Lancelot or his horse, under these depressing circumstances, fell asleep; or whether thoughts pertaining to such a life, and its fitness for a clever and ardent young fellow in the nineteenth century, became gradually too painful, and had to be peremptorily shaken off, this deponent sayeth not; but certainly, after five-and-thirty minutes of idleness and shivering, Lancelot opened his eyes with a sudden start, and struck spurs into his hunter without due cause shown; whereat Shiver-the-Timbers, who was no Griselda in temper — (Lancelot had bought him out of the Pytchley for half his value, as unrideably vicious, when he had killed a groom, and fallen backwards on a rough-rider, the first season after he came up from Horncastle) — responded by a furious kick or two, threw his head up, put his foot into a drain, and sprawled down all but on his nose, pitching Lancelot unawares shamefully on the pommel of his saddle. A certain fatality, by the bye, had lately attended all Lancelot's efforts to shine; he never bought a new coat without tearing it mysteriously next day, or tried to make a joke without bursting out coughing in the middle . . . and now the whole field were looking on at his mishap; between disgust and the start he turned almost sick, and felt the blood rush into his cheeks and forehead as he heard a shout of coarse jovial laughter burst out close to him, and the old master of the hounds, Squire Lavington, roar aloud, —

"A pretty sportsman you are, Mr. Smith, to fall asleep by the cover-side, and let your horse down and your pockets, too! What's that book on the ground? Sapping and studying still? I let nobody come out with my hounds with their pocket full of learning. Hand it up here, Tom; we'll see what it is. French, as I am no scholar! Translate for us, Colonel Bracebridge!"

And, amid shouts of laughter, the gay Guardsman read out, --

"St. Francis de Sales: Introduction to a Devout Life."

Poor Lancelot! Wishing himself fathoms underground, ashamed of his book, still more ashamed of himself for kis shame, he had to sit there ten physical seconds, or spiritual years, while the colonel solemnly returned him the book, complimenting him on the proofs of its purifying influence which he had given the night before, in helping to throw the turnpike-gate into the river.

But "all things do end" and so did this; and the silence of the hounds also; and a faint but knowing whimper drove St. Francis out of all heads, and Lancelot began to stalk slowly with a dozen horsemen up the wood-ride, to a fitful accompaniment of wandering hound-music, where the choristers were as invisible as nightingales among the thick cover. And hark! just as the book was returned to his pocket, the sweet hubbub suddenly crashed out into one jubilant shriek, and then swept away fainter and fainter among the trees. The walk became a trot — the trot a canter. Then a faint melancholy shout at a distance, answered by a "Stole away!" from the fields; a doleful "toot" of the horn; the dull thunder of many horsehoofs rolling along the further wood-side. Then red coats, flashing like sparks of fire across the grey gap of mist at the ride's-mouth; then a whipper-in, bringing up a belated hound, burst into the path way, smashing and plunging, with shut eyes, through ash-saplings, and hassock grass; then a fat farmer, sedulously pounding through the mud, was overtaken and bespattered in spite of all his struggles; - until the line streamed out into the wide rushy pasture, startling up pewits and curlews, as horsemen poured in from every side, and cunning old farmers rode off at inexplicable angles to some well-known haunts of pug; and right a-head, chiming and jangling sweet madness, the dappled pack glanced and wavered through the veil of soft grey mist.

"What's the use of this hurry?" growled Lancelot. "They will all be back again. I never have the luck to see a run." But, no; on and on — down the wind and down the vale; and the canter became a gallop, and the gallop a long straining stride; and a hundred horsehoofs crackled like flame among the stubbles, and thundered fetlock-deep along the heavy meadows; and every fence thinned the cavalcade, till the madness began to stir all bloods, and with grim earnest silent faces, the initiated few settled themselves to their work, and with the colonel and Lancelot at their head, "took their pleasure sadly, after the manner of their nation," as old Froissart has it.

> "Thorough bush, through brier, Thorough park, through pale;"

till the rolling grass-lands spread out into flat black open fallows, crossed with grassy baulks, and here and there a long melancholy line of tall elms, while before them the high chalk ranges gleamed above the mist like a vast wall of emerald enamelled with snow, and the winding river glittering at their feet.

"A polite fox!" observed the colonel. "He's leading the squire straight home to Whitford, just in time for dinner."

They were in the last meadow, with the stream before them. A line of struggling heads in the swollen and milky current showed the hounds' opinion of Reynard's course. The sportsmen galloped off towards the nearest bridge. Bracebridge looked back at Lancelot, who had been keeping by his side in sulky rivalry, following him successfully through all manner of desperate places, and more and more angry with himself and the guiltless colonel, because he only followed, while the colonel's quicker and unembarrassed wit, which lived wholly in the present moment, saw long before Lancelot "how to cut out his work" in every field.

"I shan't go round," quietly observed the colonel.

"Do you fancy I shall?" growled Lancelot, who took for granted — poor thin-skinned soul! — that the words were meant as a hit at himself.

"You're a brace of geese," politely observed the old squire; "and you'll find it out in rheumatic fever. There — "one fool makes many!" You'll kill Smith before you're done, colonel!" And the old man wheeled away up the meadow, as Bracebridge shouted after him, —

"Oh, he'll make a fine rider — in time!"

"In time!" Lancelot could have knocked the unsuspecting colonel down for the word. It just expressed the contrast, which had fretted him ever since he began to hunt with the Whitford Priors hounds. The colonel's long practice and consummate skill in all he took in hand, - his experience of all society, from the prairie Indian to Crockford's, from the prize-ring to the continental courts, - his varied and ready store of information and anecdote, — the harmony and completeness of the man, - his consistency with his own small ideal, and his consequent apparent superiority everywhere and in every thing to the huge awkward Titan-cub, who, though immeasurably beyond Bracebridge in intellect and heart, was still in a state of convulsive dyspepsia, "swallowing formulæ," and daily well nigh choked; diseased throughout with that morbid self-consciousness and lust of praise, for which God prepares, with

his elect, a bitter cure. Alas, poor Lancelot! an unlicked bear, "with all his sorrows before him!" —

"Come along," quoth Bracebridge, between snatches of a tune, his coolness maddening Lancelot. "Old Lavington will find us dry clothes, a bottle of port, and a brace of charming daughters at the Priory. In with you, little Mustang of the prairie! Neck or nothing!" —

And in an instant the small wiry American, and the huge Horncastle-bred hunter, were wallowing and staggering in the yeasty stream, till they floated into a deep reach, and swam steadily down to a low place in the bank. They crossed the stream, passed the Priory shrubberies, leapt the gate into the park, and then on and upward, called by the unseen Ariel's music before them. - Up, into the hills; past white crumbling chalk-pits, fringed with feathered juniper and tottering ashes, their floors strewed with knolls of fallen soil and vegetation, like wooded islets in a sea of milk. --Up, between steep ridges of turf, crested with black fir-woods and silver beech, and here and there a huge yew standing out alone, the advanced sentry of the forest, with its luscious fretwork of green velvet, like a mountain of Gothic spires and pinnacles, all glittering and steaming as the sun drank up the dew-drops. The lark sprang upwards into song, and called merrily to the new-opened sunbeams, while the wreaths and flakes of mist lingered reluctantly about the hollows, and clung with dewy fingers to every knoll and belt of pine. -- Up, into the labyrinthine bosom of the hills, -- but who can describe them? Is not all nature indescribable? every leaf infinite and transcendental? How much more those mighty downs, with their enormous sheets of spotless turf, where the dizzy eye loses all standard of size and distance before the awful simplicity, the delicate vastness, of those grand curves and swells, soft as the outlines of a Greek Venus, as if the great goddess-mother Hertha had laid herself down among the hills to sleep, her Titan limbs wrapt in a thin veil of silvery green.

Up, into a vast amphitheatre of sward, whose walls banked out the narrow sky above. And here, in the focus of the huge ring, an object appeared which stirred strange melancholy in Lancelot, — a little chapel, ivygrown, girded with a few yews, and elders, and grassy graves. A climbing rose over the porch, and iron railings round the churchyard, told of human care; and from the graveyard itself burst up one of those noble springs known as winterbournes in the chalk ranges, which, awakened in autumn from the abysses to which it had shrunk during the summer's drought, was hurrying down upon its six months' course, a broad sheet of oily silver, over a temporary channel of smooth green sward.

The hounds had checked in the woods behind; now they poured down the hill-side, so close together "that you might have covered them with a sheet," straight for the little chapel.

A saddened tone of feeling spread itself through Lancelot's heart. There were the everlasting hills around, even as they had grown and grown for countless ages, beneath the still depths of the primeval chalk ocean, in the milky youth of this great English land. And here was he, the insect of a day, fox-hunting upon them! He felt ashamed, and more ashamed when the inner voice whispered, — "Fox-hunting is not the shame — thou art the shame. If thou art the insect of a day, it is thy sin that thou art one."

And his sadness, foolish as it may seem, grew as he watched a brown speck fleet rapidly up the opposite hill, and heard a gay view-halloo burst from the colonel at his side. The chase lost its charm for him the moment the game was seen. Then vanished that mysterious delight of pursuing an invisible object, which gives to hunting and fishing their unutterable and almost spiritual charm; which made Shakspeare a nightly poacher; Davy and Chantrey the patriarchs of fly-fishing; by which the twelve-foot rod is transfigured into an enchanter's wand, potent over the unseen wonders of the water-world, to "call up spirits from the vasty deep," which will really "come if you do call for them" — at least if the conjuration be orthodox — and they there. That spell was broken by the sight of poor wearied pug, his once gracefully-floating brush all draggled and drooping, as he toiled up the sheep-paths toward the open down above.

But Lancelot's sadness reached its crisis, as he met the hounds just outside the churchyard. Another moment — they had leapt the rails; and there they swept round under the grey wall, leaping and yelling, like Berserk fiends, among the frowning tombstones, over the cradles of the quiet dead.

Lancelot shuddered — the thing was not wrong — "it was no one's fault," — but there was a ghastly discord in it. Peace and strife, time and eternity the mad noisy flesh, and the silent immortal spirit the frivolous game of life's outside show, and the terrible earnest of its inward abysses, jarred together without and within him. He pulled his horse up violently, and stood as if rooted to the place, gazing at he knew not what.

The hounds caught sight of the fox, burst into one frantic shriek of joy — and then a sudden and ghastly stillness, as, mute and breathless, they toiled up the hill-side, gaining on their victim at every stride. The patter of the horsehoofs and the rattle of rolling flints died away above. Lancelot looked up, startled at the silence; laughed aloud, he knew not why, and sat, regardless of his pawing and straining horse, still staring at the chapel and the graves.

On a sudden the chapel-door opened, and a figure, timidly yet loftily, stepped out without observing him, and, suddenly turning round, met him full, face to face, and stood fixed with surprise as completely as Lancelot himself.

That face and figure, and the spirit which spoke through them, entered his heart at once, never again to leave it. Her features were aquiline and grand, without a shade of harshness; her eyes shone out like twin lakes of still azure, beneath a broad marble cliff of polished forehead; her rich chesnut hair rippled downward round the towering neck. With her perfect masque, and queenly figure, and earnest upward gaze, she might have been the very model from which Raphael conceived his glorious St. Catherine — the ideal of the highest womanly genius, softened into self-forgetfulness by girlish devotion. She was simply, almost coarsely dressed; but a glance told him that she was a lady, by the courtesy of man as well as by the will of God.

They gazed one moment more at each other but what is time to spirits? With them, as with their Father, "one day is as a thousand years." But that eye-wedlock was cut short the next instant by the decided interference of the horse, who, thoroughly disgusted at his master's whole conduct, gave a significant shake of his head, and shamming frightened (as both women and horses will do when only cross), commenced a war-dance, which drove Argemone Lavington into the porch, and gave the bewildered Lancelot an excuse for dashing madly up the hill after his companions.

"What a horribly ugly face!" said Argemone, to herself; "but so clever, and so unhappy!"

Blest pity! true mother of that graceless scamp, young Love, who is ashamed of his real pedigree, and swears to this day that he is the child of Venus! — the coxcomb!

[Here, for the sake of the reader, we omit, or rather postpone, a long dissertation on the famous Erototheogonic chorus of Aristophanes's birds, with illustrations taken from all earth and heaven, from the Vedas and Proclus to Jacob Boëhmen and Saint Theresa.]

"The dichotomy of Lancelot's personality," as the Germans would call it, returned as he dashed on. His understanding was trying to ride, while his spirit was left behind with Argemone. Hence loose reins and a looser seat. He rolled about like a tipsy man, holding on, in fact, far more by his spurs than by his knees, to the utter infuriation of Shiver-the-timbers, who kicked and snorted over the down like one of Mephistopheles's Demon-steeds. They had mounted the hill — the deer fled before them in terror — they neared the park palings. In the road beyond them the hounds were just killing their fox, struggling and growling in fierce groups for the red gobbets of fur, a panting, steaming ring of horses round them. Half-adozen voices hailed him as he came up.

"Where have you been?" "He'll tumble off!" "He's had a fall!" "No, he hasn't!" "Ware hounds, man alive!" "He'll break his neck!"

"He has broken it, at last!" shouted the colonel, as Shiver-the-timbers rushed at the high pales, out of breath, and blind with rage. Lancelot saw and heard nothing till he was awakened from his dream by the long heave of the huge brute's shoulder, and the maddening sensation of sweeping through the air over the fence. He started, checked the curb, the horse threw up his head, fulfilled his name by driving his knees like a battering-ram against the pales — the top-bar bent like a withe, flew out into a hundred splinters, and man and horse rolled over headlong into the hard flint-road.

For one long sickening second Lancelot watched the blue sky between his own knees. Then a crash as if a shell had burst in his face — a horrible grind — a sheet of flame — and the blackness of night. Did you ever feel it, reader?

When he woke, he found himself lying in bed, with Squire Lavington sitting by him. There was real sorrow in the old man's face. "Come to himself!" and a great joyful oath rolled out. "The boldest rider of them all! I wouldn't have lost him for a dozen readymade spick-and-span Colonel Bracebridges!"

"Quite right, squire!" answered a laughing voice Yeast. 2 from behind the curtain. "Smith has a clear two thousand a-year, and I live by my wits!"

# CHAPTER II.

# Spring Yearnings.

I HEARD a story the other day of our most earnest and genial humourist, who is just now proving himself also our most earnest and genial novelist. "I like your novel exceedingly," said a lady; "the characters are so natural — all but the baronet, and he surely is overdrawn: it is impossible to find such coarseness in his rank of life!"

The artist laughed. "And that character," said he, "is almost the only exact portrait in the whole book."

So it is. People do not see the strange things which pass them every day. "The romance of real life" is only one to the romantic spirit. And then they set up for critics, instead of pupils; as if the artist's business was not just to see what they cannot see — to open their eyes to the harmonies and the discords, the miracles and the absurdities, which seem to them one uniform grey fog of common-places.

Then let the reader believe, that whatsoever is common-place in my story is my own invention. Whatsoever may seem extravagant or startling is most likely to be historic fact, else I should not have dared to write it down, finding God's actual dealings here much too wonderful to dare to invent many fresh ones for myself.

### SPRING YEARNINGS.

Lancelot, who had had a severe concussion of the brain and a broken leg, kept his bed for a few weeks, and his room for a few more. Colonel Bracebridge installed himself at the Priory, and nursed him with indefatigable good-humour and few thanks. He brought Lancelot his breakfast before hunting, described the run to him when he returned, read him to sleep, told him stories of grizzly bear and buffalo-hunts, made him laugh in spite of himself at extempore comic medleys, kept his tables covered with flowers from the conservatory, warmed his chocolate, and even his bed. Nothing came amiss to him, and he to nothing. Lancelot longed at first every hour to be rid of him, and eyed him about the room as a bulldog does the monkey who rides him. In his dreams he was Sinbad the Sailor, and Bracebridge the Old Man of the Sea; but he could not hold out against the colonel's merry bustling kindliness, and the almost womanish tenderness of his nursing. The ice thawed rapidly; and one evening it split up altogether, when Bracebridge, who was sitting drawing by Lancelot's sofa, instead of amusing himself with the ladies below, suddenly threw his pencil into the fire, and broke out, à propos de rien -

"What a strange pair we are, Smith! I think you just the best fellow I ever met, and you hate me like poison — you can't deny it."

There was something in the colonel's tone so utterly different from his usual courtly and measured speech, that Lancelot was taken completely by surprise, and stammered out, —

"I-I-I-no-no. I know I am very foolish

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#### SPRING YEARNINGS.

- ungrateful. But I do hate you," he said, with a sudden impulse, "and I'll tell you why."

"Give me your hand," quoth the colonel: "I like that. Now we shall see our way with each other, at least."

"Because," said Lancelot, slowly, "because you are cleverer than I, readier than I, superior to me in every point."

The colonel laughed, not quite merrily. Lancelot went on, holding down his shaggy brows.

"I am a brute and an ass! — And yet I do not like to tell you so. For if I am an ass, what are you?"

"Heyday?"

"Look here. — I am wasting my time and brains on ribaldry, but I am worth nothing better — at least, I think so at times; but you, who can do anything you put your hand to, what business have you, in the devil's name, to be throwing yourself away on grimcracks and fox-hunting foolery? Heavens! if I had your talents, I'd be — I'd make a name for myself before I died, if I died to make it."

The colonel griped his hand hard, rose, and looked out of the window for a few minutes. There was a dead, brooding silence, till he turned to Lancelot, —

"Mr. Smith, I thank you for your honesty, but good advice may come too late. I am no saint, and God only knows how much less of one I may become; but mark my words, — if you are ever tempted by passion, and vanity, and fine ladies, to form *liaisons*, as the Jezebels call them, snares, and nets, and labyrinths of blind ditches, to keep you down through life, stumbling and grovelling, hating yourself and hating the chain to which you cling — in that hour pray pray as if the devil had you by the throat, — to Almighty God, to help you out of that cursed slough! There is nothing else for it! — pray, I tell you!"

There was a terrible earnestness about the guardsman's face which could not be mistaken. Lancelot looked at him for a moment, and then dropped his eyes ashamed, as if he had intruded on the speaker's confidence by witnessing his emotion.

In a moment the colonel had returned to his smile and his polish.

"And now, my dear invalid, I must beg your pardon for sermonising. What do you say to a game of *écarté*? We must play for love, or we shall excite ourselves, and scandalise Mrs. Lavington's piety." And the colonel pulled a pack of cards out of his pocket, and, seeing that Lancelot was too thoughtful for play, commenced all manner of juggler's tricks, and chuckled over them like any schoolboy.

"Happy man!" thought Lancelot, "to have the strength of will which can thrust its thoughts away once and for all."

No, Lancelot! more happy are they whom God will not allow to thrust their thoughts from them till the bitter draught has done its work.

From that day, however, there was a cordial understanding between the two. They never alluded to the subject; but they had known the bottom of each other's heart. Lancelot's sick room was now pleasant enough, and he drank in daily his new friend's perpetual stream of anecdote, till March and hunting were past, and April was half over. The old squire came up after dinner regularly (during March he had hunted every day, and slept every evening); and the trio chatted along merrily enough, by the help of whist and backgammon, upon the surface of this little island of life, — which is, like Sinbad's, after all only the back of a floating whale, ready to dive at any moment — And then? —

But what was Argemone doing all this time? Argemone was busy in her boudoir (too often a true boudoir to her) among books and statuettes, and dried flowers, fancying herself, and not unfairly, very intellectual. She had four new manias every year: her last winter's one had been that bottle-and-squirt mania, miscalled chemistry; her spring madness was for the Greek drama. She had devoured Schlegel's lectures, and thought them divine; and now she was hard at work on Sophocles, with a little help from translations, and thought she understood him every word. Then she was somewhat High-Church in her notions, and used to go up every Wednesday and Friday to the chapel in the hills, where Lancelot had met her, for an hour's mystic devotion, set off by a little graceful asceticism. As for Lancelot, she never thought of him but as an empty-headed fox-hunter who had met with his deserts; and the brilliant accounts which the allsmoothing colonel gave at dinner of Lancelot's physical well-doing and agreeable conversation only made her set him down the sooner as a twin clever-do-nothing to the despised Bracebridge, whom she hated for keeping her father in a roar of laughter.

But her sister, little Honoria, had all the while been busy messing and cooking with her own hands for the invalid, and almost fell in love with the colonel for his watchful kindness. And here a word about Honoria, to whom Nature, according to her wont with sisters, had given almost everything which Argemone wanted, and denied almost everything which Argemone had, except beauty. And even in that, the manysided mother had made her a perfect contrast to her sister, — tiny and luscious, dark-eyed and dark-haired; as full of wild simple passion as an Italian, thinking little, except where she felt much — which was, indeed everywhere; for she lived in a perpetual April-shower of exaggerated sympathy for all suffering, whether in novels or in life; and daily gave the lie to that shallow old calumny, that "fictitious sorrows harden the heart to real ones."

Argemone was almost angry with her sometimes, when she trotted whole days about the village from school to sick-room: perhaps conscience hinted to her that her duty, too, lay rather there than among her luxurious day-dreams. But, alas! though she would have indignantly repelled the accusation of selfishness, yet in self and for self alone she lived; and while she had force of will for any so-called "self-denial," and would fast herself cross and stupified, and guite enjoy kneeling thinly clad and barefoot on the freezing chapel-floor on a winter's morning, yet her fastidious delicacy revolted at sitting, like Honoria, beside the bed of the ploughman's consumptive daughter, in a reeking, stifling, lean-to garret, in which had slept the night before, the father, mother, and two grown-up boys, not to mention a new-married couple, the sick girl, and, alas! her baby. And of such bedchambers there were too many in Whitford Priors.

The first evening that Lancelot came down stairs,

Honoria clapped her hands outright for joy as he entered, and ran up and down for ten minutes, fetching and carrying endless unnecessary cushions and footstools; while Argemone greeted him with a cold distant bow, and a fine-lady drawl of carefully common-place congratulations. Her heart smote her though, as she saw the wan face and the wild, melancholy, moon-struck eyes once more glaring through and through her; she found a comfort in thinking his stare impertinent, drew herself up, and turned away; once, indeed, she could not help listening, as Lancelot thanked Mrs. Lavington for all the pious and edifying books with which the good lady had kept his room rather than his brain furnished for the last six weeks; he was going to say more, but he saw the colonel's quaint foxy eye peering at him, remembered St. Francis de Sales, and held his tongue.

But, as her destiny was, Argemone found herself, in the course of the evening, alone with Lancelot, at the open window. It was a still, hot, heavy night, after long easterly drought; sheet-lightning glimmered on the far horizon over the dark woodlands; the coming shower had sent forward as his herald a whispering draught of fragrant air.

"What a delicious shiver is creeping over those limes!" said Lancelot, half to himself.

The expression struck Argemone: it was the right one, and it seemed to open vistas of feeling and observation in the speaker which she had not suspected. There was a rich melancholy in the voice: — she turned to look at him.

"Ay," he went on; "and the same heat which

crisps those thirsty leaves must breed the thundershower which cools them! But so it is throughout the universe: every yearning proves the existence of an object meant to satisfy it; the same law creates both the giver and the receiver, the longing and its home."

"If one could but know sometimes what it is for which one is longing!" said Argemone, without knowing that she was speaking from her inmost heart: but thus does the soul involuntarily lay bare its most unspoken depths in the presence of its yet unknown mate, and then shudders at its own *abandon*, as it first tries on the wedding garment of Paradise.

Lancelot was not yet past the era at which young geniuses are apt to "talk book" a little.

"For what?" he answered, flashing up according to his fashion. "To be; — to be great; to have done one mighty work before we die, and live, unloved or loved, upon the lips of men. For this all long who are not mere apes and wall-flies."

"So longed the founders of Babel," answered Argemone, carelessly, to this tirade. She had risen a strange fish, the cunning beauty, and now she was trying her fancy flies over him one by one.

"And were they so far wrong?" answered he. "From that Babel society sprung our architecture, our astronomy, politics, and colonisation. No doubt the old Hebrew scheiks thought them impious enough, for daring to build brick walls instead of keeping to the good old-fashioned tents, and gathering themselves into a nation instead of remaining a mere family horde; and gave their own account of the myth, just as the antediluvian savages gave theirs of that strange Eden scene, by the common interpretation of which the devil is made the first inventor of modesty. Men are all conservatives; everything new is impious, till we get accustomed to it; and if it fails, the mob piously discover a divine vengeance in the mischance, from Babel to Catholic Emancipation."

Lancelot had stuttered horribly during the latter part of this most heterodox outburst, for he had begun to think about himself, and try to say a fine thing, suspecting all the while that it might not be true. But Argemone did not remark the stammering: the new thoughts startled and pained her; but there was a daring grace about them. She tried, as women will, to answer him with arguments, and failed, as women will fail. She was accustomed to lay down the law, à la Madame de Staël, to savants and non-savants, and be heard with reverence, as a woman should be. But poor truth-seeking Lancelot did not see what sex had to do with logic; he flew at her as if she had been a very barrister, and hunted her mercilessly up and down through all sorts of charming sophisms, as she begged the question, and shifted her ground, as thoroughly right in her conclusion as she was wrong in her reasoning, till she grew quite confused and pettish. - And then Lancelot suddenly shrank into his shell, claws and all, like an affrighted soldier-crab, hung down his head, and stammered out some incoherencies, -"N-n-not accustomed to talk to women - ladies, I mean. F-forgot myself - Pray forgive me!" And he looked up, and her eyes, half-amused, met his, and she saw that they were filled with tears.

"What have I to forgive?" she said, more gently, wondering on what sort of strange sportsman she had fallen. "You treat me like an equal; you will deign to argue with me. But men in general — oh, they hide their contempt for us, if not their own ignorance, under that mask of chivalrous deference!" And then in the nasal fine-ladies' key, which was her shell, as bitter *brusquerie* was his, she added, with an Amazon queen's toss of the head, — "You must come and see us often. We shall suit each other, I see, better than most whom we see here."

A sneer and a blush passed together over Lancelot's ugliness.

"What, better than the glib Colonel Bracebridge yonder?"

"Oh, he is witty enough, but he lives on the surface of everything! He is altogether shallow and *blasé*. His good-nature is the fruit of want of feeling; between his gracefulness and his sneering persiflage he is a perfect Mephistopheles-Apollo."

What a snare a decently-good nickname is! Out it must come, though it carry a lie on its back. But the truth was, Argemone thought herself infinitely superior to the colonel, for which simple reason she could not in the least understand him.

[By the bye, how subtly Mr. Tennyson has embodied all this in *The Princess*. How he shows us the woman, when she takes her stand on the false masculine ground of intellect, working out her own moral punishment, by destroying in herself the tender heart of flesh, which is either woman's highest blessing or her bitterest curse; how she loses all feminine sensibility to the under-current of feeling in us poor world-worn, casehardened men, and falls from pride to sternness, from

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sternness to sheer inhumanity. I should have honoured myself by pleading guilty to stealing much of Argemone's character from *The Princess*, had not the idea been conceived, and fairly worked out, long before the appearance of that noble poem.]

They said no more to each other that evening. Argemone was called to the piano; and Lancelot took up the *Sporting Magazine*, and read himself to sleep, till the party separated for the night.

Argemone went up thoughtfully to her own room. The shower had fallen, and the moon was shining bright, while every budding leaf and knot of mould steamed up cool perfume, borrowed from the treasures of the thunder-cloud. All around was working the infinite mystery of birth and growth, of giving and taking, of beauty and use. All things were harmonious — all things reciprocal without. Argemone felt herself needless, lonely, and out of tune with herself and nature.

She sat in the window, and listlessly read over to herself a fragment of her own poetry : —

# SAPPHO.

She lay among the myrtles on the cliff; Above her glared the noon; beneath, the sea. Upon the white horizon Athos' peak Weltered in burning haze; all airs were dead; The cicale slept among the tamarisk's hair; The birds sat dumb and drooping. Far below The lazy sea-weed glistened in the sun; The lazy sea-fowl dried their steaming wings; The lazy swell crept whispering up the ledge, And sank again. Great Pan was laid to rest; And Mother Earth watched by him as he slept, And hushed her myriad children for awhile.

#### SPRING YEARNINGS.

She lay among the myrtles on the cliff; And sighed for sleep, for sleep that would not hear, But left her tossing still; for night and day A mighty hunger yearned within her heart, Till all her veins ran fever, and her cheek, Her long thin hands, and ivory-channell'd feet, Were wasted with the wasting of her soul. Then peevishly she flung her on her face, And hid her eyeballs from the blinding glare, And fingered at the grass, and tried to cool Her crisp hot lips against the crisp hot sward: And then she raised her head, and upward cast Wild looks from homeless eyes, whose liquid light Gleamed out between deep folds of blue-black hair, As gleam twin lakes between the purple peaks Of deep Parnassus, at the mournful moon. Beside her lay her lyre. She snatched the shell, And waked wild music from its silver strings; Then tossed it sadly by, - "Ah, hush;" she cries, "Dead offspring of the tortoise and the mine! Why mock my discords with thine harmonies? Although a thrice-Olympian lot be thine, Only to echo back in every tone, The moods of nobler natures than thine own."

"No!" she said. "That soft and rounded rhyme suits ill with Sappho's fitful and wayward agonies. She should burst out at once into wild passionate lifeweariness, and disgust at that universe, with whose beauty she has filled her eyes in vain, to find it always a dead picture, unsatisfying, unloving — as I have found it."

Sweet self-deceiver! had you no other reason for choosing as your heroine Sappho, the victim of the idolatry of intellect — trying in vain to fill her heart with the friendship of her own sex, and then sinking into mere passion for a handsome boy, and so down into self-contempt and suicide?

She was conscious, I do believe, of no other reason than that she gave; but consciousness is a dim candle — over a deep mine. "After all," she said, pettishly, "people will call it a mere imitation of Shelley's *Alastor*. And what harm if it is? Is there to be no female Alastor? Has not the woman as good a right as the man to long after ideal beauty — to pine and die if she cannot find it; and regenerate herself in its light?"

"Yo-hoo-ooo! Youp-youp! Oh-hooo!" arose doleful through the echoing shubbery.

Argemone started and looked out. It was not a banshee, but a forgotten foxhound puppy, sitting mournfully on the gravel-walk beneath, staring at the clear ghastly moon.

She laughed, and blushed — there was a rebuke in it. She turned to go to rest; and as she knelt and prayed at her velvet faldstool, among all the knicknacks which nowadays make a luxury of devotion, was it strange if, after she had prayed for the fate of nations and churches, and for those who, as she thought, were fighting at Oxford the cause of universal truth and reverend antiquity, she remembered in her petitions the poor godless youth, with his troubled and troubling eloquence? But it was strange that she blushed when she mentioned his name — why should she not pray for him as she prayed for others?

Perhaps she felt that she did not pray for him as she prayed for others.

She left the Æolian harp in the window, as a luxury, if she should wake, and coiled herself up among lace pillows and eider blemos; and the hound coiled himself up on the gravel-walk, after a solemn vesperceremony of three turns round in his own length, looking vainly for "a soft stone." The finest of us are animals after all, and live by eating and sleeping: and, taken as animals, not so badly off either — unless we happen to be Dorsetshire labourers — or Spitalfields weavers — or colliery children — or marching soldiers — or, I am afraid, one-half of English souls this day.

And Argemone dreamed; - that she was a fox, flying for her life through a churchyard - and Lancelot was a hound, yelling and leaping, in a red coat and white buckskins, close upon her - and she felt his hot breath, and saw his white teeth glare . . . And then her father was there; and he was an Italian boy, and played the organ - and Lancelot was a dancing dog, and stood up and danced to the tune of C'est l'amour, l'amour, l'amour," pitifully enough, in his red coat - and she stood up and danced too; but she found her fox-fur dress insufficient, and begged hard for a paper frill — which was denied her: whereat she cried bitterly, and woke; and saw the Night peeping in with her bright diamond eyes, and blushed, and hid her beautiful face in the pillows, and fell asleep again.

What the little imp, who managed this puppet-show on Argemone's brain-stage, may have intended to symbolize thereby, and whence he stole his actors and stage-properties, and whether he got up the interlude for his own private fun, or for that of a choir of brother Eulenspiegels, or, finally, for the edification of Argemone as to her own history, past, present or future, are questions which we must leave unanswered, till physicians have become a little more of metaphysicians, and have given up their present plan of ignoring for nine hundred and ninety-nine pages that most awful and significant custom of dreaming, and then in the thousandth page talking the boldest materialist twaddle about it.

In the meantime, Lancelot, contrary to the colonel's express commands, was sitting up to indite the following letter to his cousin the Tractarian curate: —

"You complain that I waste my time in fieldsports: how do you know that I waste my time? I find within myself certain appetites; and I suppose that the God whom you say made me, made those appetites as a part of me. Why are they to be crushed any more than any other part of me? I am the whole of what I find in myself — am I to pick and choose myself out of myself? And besides, I feel that the exercise of freedom, activity, foresight, daring, independent selfdetermination, even in a few minutes' burst across country, strengthens me in mind as well as in body. It might not do so to you; but you are of a different constitution, and, from all I see, the power of a man's muscles, the excitability of his nerves, the shape and balance of his brain, make him what he is. Else what is the meaning of physiognomy? Every man's destiny, as the Turks say, stands written on his forehead. One does not need two glances at your face to know that you would not enjoy fox-hunting, that you would enjoy book-learning, and "refined repose," as they are pleased to call it. Every man carries his character in his brain. You all know that, and act upon it when you have to deal with a man for sixpence; but your religious dogmas, which make out that every man comes into the world equally brutish and fiendish, make you afraid to confess it. I don't quarrel with a "douce" man like you, with a large organ of veneration, for following your bent. But if I am fiery, with a huge cerebellum, why

am I not to follow mine? — For that is what you do, after all — what you like best. It is all very easy for a man to talk of conquering his appetites, when he has none to conquer. Try and conquer your organ of veneration, or of benevolence, or of calculation then I will call you an ascetic. Why not? — The same Power which made the front of one's head made the back, I suppose?

"And, I tell you, hunting does me good. It awakens me out of my dreary mill-round of metaphysics. It sweeps away that infernal web of self-consciousness, and absorbs me in outward objects; and my red-hot Perillus' bull cools in proportion as my horse warms. I tell you, I never saw a man who could cut out his way across country who could not cut his way through better things when his turn came. The cleverest and noblest fellows are sure to be the best riders in the long run. And as for bad company and 'the world,' when you take to going in the first-class carriages for fear of meeting a swearing sailor in the second-class — when those who have 'renounced the world' give up buying and selling in the funds - when my uncle, the pious banker, who will only 'associate' with the truly religious, gives up dealing with any scoundrel or heathen who can 'do business' with him, -- then you may quote pious people's opinions to me. In God's name, if the Stock Exchange, and railway stagging, and the advertisements in the Protestant Hue-and-Cry, and the frantic Mammon-hunting which has been for the last fifty years the peculiar pursuit of the majority of Quakers, Dissenters, and Religious Churchmen, are not The World, what is? I don't complain of them, though; Puritanism has interdicted to them all art, all Yeast. 3

excitement, all amusement — except money-making. It is their *dernier ressort*, poor souls!

"But you must explain to us naughty foxhunters how all this agrees with the good book. We see plainly enough, in the meantime, how it agrees with 'poor human nature.' We see that the 'religious world,' like the 'great world,' and the 'sporting world,' and the 'literary world,'

> Compounds for sins she is inclined to, By damning those she has no mind to;

and that because England is a money-making country, and money-making is an effeminate pursuit, therefore all sedentary and spoony sins, like covetousness, slander, bigotry, and self-conceit, are to be cockered and plastered over, while the more masculine vices, and no-vices also, are mercilessly hunted down by your cold-blooded, soft-handed religionists.

"This is a more quiet letter than usual from me, my dear coz., for many of your reproofs cut me home: they angered me at the time; but I deserve them. I am miserable, self-disgusted, self-helpless, craving for freedom, and yet crying aloud for some one to come and guide me, and teach me; and who is there in these days who could teach a fast man, even if he would try? Be sure; that as long as you and yours make piety a synonym for unmanliness, you will never convert either me or any other good sportsman.

"By the bye, my dear fellow, was I asleep or awake when I seemed to read in the postscript of your last letter, something about 'being driven to Rome after all?'... Why thither, of all places in heaven or earth? You know, I have no party interest in the question. All creeds are very much alike to me just now. But allow me to ask, in a spirit of the most tolerant curiosity, what possible celestial bait, either of the useful or the agreeable kind, can the present excellent Pope, or his adherents, hold out to you in compensation for the solid earthly pudding which you would have to desert? .... I dare say, though, that I shall not comprehend your answer when it comes. I am, you know, utterly deficient in that sixth sense of the angelic or supra-lunar beautiful, which fills your soul with ecstasy. You, I know, expect and long to become an angel after death: I am under the strange hallucination that my body is part of me, and in spite of old Plotinus, look with horror at a disembodied immortality - or even a few thousand years of disembodiment till the giving of that new body, the great perfection of which, in your eyes, and those of every one else, seems to be, that it will be less, and not more of a body, than our present one. . . . Is this hope, to me at once inconceivable and contradictory, palpable and valuable enough to you to send you to that Italian Avernus, to get it made a little more certain? If so, I despair of your making your meaning intelligible to a poor fellow wallowing, like me, in the Hylic Borboros -- or whatever else you may choose to call the unfortunate fact of being flesh and blood .... Still, write."

# CHAPTER III.

## New Actors, and a new Stage.

WHEN Argemone rose in the morning, her first thought was of Lancelot. His face haunted her. The wild brilliance of his intellect, struggling through foul

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### NEW ACTORS,

smoke-clouds, had haunted her still more. She had heard of his profligacy, his bursts of fierce Berserkmadness; and yet now these very faults, instead of repelling, seemed to attract her, and intensify her longing to save him. She would convert him; purify him; harmonise his discords. And that very wish gave her a peace she had never felt before. She had formed her idea; she had now a purpose for which to live, and she determined to concentrate herself for the work, and longed for the moment when she should meet Lancelot, and begin — how, she did not very clearly see.

It is an old jest — the fair devotee trying to convert the young rake. Men of the world laugh heartily at it; and so does the devil, no doubt. If any readers wish to be fellow-jesters with that personage, they may; but, as sure as old Saxon woman-worship remains for ever a blessed and healing law of life, the devotee may yet convert the rake — and, perhaps, herself into the bargain.

Argemone looked almost angrily round at her beloved books and drawings; for they spoke a message to her which they had never spoken before, of selfcentred ambition. "Yes," she said aloud to herself, "I have been selfish, utterly! Art, poetry, science — I believe, after all, that I have only loved them for my own sake, not for theirs, because they would make me something, feed my conceit of my own talents. How infinitely more glorious to find my work-field and my prize, not in dead forms and colours, or inkand-paper theories, but in a living, immortal, human spirit! I will study no more, except the human heart, and only that to purify and ennoble it." True, Argemone; and yet, like all resolutions, somewhat less than the truth. That morning, indeed, her purpose was simple as God's own light. She never dreamed of exciting Lancelot's admiration, even his friendship, for herself. She would have started as from a snake, from the issue which the reader very clearly foresees, that Lancelot would fall in love, not with Young-Englandism, but with Argemone Lavington. But yet self is not eradicated even from a woman's heart in one morning before breakfast. Besides, it is not "benevolence," but love — the real Cupid of flesh and blood, who can first

> Touch the chord of self, which, trembling, Passes in music out of sight.

But a time for all things; and it is now time for Argemone to go down to breakfast, having prepared some dozen imaginary dialogues between herself and Lancelot, in which, of course, her eloquence always had the victory. She had yet to learn, that it is better sometimes not to settle in one's heart what we shall speak, for the Everlasting Will has good works ready prepared for us to walk in, by what we call fortunate accident; and it shall be given us in that day and that hour what we shall speak.

Lancelot, in the meantime, shrank from meeting Argemone; and was quite glad of the weakness which kept him up stairs. Whether he was afraid of her whether he was ashamed of himself or of his crutches, I cannot tell, but I dare say, reader, you are getting tired of all this soul-dissecting. So we will have a bit of action again, for the sake of variety if for nothing better.

Of all the species of lovely scenery which England holds, none, perhaps, is more exquisite than the banks of the chalk-rivers — the perfect limpidity of the water, the gay and luxuriant vegetation of the banks and ditches, the masses of noble wood embosoming the villages, the unique beauty of the water-meadows, living sheets of emerald and silver, tinkling and sparkling, cool under the fiercest sun, brilliant under the blackest clouds. - There, if anywhere, one would have expected to find Arcadia among fertility, loveliness, industry, and wealth. But, alas for the sad reality! the cool breath of those glittering watermeadows too often floats laden with poisonous miasma. Those picturesque villages are generally the perennial hotbeds of fever and ague, of squalid penury, sottish profligacy, dull discontent too stale for words. There is luxury in the park, wealth in the huge farm-steadings, knowledge in the parsonage: but the poor? those by whose dull labour all that luxury and wealth, ay, even that knowledge, is made possible, what are they? We shall see, please God, ere the story's end.

But of all this Lancelot as yet thought nothing. He, too, had to be emancipated, as much as Argemone, from selfish dreams; to learn to work trustfully in the living Present, not to gloat sentimentally over the unreturning Past. But his time was not yet come; and little he thought of all the work which lay ready for him within a mile of the Priory, as he watched the ladies go out for the afternoon, and slipped down to the Nun-pool on his crutches to smoke, and fish, and build castles in the air.

The Priory, with its rambling courts and gardens, stood on an island in the river. The upper stream

flowed in a straight artificial channel through the garden, still and broad, towards the Priory mill; while just above the Priory wall half the river fell over a high weir, with all its appendages of bucks and hatchways, and eel-baskets, into the Nun's-pool, and then swept round under the ivied walls, with their fantastic turrets and gables, and little loopholed windows, peering out over the stream, as it hurried down over the shallows to join the race below the mill. A postern-door in the walls opened on an ornamental wooden bridge across the weir-head - a favourite haunt of all fishers and sketchers who were admitted to the dragon-guarded Elysium of Whitford Priors. Thither Lancelot went, congratulating himself, strange to say, in having escaped the only human being whom he loved on earth.

He found on the weir-bridge two of the keepers. The younger one, Tregarva, was a stately, thoughtfullooking Cornishman, some six feet three in height, with thews and sinews in proportion. He was sitting on the bridge looking over a basket of eel-lines, and listening silently to the chat of his companion.

Old Harry Verney, the other keeper, was a character in his way, and a very bad character, too, though he was a patriarch among all the gamekeepers of the vale. He was a short, wiry, bandy-legged, ferretvisaged old man, with grizzled hair, and a wizened face tanned brown and purple by constant exposure. Between rheumatism and constant handling the rod and gun, his fingers were crooked like a hawk's claws. He kept his left eye always shut, apparently to save trouble in shooting; and squinted, and sniffed, and peered, with a stooping back and protruded chin, as if he were perpetually on the watch for fish, flesh, and fowl, vermin and Christian. The friendship between himself and the Scotch terrier at his heels would have been easily explained by Lessing, for in the transmigration of souls the spirit of Harry Verney had evidently once animated a dog of that breed. He was dressed in a huge thick fustian jacket, scratched, stained, and patched, with bulging, greasy pockets; a cast of flies round a battered hat, riddled with shot-holes, a dog-whistle at his button-hole, and an old gun cut short over his arm, bespoke his business.

"I seed that 'ere Crawy against Ashy Down Plantations last night, I'll be sworn," said he, in a squeaking, sneaking tone.

"Well, what harm was the man doing?"

"Oh, ay, that's the way you young 'uns talk. If he warn't doing mischief, he'd a been glad to have been doing it, I'll warrant. If I'd been as young as you, I'd have picked a quarrel with him soon enough, and found a cause for tackling him. It's worth a brace of sovereigns with the squire to haul him up. Eh? eh? An't old Harry right now?"

"Humph!" growled the younger man.

"There, then, you get me a snare and a hare by to-morrow night," went on old Harry, "and see if I don't nab him. It won't lay long under the plantation afore he picks it up. You mind to snare me a hare to-night, now!"

"I'll do no such thing, nor help to bring false accusations against any man!"

"False accusations!" answered Harry, in his cringing way. "Look at that now, for a keeper to say! Why, if he don't happen to have a snare just there, he has somewhere else, you know. Eh? An't old Harry right now, eh?"

"Maybe."

"There, don't say I don't know nothing then. Eh? What matter who put the snare down, or the hare in, perwided he takes it up, man? If 't was his'n, he'd be all the better pleased. The most notoriousest poacher as walks unhung!" And old Harry lifted up his crooked hands in pious indignation.

"I'll have no more gamekeeping, Harry. What with hunting down Christians as if they were vermin, all night, and being cursed by the squire all day, I'd sooner be a sheriff's runner, or a negro slave."

"Ay, ay! that's the way the young dogs always bark afore they're broke in, and gets to like it, as the eels does skinning. Haven't I bounced pretty near out of my skin many a time afore now, on this here very bridge, with 'Harry, jump in, you stupid hound!' and 'Harry, get out, you one-eyed tailor!' And then, if one of the gentlemen lost a fish with their clumsiness — Oh, Father! to hear 'em let out at me and my landing net, and curse fit to fright the devil! Dash their sarcy tongues! Eh? Don't old Harry know their ways? Don't he know 'em, now?"

"Ay," said the young man bitterly. "We break the dogs, and we load the guns, and we find the game, and mark the game, — and then they call themselves sportsmen; we choose the flies, and we bait the spinning-hooks, and we show them where the fish lie, and then when they've hooked them, they can't get them out without us and the spoon-net; and then they go home to the ladies and boast of the lot of fish they killed — and who thinks of the keeper?" "Oh? ah? Then don't say old Harry knows nothing, then. How nicely, now, you and I might get a living off this ere manor, if the landlords was served like the French ones was. Eh, Paul?" chuckled old Harry. "Wouldn't we pay our taxes with pheasants and grayling that's all, eh? An't old Harry right now, eh?"

The old fox was fishing for an assent, not for its own sake, for he was a fierce Tory, and would have stood up to be shot any day, not only for his master's sake, but for the sake of a single pheasant of his master's; but he hated Tregarva for many reasons, and was daily on the watch to entrap him on some of his peculiar points, whereof he had, as we shall find, a good many.

What would have been Tregarva's answer, I cannot tell; but Lancelot, who had unintentionally overheard the greater part of the conversation, disliked being any longer a listener, and came close to them.

"Here's your gudgeons and minnows, Sir, as you bespoke," quoth Harry; "and here's that paternoster as you gave me to rig up. Beautiful minnows, Sir; white as a silver spoon. — They're the ones now, an't they, Sir, eh?"

"They'll do!"

"Well, then, don't say old Harry don't know nothing, that's all, eh?" and the old fellow toddled off, peering and twisting his head about like a starling.

"An odd old fellow that, Tregarva," said Lancelot.

"Very, Sir, considering who made him," answered the Cornishman, touching his hat, and then thrusting his nose deeper than ever into the eel-basket. "Beautiful stream this," said Lancelot, who had a continual longing — right or wrong — to chat with his inferiors; and was proportionately sulky and reserved to his superiors.

"Beautiful enough, Sir," said the keeper, with an emphasis on the first word.

"Why, has it any other fault?"

"Not so wholesome as pretty, Sir."

"What harm does it do?"

"Fever, and ague, and rheumatism, Sir."

"Where?" asked Lancelot, a little amused by the man's laconic answers.

"Wherever the white fog spreads, Sir."

"Where's that?"

"Everywhere, Sir."

"And when?"

"Always, Sir."

Lancelot burst out laughing. The man looked up at him slowly and seriously.

"You wouldn't laugh, Sir, if you'd seen much of the inside of these cottages round."

"Really," said Lancelot, "I was only laughing at your making such very short work of such a long and serious story. Do you mean that the unhealthiness of this country is wholly caused by the river?"

"No, Sir. The river-damps are God's sending; and so they are not too bad to bear. But there's more of man's sending, that is too bad to bear."

"What do you mean?"

"Are men likely to be healthy when they are worse housed than a pig?"

"No."

"And worse fed than a hound?"

"Good heavens! No!"

"Or packed together to sleep, like pilchards in a barrel?"

"But, my good fellow, do you mean that the labourers here are in that state?"

"It isn't far to walk, Sir. Perhaps, some day, when the may-fly is gone off, and the fish won't rise awhile, you could walk down and see. I beg your pardon, Sir, though, for thinking of such a thing. They are not places fit for gentlemen, that's certain." There was a staid irony in his tone, which Lancelot felt.

"But the clergyman goes?"

"Yes, Sir."

"And Miss Honoria goes?"

"Yes, God Almighty bless her!"

"And do not they see that all goes right?"

The giant twisted his huge limbs, as if trying to avoid an answer, and yet not daring to do so.

"Do clergymen go about among the poor much, Sir, at college, before they are ordained?"

Lancelot smiled, and shook his head.

"I thought so, Sir. Our good vicar is like the rest hereabouts. God knows, he stints neither time nor money — the souls of the poor are well looked after, and their bodies, too — as far as his purse will go; but that's not far."

"Is he ill-off, then?"

"The living's worth some forty pounds a-year. The great tithes, they say, are worth better than twelve hundred; but Squire Lavington has them."

"Oh, I see!" said Lancelot.

"I'm glad you do, Sir, for I don't," meekly

answered Tregarva. "But the vicar, Sir, he is a kind man, and a good; but the poor don't understand him, nor he them. He is too learned, Sir, and, saving your presence, too fond of his prayerbook."

"One can't be too fond of a good thing!"

"Not unless you make an idol of it, Sir, and fancy that men's souls were made for the prayer-book, and not the prayer-book for them."

"But cannot he expose and redress these evils, if they exist?"

Tregarva twisted about again.

"I do not say that I think it, Sir; but this I know, that every poor man in the vale thinks it — that the parsons are afraid of the landlords. They must see these things, for they are not blind; and they try to plaster them up out of their own pockets."

"But why, in God's name, don't they strike at the root of the matter, and go straight to the landlords and tell them the truth?" asked Lancelot.

"So people say, Sir. I see no reason for it, except the one which I gave you. Besides, Sir, you must remember, that a man can't quarrel with his own kin; and so many of them are their squire's brothers, or sons, or nephews."

"Or good friends with him, at least."

"Ay, Sir, and, to do them justice, they had need, for the poor's sake, to keep good friends with the squire. How else are they to get a farthing for schools, or coal-subscriptions, or lying-in societies, or lending libraries, or penny clubs? If they spoke their minds to the great ones, Sir, how could they keep the parish together?" "You seem to see both sides of a question, certainly. But what a miserable state of things, that the labouring man should require all these societies, and charities, and helps from the rich! — that an industrious freeman cannot live without alms!"

"So I have thought this long time," quietly answered Tregarva.

"But Miss Honoria, — she is not afraid to tell her father the truth?"

"Suppose, Sir, when Adam and Eve were in the garden, that all the devils had come up and played their fiends' tricks before them, — do you think they'd have seen any shame in it?"

"I really cannot tell," said Lancelot, smiling.

"Then I can, Sir. They'd have seen no more harm in it than there was harm already in themselves; and that was none. A man's eyes can only see what they've learnt to see."

Lancelot started: it was a favourite *dictum* of his in Carlyle's works.

"Where did you get that thought, my friend?"

"By seeing, Sir."

"But what has that to do with Miss Honoria?"

"She is an angel of holiness herself, Sir; and, therefore she goes on without blushing or suspecting, where our blood would boil again. She sees people in want, and thinks it must be so, and pities them and relieves them. But she don't know want herself; and, therefore, she don't know that it makes men beasts and devils. She's as pure as God's light herself; and, therefore, she fancies every one is as spotless as she is. And there's another mistake in your charitable great people, Sir. When they see poor folk sick or hungry before their eyes, they pull out their purses fast enough, God bless them; for they wouldn't like to be so themselves. But the oppression that goes on all the year round, and the want that goes on all the year round, and the filth, and the lying, and the swearing, and the profligacy, that go on all the year round, and the sickening weight of debt, and the miserable grinding anxiety from rentday to rent-day, and Saturday night to Saturday night, that crushes a man's soul down, and drives every thought out of his head but how he is to fill his stomach and warm his back, and keep a house over his head, till he daren't for his life take his thoughts one moment off the meat that perisheth -oh, Sir, they never felt this; and, therefore, they never dream that there are thousands who pass them in their daily walks who feel this, and feel nothing else!"

This outburst was uttered with an earnestness and majesty which astonished Lancelot. He forgot the subject in the speaker.

"You are a very extraordinary gamekeeper!" said he.

"When the Lord shows a man a thing, he can't well help seeing it," answered Tregarva, in his usual staid tone.

There was a pause. The keeper looked at him with a glance, before which Lancelot's eyes fell.

"Hell is paved with hearsays, Sir, and as all this talk of mine is hearsay, if you are in earnest, Sir, go and see for yourself. I know you have a kind heart, and they tell me you are a great scholar, which would to God I was! so you ought not to condescend to

#### NEW ACTORS,

take my word for anything which you can look into yourself;" with which sound piece of common-sense Tregarva returned busily to his eel-lines.

"Hand me the rod and can, and help me out along the buck-stage," said Lancelot; "I must have some more talk with you, my fine fellow."

"Amen," answered Tregarva, as he assisted our lame hero along a huge beam which stretched out into the pool; and having settled him there, returned mechanically to his work, humming a Wesleyan hymntune.

Lancelot sat and tried to catch perch, but Tregarva's words haunted him. He lighted his cigar, and tried to think earnestly over the matter, but he had got into the wrong place for thinking. All his thoughts, all his sympathies, were drowned in the rush and the whirl of the water. He forgot everything else in the mere animal enjoyment of sight and sound. Like many young men at his crisis of life, he had given himself up to the mere contemplation of Nature till he had become her slave; and now a luscious scene, a singing-bird, were enough to allure his mind away from the most earnest and awful thoughts. He tried to think, but the river would not let him. It thundered and spouted out behind him from the hatches, and leapt madly past him, and caught his eyes in spite of him, and swept them away down its dancing waves, and then let them go again only to sweep them down again and again, till his brain felt a delicious dizziness from the everlasting rush and the everlasting roar. And then below, how it spread, and writhed, and whirled, into transparent fans, hissing and twining snakes, polished

glass-wreaths, huge crystal bells, which boiled up from the bottom, and dived again beneath long threads of creamy foam, and swung round posts and roots, and rushed blackening under dark weedfringed boughs, and gnawed at the marly banks, and shook the ever restless bulrushes, till it was swept away and down over the white pebbles and olive weeds, in one broad rippling sheet of molten silver, towards the distant sea. Downwards it fleeted ever, and bore his thoughts floating on its oily stream; and the great trout, with their yellow sides and peacock backs, lunged among the eddies, and the silver grayling dimpled and wandered upon the shallows, and the may-flies flickered and rustled round him like water fairies, with their green gauzy wings; the coot clanked musically among the reeds; the frogs hummed their ceaseless vesper-monotone; the kingfisher darted from his hole in the bank like a blue spark of electric light; the swallows' bills snapped as they twined and hawked above the pool; the swifts' wings whirred like musket-balls, as they rushed screaming past his head; and ever the river fleeted by, bearing his eyes away down the current, till its wild eddies began to glow with crimson beneath the setting sun. The complex harmony of sights and sounds slid softly over his soul, and he sank away into a still day-dream, too passive for imagination, too deep for meditation, and

> Beauty born of murmuring sound, Did pass into his face.

Blame him not. There are more things in a man's heart than ever get in through his thoughts.

On a sudden, a soft voice behind him startled him. Yeast. 4 "Can a poor Cockney artist venture himself along this timber without falling in?"

· Lancelot turned.

"Come out to me, and if you stumble, the naiads will rise out of their depths, and 'hold up their pearled wrists' to save their favourite."

The artist walked timidly out along the beams, and sat down beside Lancelot, who shook him warmly by the hand.

"Welcome, Claude Mellot, and all lovely enthusiasms and symbolisms! Expound to me, now, the meaning of that water-lily leaf and its grand simple curve, as it lies sleeping there in the back eddy."

"Oh, I am too amused to philosophise. The fair Argemone has been just treating me to her three hundred and sixty-fifth philippic against my unoffending beard."

"Why, what fault can she find with such a graceful and natural ornament?"

"Just this, my dear fellow, that it is natural. As it is, she considers me only 'intellectual-looking.' If the beard were away, my face, she says, would be 'so refined!' And, I suppose, if I was just a little more effeminate and pale, with a nice retreating under-jaw and a drooping lip, and a meek peaking simper, like your starved Romish saints, I should be 'so spiritual!' And if again, to complete the climax, I did but shave my head like a Chinese, I should be a model for St. Francis himself!"

"But really, after all, why make yourself so singular by this said beard?"

"I wear it for a testimony and a sign that a man has no right to be ashamed of the mark of manhood.

### AND A NEW STAGE.

Oh, that one or two of your Protestant clergymen, who ought to be perfect ideal men, would have the courage to get up into the pulpit in a long beard, and testify that the very essential idea of Protestantism is the dignity and divinity of man as God made him! Our forefathers were not ashamed of their beards; but now even the soldier is only allowed to keep his moustache, while our quill-driving masses shave themselves as close as they can; and in proportion to a man's piety he wears less hair, from the young curate who shaves off his whiskers, to the Popish priest who shaves his crown."

"What do you say, then, to cutting off nuns' hair?"

"I say, that extremes meet, and prudish Manichæism always ends in sheer indecency. Those Papists have forgotten what woman was made for, and therefore, they have forgotten that a woman's hair is her glory, for it was given to her for a covering; as says your friend Paul the Hebrew, who, by the by, had as fine theories of art as he had of society, if he had only lived fifteen hundred years later, and had a chance of working them out."

"How remarkably orthodox you are!" said Lancelot, smiling.

"How do you know that I am not? You never heard me deny the old creed. But what if an artist ought to be of all creeds at once? My business is to represent the beautiful, and therefore to accept it wherever I find it. Yours is to be a philosopher, and find the true."

"But the beautiful must be truly beautiful to be

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worth anything; and so you, too, must search for the true."

"Yes; truth of form, colour, chiaroscuro. They are worthy to occupy me a life; for they are eternal — or at least that which they express: and if I am to get at the symbolized unseen, it must be through the beauty of the symbolizing phænomenon. If I, who live by art, for art, in art, or you either, who seem as much a born artist as myself, am to have a religion, it must be a worship of the fountain of art — of the

Spirit of beauty, who doth consecrate With his own hues whate'er he shines upon."

"As poor Shelley has it; and much peace of mind it gave him!" answered Lancelot. "I have grown sick lately of such dreary tinsel abstractions. When you look through the glitter of the words, your 'spirit of beauty' simply means certain shapes and colours which please you in beautiful things and in beautiful people."

"Vile nominalist! renegade from the ideal and all its glories!" said Claude, laughing.

"I don't care sixpence now for the ideal! I want not beauty, but some beautiful thing — a woman, perhaps," and he sighed. "But at least a person — a living, loving person — all lovely itself, and giving loveliness to all things! If I must have an ideal, let it be, for mercy's sake, a realised one."

Claude opened his sketch-book.

"We shall get swamped in these metaphysical oceans, my dear dreamer. But lo, here come a couple, as near ideals as any in these degenerate days — the two poles of beauty; the *milieu* of which would be Venus with us Pagans, or the Virgin Mary with the Catholics. Look at them! Honoria the dark — symbolic of passionate depth; Argemone the fair, type of intellectual light! Oh, that I were a Zeuxis to unite them instead of having to paint them in two separate pictures, and split perfection in half, as everything is split in this piecemeal world!"

"You will have the honour of a sitting this afternoon, I suppose, from both beauties?"

"I hope so, for my own sake. There is no path left to immortality, or bread either, now for us poor artists but portrait-painting."

"I envy you your path, when it leads through such Elysiums," said Lancelot.

"Come here, gentlemen both!" cried Argemone from the bridge.

"Fairly caught!" grumbled Lancelot. "You must go, at least; my lameness will excuse me, I hope."

The two ladies were accompanied by Bracebridge, a gazelle which he had given Argemone, and a certain miserable cur of Honoria's adopting, who plays an important part in this story, and, therefore, deserves a little notice. Honoria had rescued him from a watery death in the village pond, by means of the colonel, who had revenged himself for a pair of wet feet by utterly corrupting the dog's morals, and teaching him every week to answer to some fresh scandalous name.

But Lancelot was not to escape. Instead of moving on, as he had hoped, the party stood looking over the bridge, and talking — he took for granted, poor thinskinned fellow — of him. And for once his suspicions were right; for he overheard Argemone say —

"I wonder how Mr. Smith can be so rude as to sit there in my presence over his stupid perch! Smoking those horrid cigars, too! How selfish those field-sports do make men!"

"Thank you!" said the colonel, with a low bow. Lancelot rose.

"If a country girl, now, had spoken in that tone, said he to himself, 'it would have been called at least 'saucy' — but Mammon's elect ones may do anything. Well — here I come, limping to my new tyrant's feet, like Göthe's bear to Lili's."

She drew him away, as women only know how, from the rest of the party, who were chatting and laughing with Claude. She had shown off her fancied indifference to Lancelot before them, and now began in a softer voice, —

"Why will you be so shy and lonely, Mr. Smith?"

"Because I am not fit for your society."

"Who tells you so? Why will you not become so?"

Lancelot hung down his head.

"As long as fish and game are your only society, you will become more and more *morne* and self-absorbed."

"Really, fish were the last things of which I was thinking when you came. My whole heart was filled with the beauty of nature, and nothing else."

There was an opening for one of Argemone's preconcerted orations.

"Had you no better occupation," she said, gently, "than nature, the first day of returning to the open air after so frightful and dangerous an accident? Were there no thanks due to One above?"

Lancelot understood her.

"How do you know that I was not even then showing my thankfulness?"

"What! with a cigar and a fishing-rod?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

Argemone really could not tell at the moment. The answer upset her scheme entirely.

"Might not that very admiration of nature have been an act of worship?" continued our hero. "How can we better glorify the worker, than by delighting in his work?"

"Ah!" sighed the lady, "why trust to these selfwilled methods, and neglect the noble and exquisite forms which the Church has prepared for us as embodiments for every feeling of our hearts?"

"Every feeling, Miss Lavington?"

Argemone hesitated. She had made the good old stock assertion, as in duty bound; but she could not help recollecting that there were several Popish books of devotion at that moment on her table, which seemed to her to patch a gap or two in the Prayer-book.

"My temple as yet," said Lancelot, "is only the heaven and the earth; my church-music I can hear all day long, whenever I have the sense to be silent, and 'hear my mother sing;' my priests and preachers are every bird and bee, every flower and cloud. Am I not well enough furnished? Do you want to reduce my circular infinite chapel to an oblong hundred-foot one? My sphere-harmonies to the Gregorian tones in four parts? My world-wide priesthood, with their endless variety of costume, to one not over-educated gentleman in a white sheet? And my dreams of naiads and flowerfairies, and the blue-bells ringing God's praises, as they do in *The Story without an End*, for the gross reality of naughty charity children, with their pockets full of apples, bawling out Hebrew psalms of which they neither feel nor understand a word?"

Argemone tried to look very much shocked at this piece of bombast. Lancelot evidently meant it as such, but he eyed her all the while as if there was solemn earnest under the surface.

"Oh, Mr. Smith!" she said, "how can you dare talk so of a liturgy compiled by the wisest and holiest of all countries and ages? You revile that of whose beauty you are not qualified to judge!"

"There must be a beauty in it all, or such as you are would not love it."

"Oh," she said, hopefully, "that you would but try the Church system! How you would find it harmonise and methodise every day, every thought, for you! But I cannot explain myself. Why not go to our vicar, and open your doubts to him?"

"Pardon, but you must excuse me."

"Why? He is one of the saintliest of men!"

"To tell the truth, I have been to him already."

"You do not mean it! And what did he tell you?"

"What the rest of the world does - hearsays."

"But did you not find him most kind?"

"I went to him to be comforted and guided. He received me as a criminal. He told me that my first duty was penitence; that, as long as I lived the life I did, he could not dare to cast his pearls before swine by answering my doubts; that I was in a state incapable of appreciating spiritual truths; and, therefore, he had no right to tell me any."

"And what did he tell you?"

"Several spiritual lies instead, I thought. He told

me, hearing me quote Schiller, to beware of the Germans, for they were all Pantheists at heart. I asked him whether he included Lange and Bunsen, and it appeared that he had never read a German book in his life. He then flew furiously at Mr. Carlyle, and I found that all he knew of him was from a certain review in the Quarterly. He called Böhme a theosophic Atheist. I should have burst out at that, had I not read the very words in a High Church review the day before, and hoped that he was not aware of the impudent falsehood which he was retailing. Whenever I feebly interposed an objection to anything he said (for, after all, he talked on), he told me to hear the Catholic Church. I asked him which Catholic Church? He said the English. I asked him whether it was to be the Church of the sixth century, or the thirteenth, or the seventeenth, or the eighteenth? He told me the one and eternal Church, which belonged as much to the nineteenth century as to the first. I begged to know whether, then, I was to hear the Church according to Simeon, or according to Newman, or according to St. Paul; for they seemed to me a little at variance? He told me, austerely enough, that the mind of the Church was embodied in her Liturgy and Articles. To which I answered, that the mind of the episcopal clergy might, perhaps, be; but, then, how happened it that they were always quarrelling and calling hard names about the sense of those very documents? And so I left him, assuring him that, living in the nineteenth century, I wanted to hear the Church of the nineteenth century, and no other; and should be most happy to listen to her, as soon as she had made up her mind what to say."

Argemone was angry and disappointed. She felt she could not cope with Lancelot's quaint logic, which, however unsound, cut deeper into questions than she had yet looked for herself. Somehow, too, she was tongue-tied before him just when she wanted to be most eloquent in behalf of her principles; and that fretted her still more. But his manner puzzled her most of all. First he would run on with his face turned away, as if soliloquising out into the air, and then suddenly look round at her with most fascinating humility; and then, in a moment, a dark shade would pass over his countenance, and he would look like one possessed, and his lips wreathe in a sinister artificial smile, and his wild eyes glare through and through her with such cunning understanding of himself and her, that, for the first time in her life, she quailed and felt frightened, as if in the power of a madman. She turned hastily away to shake off the spell.

He sprung after her, almost on his knees, and looked up into her beautiful face with an imploring cry.

"What, do you too, throw me off? Will you too, treat that poor wild uneducated sportsman as a Pariah and an outcast, because he is not ashamed to be a man? — because he cannot stuff his soul's hunger with cut-and-dried hearsays, but dares to think for himself? — because he wants to believe things, and dare not be satisfied with only believing that he ought to believe them?"

She paused, astonished.

"Ah, yes," he went on, "I hoped too much! What right had I to expect that you would understand me? What right, still more, to expect that you would stoop, any more than the rest of the world, to speak

to me, as if I could become anything better than the wild hog I seem? Oh, yes! - the chrysalis has no butterfly in it, of course! - Stamp on the ugly, motionless thing! And yet - you look so beautiful and good! — are all my dreams to perish, about the Al-runen and prophet-maidens, how they charmed our old fighting, hunting, forefathers into purity and sweet obedience among their Saxon forests? Has woman forgotten her mission - to look at the heart and have mercy, while cold man looks at the act and condemns? Do you, too, like the rest of mankind, think no-belief better than misbelief; and smile on hypocrisy, lip-assent, practical Atheism, sooner than on the unpardonable sin of making a mistake? Will you, like the rest of this wise world, let a man's spirit rot asleep into the pit, if he will only lie quiet and not disturb your smooth respectabilities; but if he dares, in waking, to yawn in an unorthodox manner, knock him on the head at once, and 'break the bruised reed,' and 'quench the smoking flax?' And yet you church-goers have 'renounced the world!"

"What do you want, in Heaven's name?" asked Argemone, half terrified.

"I want you to tell me that. Here I am, with youth, health, strength, money, every blessing of life — but one; and I am utterly miserable. I want some one to tell me what I want."

"Is it not that you want - religion?"

"I see hundreds who have what you call religion, with whom I should scorn to change my irreligion."

"But, Mr. Smith, are you not -are you not very

wicked? They tell me so," said Argemone, with an effort. "And is not that the cause of your disease?" Lancelot laughed.

"No, fairest prophetess, it is the disease itself. 'Why am I what I am, when I know more and more daily what I could be?' — That is the mystery and my sins are the fruit, and not the root of it. Who will explain that?"

Argemone began, -

"The Church —"

"Oh, Miss Lavington," cried he, impatiently, "will you, too, send me back to that cold abstraction? I came to you, however presumptuous, for living, human, advice to a living, human, heart, and will you pass off on me that Proteus-dream the Church, which in every man's mouth has a different meaning? In one book, meaning a method of education, only it has never been carried out; in another, a system of polity, — only it has never been realised; — now a set of words written in books, on whose meaning all are divided; now a body of men, who are daily excommunicating each other as heretics and apostates; now a universal idea; now the narrowest and most exclusive of all parties. Really, before you ask me to hear the Church, I have a right to ask you to define what the Church is."

"Our Articles define it," said Argemone, drily.

"The 'Visible Church,' at least, it defines as a company of faithful men, in which, &c. But how does it define the 'Invisible' one? And what does 'faithful' mean? What if I thought Cromwell and Pierre Leroux infinitely more faithful men in their way, and better members of the 'Invisible Church,' than the torturer-pedant Laud, or the facing-both-ways Protestant-Manichee Taylor?"

It was lucky for the life of young Love that the discussion went no further: Argemone was becoming scandalised beyond all measure. But, happily, the colonel interposed, —

"Look here, tell me if you know for whom this sketch is meant?"

"Tregarva, the keeper: who can doubt?" answered they both at once.

"Has not Mellot succeeded perfectly?"

"Yes," said Lancelot. "But what wonder, with such a noble subject! What a grand benevolence is enthroned on that lofty forehead!"

"Oh, you would say so, indeed," interposed Honoria, "if you knew him! The stories that I could tell you about him! How he will go into cottages, read to sick people by the hour, dress the children, cook their food for them, as tenderly as any woman! I found out, last winter, if you will believe it, that he lived on bread and water, to give out of his own wages — which are barely twelve shillings a-week five shillings a-week for more than two months to a poor labouring man, to prevent his going to the workhouse, and being parted from his wife and children."

"Noble, indeed!" said Lancelot. "I do not wonder now at the effect his conversation just now had on me."

"Has he been talking to you?" said Honoria, eagerly. "He seldom speaks to ony ane."

"He has to me; and so well, that were I sure that the poor were as ill off as he says, and that I had the power of altering the system a hair, I could find it in my heart to excuse all political grievance-mongers, and turn one myself."

Claude Mellot clapped his white woman-like hands.

"Bravo! bravo! Oh wonderful conversion! Lancelot has at last discovered that, beside the 'glorious Past,' there is a Present worthy of his sublime notice! We may now hope, in time, that he will discover the existence of a Future!"

"But, Mr. Mellot," said Honoria, "why have you been so unfaithful to your original? why have you, like all artists, been trying to soften and refine on your model?"

"Because, my dear lady, we are bound to see everything in its ideal, — not as it is, but as it ought to be, and will be, when the vices of this pitiful civilised world are exploded, and sanitary reform, and a variety of occupation, and harmonious education, let each man fulfil in body and soul the idea which God embodied in him."

"Fourierist!" cried Lancelot, laughing. "But surely you never saw a face which had lost by wear less of the divine image? How thoroughly it exemplifies your great law of Protestant art, that 'the Ideal is best manifested in the Peculiar.' How classic, how independent of clime or race, is its bland, majestic self-possession: how thoroughly Norse its massive squareness!"

"And yet, as a Cornishman, he should be no Norseman."

"I beg your pardon! Like all noble races, the Cornish owe their nobleness to the impurity of their blood — to its perpetual loans from foreign veins.

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See how the serpentine curve of his nose, his long nostril, and protruding, sharp-cut lips, mark his share of Phœnician or Jewish blood! how Norse again, that dome-shaped forehead! how Celtic those dark curls, that restless grey eye, with its 'swinden blicken,' like Von Tronje Hagen's in the Nibelungen Lied!"

He turned: Honoria was devouring his words. He saw it, for he was in love, and young love makes man's senses as keen as woman's.

"Look! look at him now! said Claude, in a low voice. "How he sits, with his hands on his knees, the enormous size of his limbs quite concealed by the careless grace, with his Egyptian face, like some dumb granite Memnon!"

"Only waiting," said Lancelot, "for the day-star to arise on him and wake him into voice."

He looked at Honoria as he spoke. She blushed angrily; and yet a sort of sympathy arose from that moment between Lancelot and herself.

Our hero feared he had gone too far, and tried to turn the subject off.

The smooth mill-head was alive with rising trout.

"What a huge fish leapt there!" said Lancelot, carelessly; "and close to the bridge, too!"

Honoria looked round, and uttered a piercing scream.

"Oh, my dog! my dog! Mops is in the river! That horrid gazelle has butted him in, and he'll be drowned!"

Alas! it was too true. There, a yard above the one open hatchway, through which the whole force of the stream was rushing, was the unhappy Mops, *alias* 

#### NEW ACTORS,

Scratch, alias Dirty Dick, alias Jack Sheppard, paddling, and sneezing, and winking, his little bald muzzle turned piteously upward to the sky.

"He will be drowned!" quoth the colonel.

There was no doubt of it; and so Mops thought, as, shivering and whining, he plied every leg, while the glassy current dragged him back and back, and Honoria sobbed like a child.

The colonel lay down on the bridge, and caught at him: his arm was a foot too short. In a moment the huge form of Tregarva plunged solemnly into the water, with a splash like seven salmon, and Mops was jerked out over the colonel's head high and dry on to the bridge.

"You'll be drowned, at least!" shouted the colonel, with an oath of Uncle Toby's own.

Tregarva saw his danger, made one desperate bound upward, and missed the bridge. The colonel caught at him, tore off a piece of his collar — the calm, solemn face of the keeper flashed past beneath him, and disappeared through the roaring gate.

They rushed to the other side of the bridge caught one glimpse of a dark body fleeting and rolling down the foam-way. — The colonel leapt the bridgerail like a deer, rushed out along the buck-stage, tore off his coat, and sprung headlong into the boiling pool, "rejoicing in his might," as old Homer would say.

Lancelot, forgetting his crutches, was dashing after him, when he felt a soft hand clutching at his arm.

"Lancelot! Mr. Smith!" cried Argemone. "You shall not go! You are too ill — weak —"

"A fellow-creature's life!"

"What is his life to yours?" she cried, in a tone

# AND A NEW STAGE.

of deep passion. And then, imperiously, "Stay here, I command you!"

The magnetic touch of her hand thrilled through his whole frame. She had called him Lancelot! He shrunk down, and stood spell-bound.

"Good heavens!" she cried; "look at my sister!"

Out on the extremity of the buck-stage (how she got there neither they nor she ever knew) crouched Honoria, her face idiotic with terror, while she stared with bursting eyes into the foam. A shriek of disappointment rose from her lips, as in a moment the colonel's weather-worn head reappeared above, looking for all the world like an old grey shiny-painted seal.

"Poof! tally-ho! Poof! poof! Heave me a piece of wood, Lancelot, my boy!" And he disappeared again.

They looked round, there was not a loose bit near. Claude ran off towards the house. Lancelot, desperate, seized the bridge-rail, tore it off by sheer strength, and hurled it far into the pool. Argemone saw it, and remembered it, like a true woman. Ay, be as Manichæan-sentimental as you will, fair ladies, physical prowess, that Eden-right of manhood, is sure to tell upon your hearts!

Again the colonel's grizzled head reappeared, and, oh, joy! beneath it a draggled knot of black curls. In another instant he had hold of the rail, and, quietly floating down to the shallow, dragged the lifeless giant high and dry on a patch of gravel.

Honoria never spoke. She rose, walked quickly back along the beam, passed Argemone and Lancelot without seeing them, and firmly but hurriedly led the way round the pool-side.

Yeast.

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Before they arrived at the bank, the colonel had carried Tregarva to it. Lancelot and two or three workmen, whom his cries had attracted, lifted the body on to the meadow.

Honoria knelt quietly down on the grass, and watched, silent and motionless, the dead face with her wide awe-struck eyes.

"God bless her for a kind soul!" whispered the wan weather-beaten field-drudges, as they crowded over the body.

"Get out of the way, my men!" quoth the colonel. "Too many cooks spoil the broth." And he packed off one here and another there for necessaries, and commenced trying every restorative means with the ready coolness of a practised surgeon; while Lancelot, whom he ordered about like a baby, gulped down a great choking lump of envy, and then tasted the rich delight of forgetting himself in admiring obedience to a real superior.

But there Tregarva lay lifeless, with folded hands, and a quiet satisfied smile, while Honoria watched and watched with parted lips, unconscious of the presence of every one.

Five minutes! — ten!

"Carry him to the house," said the colonel, in a despairing tone, after another attempt.

"He moves!" "No!" "He does!" "He breathes!" "Look at his eyelids!"

Slowly his eyes opened.

"Where am I? All gone? Sweet dreams — blessed dreams!"

His eyes met Honoria's. One big deep sigh swelled to his lips and burst. She seemed to recollect herself, rose, passed her arm through Argemone's, and walked slowly away.

# CHAPTER IV.

## An "Inglorious Milton."

ARGEMONE, sweet prude, thought herself bound to read Honoria a lecture that night, on her reckless exhibition of feeling; but it profited little. The most consummate cunning could not have baffled Argemone's suspicions more completely than her sister's utter simplicity. She cried just as bitterly about Mops' danger as about the keeper's, and then laughed heartily at Argemone's solemnity; till at last, when pushed a little too hard, she broke out into something very like a passion, and told her sister, bitterly enough, that "she was not accustomed to see men drowned every day, and begged to hear no more about the subject." Whereat Argemone prudently held her tongue, knowing that under all Honoria's tenderness lay a volcano of passionate determination, which was generally kept down by her affections, but was just as likely to be maddened by them. And so this conversation only went to increase the unconscious estrangement between them, though they continued, as sisters will do, to lavish upon each other the most extravagant protestations of affection - vowing to live and die only for each other - and believing honestly, sweet souls, that they felt all they said; till real imperious Love came in, in one case of the two at least, shouldering all other affections right and left; and then the two beauties discovered, as others do, that it is not so possible or reasonable as they thought for a woman

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to sacrifice herself and her lover for the sake of her sister or her friend.

Next morning Lancelot and the colonel started out to Tregarva's cottage, on a mission of inquiry. They found the giant propped up in bed with pillows, his magnificent features looking in their paleness more than ever like a granite Memnon. Before him lay an open "Pilgrim's Progress," and a drawer filled with feathers and furs, which he was busily manufacturing into trout flies, reading as he worked. The room was filled with nets, guns, and keepers' tackle, while a well-filled shelf of books hung by the wall.

"Excuse my rising, gentlemen," he said, in his slow, staid voice, "but I am very weak, in spite of the Lord's goodness to me. You are very kind to think of coming to my poor cottage."

"Well, my man," said the colonel, "and how are you after your cold-bath? You are the heaviest fish I ever landed!"

"Pretty well, thank God, and you, Sir. I am in your debt, Sir, for the dear life. How shall I ever repay you?"

"Repay? my good fellow? You would have done as much for me."

"May be; but you did not think of that when you jumped in; and no more must I in thanking you. God knows how a poor miner's son will ever reward you; but the mouse repaid the lion, says the story, and, at all events, I can pray for you. By the bye, gentlemen, I hope you have brought up some trollingtackle?"

"We came up to see you, and not to fish," said Lancelot, charmed with the stately courtesy of the man. "Many thanks, gentlemen; but old Harry Verney was in here just now, and had seen a great jack strike, at the tail of the lower reeds. With this fresh wind he will run till noon; and you are sure of him with a dace. After that, he will not be up again on the shallows till sunset. He works the works of darkness, and comes not to the light, because his deeds are evil."

Lancelot laughed. "He does but follow his kind, poor fellow."

"No doubt, Sir, no doubt; all the Lord's works are good: but it is a wonder why He should have made wasps, now, and blights, and vermin, and jack, and such evil-featured things, that carry spite and cruelty in their very faces — a great wonder. Do you think, Sir, all those creatures were in the garden of Eden?"

"You are getting too deep for me," said Lancelot. "But why trouble your head about fishing?"

"I beg your pardon for preaching to you, Sir. I'm sure I forgot myself. If you will let me, I'll get up, and get you a couple of bait from the stew. You'll do us keepers a kindness, and prevent sin, Sir, if you'll catch him. The squire will swear sadly — the Lord forgive him — if he hears of a pike in the troutruns. I'll get up, if I may trouble you to go into the next room a minute."

"Lie still, for Heaven's sake. Why bother your head about pike now?"

"It is my business, Sir, and I am paid for it, and I must do it throughly; — and abide in the calling wherein I am called," he added, in a sadder tone.

"You seem to be fond enough of it, and to know

enough about it, at all events," said the colonel, "tying flies here on a sick-bed."

"As for being fond of it, Sir — those creatures of the water teach a man many lessons; and when I tie flies, I earn books."

"How then?"

"I send my flies all over the county, Sir, to Salisbury and Hungerford, and up to Winchester, even; and the money buys me many a wise book — all my delight is in reading; perhaps so much the worse for me."

"So much the better, say," answered Lancelot, warmly. "I'll give you an order for a couple of pounds' worth of flies at once."

"The Lord reward you, Sir," answered the giant.

"And you shall make me the same quantity," said the colonel. "You can make salmon-flies?"

"I made a lot by pattern for an Irish gent, Sir."

"Well, then, we'll send you some Norway patterns, and some golden pheasant and parrot feathers. We're going to Norway this summer you know, Lancelot —"

Tregarva looked up with a quaint, solemn hesitation.

"If you please, gentlemen, you'll forgive a man's conscience."

"Well?"

"But I'd not like to be a party to the making of Norway flies."

"Here's a Protectionist, with a vengeance!" laughed the colonel. "Do you want to keep all us fishermen in England? eh? to fee English keepers?"

""No, Sir. There's pretty fishing in Norway, I

hear, and poor folk that want money more than we keepers. God knows we get too much — we that hang about great houses and serve great folk's pleasure — you toss the money down our throats, without our deserving it; and we spend it as we get it a deal too fast — while hard-working labourers are starving."

"And yet you would keep us in England?"

"Would God I could!"

"Why then, my good fellow?" asked Lancelot, who was getting intensely interested with the calm selfpossessed earnestness of the man, and longed to draw him out.

The colonel yawned.

"Well, I'll go and get myself a couple of bait. Don't you stir, my good parson-keeper. Down charge, I say! Odd if I don't find a bait-net, and a rod for myself, under the verandah."

"You will, colonel. I remember, now, I set it there last morning; but the water washed many things out of my brains, and some things into them — and I forgot it, like a goose."

"Well, good-by, and lie still. I know what a drowning is, and more than one. A day and a night have I been in the deep, like the man in the good book; and bed is the best of medicine for a ducking;" and the colonel shook him kindly by the hand and disappeared.

Lancelot sat down by the keeper's bed.

"You'll get those fish-hooks into your trowsers, Sir; and this is a poor place to sit down in."

"I want you to say your say out, friend, fish-hooks or none." The keeper looked warily at the door, and when the colonel had passed the window, balancing the trolling-rod on his chin, and whistling merrily, he began, —

"A day and a night have I been in the deep!" and brought back no more from it! And yet the Psalms say how they that go down to the sea in ships see the works of the Lord! — If the Lord has opened their eyes to see them, that must mean."

Lancelot waited.

"What a gallant gentleman that is, and a valiant man of war, I'll warrant, — and to have seen all the wonders he has, and yet to be wasting his span of life like that!"

Lancelot's heart smote him.

"One would think, Sir — You'll pardon me for speaking out." And the noble face worked, as he murmured to himself, "When ye are brought before kings and princes for my name's sake. — I dare not hold my tongue, Sir. I am as one risen from the dead," — and his face flashed up into sudden enthusiasm — "and woe to me if I speak not. Oh, why, why are you gentlemen running off to Norway, and foreign parts, whither God has not called you? Are there no graves in Egypt, that you must go out to die in the wilderness?"

Lancelot, quite unaccustomed to the language of the Dissenting poor, felt keenly the bad taste of the allusion.

"What can you mean?" he asked.

"Pardon me, Sir, if I cannot speak plainly; but are there not temptations enough here in England that you must go to waste all your gifts, your scholarship, and your rank, far away there out of the sound of a church-going bell? I don't deny it's a great temptation. I have read of Norway wonders in a book of one Miss Martineau, with a strange name."

"Feats on the Fiord?"

"That's it, Sir. Her books are grand books to set one a-thinking; but she don't seem to see the Lord in all things, does she, Sir?"

Lancelot parried the question.

"You are wandering a little from the point."

"So I am, and thank you for the rebuke. There's where I find you scholars have the advantage of us poor fellows, who pick up knowledge as we can. Your book-learning makes you stick to the point so much better. You are taught how to think. After all — God forgive me if I'm wrong! — but I sometimes think there must be more good in that human wisdom, and philosophy falsely so called, than we Wesleyans hold. Oh, Sir, what a blessing is a good education! What you gentlemen might do with it, if you did but see your own power! Are there no fish in England, Sir, to be caught? precious fish, with immortal souls? And is there not One who has said, 'Come with me, and I will make you fishers of men?'"

"Would you have us all turn parsons?"

"Is no one to do God's work except the parson, Sir? Oh, the game that you rich folks have in your hands, if you would but play it! Such a man as Colonel Bracebridge, now, with the tongue of the serpent, who can charm any living soul he likes to his will, as a stoat charms a rabbit. Or you, Sir, with your tongue; — you have charmed one precious creature already. I can see it: though neither of you know it, yet I know it."

Lancelot started, and blushed crimson.

"Oh, that I had your tongue, Sir!" And the keeper blushed crimson too, and went on hastily, --

"But why could you not charm all alike? Do not the poor want you as well as the rich?"

"What can I do for the poor, my good fellow? And what do they want? Have they not houses, work, a church, and schools, — and poor-rates to fall back on?"

The keeper smiled sadly,

"To fall back on, indeed! and down on, too. At all events, you rich might help to make Christians of them, and men of them. For I'm beginning to fancy strangely, in spite of all the preachers say, that, before ever you can make them Christians, you must make them men and women."

"Are they not so already?"

"Oh, Sir, go and see! How can a man be a man in those crowded styes, sleeping packed together like Irish pigs in a steamer, never out of the fear of want, never knowing any higher amusement than the beershop? Those old Greeks and Romans, as I read, were more like men than half our English labourers. Go and see! Ask that sweet heavenly angel, Miss Honoria," — and the keeper again blushed, — "and she, too, will tell you. I think sometimes, if she had been born and bred like her father's tenants' daughters, to sleep where they sleep, and hear the talk they hear, and see the things they see, what would she have been now? We mustn't think of it." And the keeper turned his head away and fairly burst into tears.

Lancelot was moved.

"Are the poor very immoral, then?"

"You ask the rector, Sir, how many children hereabouts are born within six months of the wedding-day. None of them marry, Sir, till the devil forces them. There's no sadder sight than a labourer's wedding now-a-days. You never see the parents come with them. They just get another couple, that are keeping company, like themselves, and come sneaking into church, looking all over as if they were ashamed of it — and well they may be!"

"Is it possible?"

"I say, Sir, that God makes you gentlemen, gentlemen, that you may see into these things. You give away your charities kindly enough, but you don't know the folks you give to. If a few of you would but be like the blessed Lord, and stoop to go out of the road, just behind the hedge, for once, among the publicans and harlots! Were you ever at a country fair, Sir? Though I suppose I am rude for fancying that you could demean yourself to such company."

"I should not think it demeaning myself," said Lancelot, smiling; "but I never was at one, and I should like for once to see the real manners of the poor."

"I'm no haunter of such places myself, God knows; but — I see you're in earnest now — will you come with me, Sir, — for once? for God's sake, and the poor's sake?"

"I shall be delighted."

"Not after you've been there, I am afraid."

"Well, it's a bargain when you are recovered. And, in the meantime, the squire's orders are, that you lie by for a few days to rest; and Miss Honoria's too; and she has sent you down some wine."

"She thought of me, did she?" And the still sad face blazed out radiant with pleasure, and then collapsed as suddenly into deep melancholy.

Lancelot saw it, but said nothing; and shaking him heartily by the hand, had his shake returned by an iron grasp, and slipped silently out of the cottage.

The keeper lay still, gazing on vacancy. Once he murmured to himself, --

"Through strange ways — strange ways — and though he let them wander out of the road in the wilderness; — we know how that goes on —"

And then he fell into a fixed meditation — perhaps into a prayer.

## CHAPTER V.

# A Sham is worse than Nothing.

AT last, after Lancelot had waited long in vain, came his cousin's answer to the letter which I gave in my second chapter.

"You are not fair to me, good cousin ..... but I have given up expecting fairness from Protestants. I do not say that the front and the back of my head have different makers, any more than that doves and vipers have ..... and yet I kill the viper when I meet him ..... and so do you ..... And yet, are we not taught that our animal nature is throughout equally viperous? ..... The Catholic Church, at least, so teaches ..... She believes in the corruption of

#### ' A SHAM IS WORSE THAN NOTHING.

human nature. She believes in the literal meaning of Scripture. She has no wish to paraphrase away St. Paul's awful words, that 'in his flesh dwelleth no good thing,' by the unscientific euphemisms of 'fallen nature' or 'corrupt humanity.' The boasted discovery of phrenologists, that thought, feeling, and passion reside in this material brain and nerves of ours, has ages ago been anticipated by her simple faith in the letter of Scripture; a faith which puts to shame the irreverent vagueness and fantastic private interpretations of those who make an idol of that very letter which they dare not take literally, because it makes against their self-willed theories . . . .

"And so you call me douce and meek? . . . . You should remember what I once was, Lancelot . . . . I, at least, have not forgotten . . . I have not forgotten how that very animal nature, on the possession of which you seem to pride yourself, was in me only the parent of remorse . . . I know it too well not to hate and fear it. Why do you reproach me, if I try to abjure it, and cast away the burden which I am too weak to bear? I am weak - Would you have me say that I am strong? Would you have me try to be a Prometheus, while I am longing to be once more an infant on a mother's breast? Let me alone ..... I am a weary child, who knows nothing, can do nothing, except lose its way in arguings and reasonings, and 'find no end, in wandering mazes lost.' Will you reproach me, because when I see a soft cradle lying open for me . . . . with a Virgin Mother's face smiling down all woman's love above it . . . . I long to crawl into it, and sleep awhile? I want loving, indulgent sympathy . . . . I want detailed, explicit

guidance . . . . . Have you, then, found so much of them in our former creed, that you forbid me to go to seek them elsewhere, in the Church which not only professes them as an organized system, but practises them . . . . as you would find in your first half-hour's talk with one of Her priests . . . true priests . . . who know the heart of man, and pity, and console, and bear for their flock the burdens which they cannot bear themselves. You ask me who will teach a fast young man? . . . I answer, the Jesuit. Ay, start and sneer, at that delicate woman-like tenderness, that subtle instinctive sympathy, which you have never felt . . . . which is as new to me, alas, as it would be to you! For if there be none now-a-days to teach such as you, who is there who will teach such as me? Do not fancy that I have not craved and searched for teachers . . . . I went to one party long ago, and they commanded me, as the price of their sympathy, even of any thing, but their denunciations, to ignore, if not to abjure, all the very points on which I came for light - my love for the Beautiful and the Symbolic — my desire to consecrate and christianize it my longing for a human voice to tell me with authority that I was forgiven - my desire to find some practical and palpable communion between myself and the saints of old. They told me to cast away, as an accursed chaos, a thousand years of Christian history, and believe that the devil had been for ages . . . . just the ages I thought noblest, most faithful, most interpenetrated with the thought of God . . . . triumphant over that church with which He had promised to be till the end of the world. No . . . by-the-bye, they made two exceptions - of their own choosing. One

in favour of the Albigenses . . . . who seemed to me, from the original documents, to have been very profligate Infidels, of whom the world was well rid . . . and the Piedmontese . . . . poor, simple, ill-used folk enough, but who certainly cannot be said to have exercised much influence on the destinies of mankind .... and all the rest was chaos and the pit. There never had been, never would be, a kingdom of God on earth, but only a few scattered individuals, each selfishly intent on the salvation of his own soul --without organization, without unity, without common purpose, without even a masonic sign whereby to know one another when they chanced to meet . . . except Shibboleths which the hypocrite could ape, and virtues which the heathen have performed . . . Would you have had me accept such a 'Philosophy of History ?'

"And then I went to another school . . . . or rather wandered up and down between those whom I have just described, and those who boast on their side prescriptive right, and apostolic succession . . . . and I found that their ancient charter went back - just three hundred years . . . and there derived its transmitted virtue, it seemed to me, by something very like obtaining goods on false pretences, from the very church which it now anathematizes. Disheartened, but not hopeless, I asked how it was that the priesthood, whose hands bestowed the grace of ordination, could not withdraw it . . . . whether, at least, the schismatic did not forfeit it by the very act of schism . . . . and instead of any real answer to that fearful spiritual dilemma, they set me down to folios of Nag's head controversies . . . . and myths of an Independent British

Church, now represented, strangely enough, by those Saxons who, after its wicked refusal to communicate with them, exterminated it with fire and sword, and derived its own order from St. Gregory . . . and decisions of mythical old councils (held by bishops of a different faith and practice from their own), from which I was to pick the one point which made for them, and omit the nine which made against them, while I was to believe, by a stretch of imagination .... or common honesty .... which I leave you to conceive, that the Church of Syria in the fourth century was, in doctrine, practice, and constitution, like that of England in the nineteenth! . . . And what was I to gain by all this? .... For the sake of what was I to strain logic and conscience? To believe myself a member of the same body with all the Christian nations of the earth? - to be able to hail the Frenchman, the Italian, the Spaniard, as a brother — to have hopes even of the German and the Swede . . . . if not in this life, still in the life to come? No . . . . to be able still to sit apart from all Christendom in the exclusive pride of insular Pharisaism; to claim for the modern littleness of England the infallibility which I denied to the primæval mother of Christendom: not to enlarge my communion to the Catholic, but excommunicate, to all practical purposes, over and above the Catholics, all other Protestants except my own sect . . . or rather, in practice, except my own party in my own sect . . . . And this was believing in one Catholic and Apostolic church! . . . this was to be my share of the communion of saints! And these were the theories which were to satisfy a soul which longed for a kingdom of God on earth, which felt that unless the

highest of His promises are a mythic dream, there must be some system on the earth commissioned to fulfil those promises; some authority divinely appointed to regenerate, and rule, and guide the lives of men, and the destinies of nations; who must go mad, unless he finds that history is not a dreary aimless procession of lost spirits descending into the pit, or that the salvation of millions does not depend on an obscure and controverted hair's breadth of ecclesiastic law.

"I have tried them both, Lancelot, and found them wanting; and now but one road remains . . . . Home, to the fountain-head; to the mother of all the churches, whose fancied cruelty to her children can no more destroy her motherhood, than their confest rebellion can . . . Shall I not hear her voice, when she, and she alone, cries to me, 'I have authority and commission from the King of kings to regenerate the world. History is a chaos, only because mankind has been ever rebelling against me, its lawful ruler . . . and yet not a chaos . . . . for I still stand, and grow rooted on the rock of ages, and under my boughs are fowl of every wing. I alone have been and am consistent, progressive, expansive, welcoming every race, and intellect, and character into its proper place in my great organism . . . . meeting alike the wants of the king and the beggar, the artist and the devotee . . . . there is free room for all within my heaven-wide bosom. Infallibility is not the exclusive heritage of one proud and ignorant island, but of a . system which knows no distinction of language, race, or clime. The communion of saints is not a bygone tale, for my saints, redeemed from every age and every Yeast.

nation under heaven, still live, and love, and help, and intercede. The union of heaven and earth is not a barbaric myth; for I have still my miracles, my Host, my exorcism, my absolution. The present rule of God is still, as ever, a living reality; for I rule in His name, and fulfil all His will.'

"How can I turn away from such a voice? What if some of her doctrines may startle my untutored and ignorant understanding? ... If she is the appointed teacher, she will know best what truths to teach.... The disciple is not above his master .... or wise in requiring him to demonstrate the abstrusest problems .... spiritual problems, too .... before he allows his right to teach the elements. Humbly I must enter the temple porch; gradually and trustfully, proceed with my initiation.... When that is past, and not before .... shall I be a fit judge of the mysteries of the inner shrine.

"There .... I have written a long letter .... with my own heart's blood. . . Think over it well, before you despise it. . . And if you can refute it for me, and sweep the whole away like a wild dream when one awakes, none will be more thankful — paradoxical as it may seem — than your unhappy Cousin."

And Lancelot did consider that letter, and answered it as follows:

"It is a relief to me at least, dear Luke, that you are going to Rome in search of a great idea, and not merely from selfish superstitious terror (as I should call it) about the 'salvation of your soul.' And it is a new and very important thought to me, that Rome's scheme of this world, rather than of the next, forms her chief allurement. But as for that flesh and spirit

question, or the apostolic succession one either; all you seem to me, as a looker on, to have logically proved, is that Protestants, orthodox and unorthodox, must be a little more scientific and careful in their use of the terms. But as for adopting your use of them, and the consequences thereof - you must pardon me, and I suspect, them too. Not that. Anything but that. Whatever is right, that is wrong. Better to be inconsistent in truth, than consistent in a mistake. And your Romish idea of man is a mistake - utterly wrong and absurd — except in the one requirement of righteousness and godliness, which Protestants and heathen philosophers have required and do require just as much as you. My dear Luke, your ideal men and women won't do - for they are not men and women at all but what you call 'saints' . . . Your Calendar, your historic list of the Earth's worthies, won't do - not they, but others, are the people who have brought Humanity thus far. I don't deny that there are great souls among them; Beckets, and Hugh Grostêtes, and Elizabeths of Hungary. But you are the last people to praise them, for you don't understand them. Thierry honours Thomas à Becket more than all Canonizations and worshippers do, because he does see where the man's true greatness lay, and you don't. Why, you may hunt all Surius for such a biography of a mediæval worthy as Carlyle has given of your Abbot Samson. I have read, or tried to read, your Surius, and Alban Butler, and so forth — and they seemed to me bats and asses - One really pitied the poor saints and martyrs for having such blind biographers - such dunghill cocks, who overlooked the pearl of real human love and nobleness in them, in their greediness to snatch

up and parade the rotten chaff of superstition, and selftorture, and spiritual dyspepsia, which had overlaid it. My dear fellow, that Calendar ruins your cause -You are 'sacrés aristocrates' - kings and queens; bishops and virgins by the hundred at one end; a beggar or two at the other; and but one real human lay St. Homobonus to fill up the great gulf between - A pretty list to allure the English middle-classes, or the Lancashire working-men! - Almost as charmingly suited to England as the present free, industrious, enlightened, and moral state of that Eternal City, which has been blest with the visible presence and peculiar rule, temporal as well as spiritual, too, of your Dalai Lama. His pills do not seem to have had much practical effect there . . . . My good Luke, till he can show us a little better specimen of the kingdom of Heaven organized and realized on earth, in the country which does belong to him, soil and people, body and soul, we must decline his assistance in realizing that kingdom in countries which don't belong to him. If the state of Rome don't show his idea of man and society to be a rotten lie, what proof would you have? .... perhaps the charming results of a century of Jesuitocracy, as they were represented on the French stage in the year 1793? I can't answer his arguments, you see, or yours either; I am an Englishman, and not a controversialist. The only answer I give is John Bull's old dumb instructive 'Everlasting No!' which he will stand by, if need be, with sharp shot and cold steel --'Not that; anything but that. No kingdom of Heaven at all for us, if the kingdom of Heaven is like that. No heroes at all for us, if their heroism is to consist in their being not-men. Better no society at all, but

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only a competitive wild beasts'-den, than a sham society. Better no faith, no hope, no love, no God, than shams thereof.' I take my stand on fact and nature; you may call them idols and phantoms; I say they need be so no longer to any man, since Bacon has taught us to discover the Eternal Laws under the outward phenomena. Here on blank materialism will I stand, and testify against all Religions and Gods whatsoever, if they must needs be like that Roman religion, that Roman God. I don't believe they need - not I. But if they need, they must go. We cannot have a 'Deus quidam deceptor.' If there be a God, these trees and stones, these beasts and birds must be His will, whatever else is not. My body, and brain, and faculties, and appetites must be his will, whatever else is not. Whatsoever I can do with them in accordance with the constitution of them and nature, must be His will, whatever else is not. Those laws of nature must reveal them, and be revealed by Him, whatever else is not. Man's scientific conquest of nature must be one phase of His Kingdom on Earth, whatever else is not. I don't deny that there are spiritual laws which man is meant to obey - How can I, who feel in my own daily and inexplicable unhappiness the fruits of having broken them? - But I do say, that those spiritual laws must be in perfect harmony with every fresh physical law which we discover: that they cannot be intended to compete selfdestructively with each other; that the spiritual cannot be intended to be perfected by ignoring or crushing the physical, unless God is a deceiver, and his universe a self-contradiction. And by this test alone will I try all theories, and dogmas, and spiritualities whatsoever - Are they in accordance with the laws of nature?

And therefore when your party compare sneeringly Romish Sanctity, and English Civilization, I say, 'Take you the Sanctity, and give me the Civilization!' The one may be a dream, for it is unnatural; the other cannot be, for it is natural; and not an evil in it at which you sneer but is discovered, day by day, to be owing to some infringement of the laws of nature. When we 'draw bills on nature,' as Carlyle says, 'she honours them,' - our ships do sail; our mills do work; our doctors do cure; our soldiers do fight. And she does not honour yours; for your Jesuits have, by their own confession, to lie, to swindle, to get even man to accept theirs for them. So give me the political economist, the sanitary reformer, the engineer; and take you saints and virgins, relics and miracles. The spinning jenny and the railroad, Cunard's liners and the electric telegraph, are to me, if not to you, signs that we are, on some points at least, in harmony with the universe; that there is a mighty spirit working among us, who cannot be your anarchic and destroying Devil, and therefore may be the Ordering and Creating God."

Which of them do you think, reader, had most right on his side?

# CHAPTER VI.

#### Vogue la Galère.

LANCELOT was now so far improved in health as to return to his little cottage ornée. He gave himself up freely to his new passion. With his comfortable fortune and good connexions, the future seemed bright and possible enough as to circumstances. He knew that Argemone felt for him; how much, it seemed presumptuous even to speculate, and as yet no goldenvisaged meteor had arisen portentous in his amatory zodiac. No rich man had stepped in to snatch, in spite of all his own flocks and herds, at the poor man's one ewe-lamb, and set him barking at all the world, as many a poor lover has to do in defence of his morsel of enjoyment, now turned into a mere bone of contention and loadstone for all hungry kites and crows.

All that had to be done was to render himself worthy of her, and in doing so, to win her. And now he began to feel more painfully his ignorance of society, of practical life, and the outward present. He blamed himself angrily for having, as he now thought, wasted his time on ancient histories and foreign travels, while he neglected the living wonderful present, which weltered daily round him, every face embodying a living soul. For now he began to feel that those faces did hide living souls: formerly he had half believed - he had tried, but from laziness, to make himself wholly believe - that they were all empty masks, phantasies, without interest or significance for him. But, somehow, in the light of his new love for Argemone, the whole human race seemed glorified, brought nearer, endeared to him. So it must be. He had spoken of a law wider than he thought in his fancy, that the angels might learn love for all by love for an individual. Do we not all learn love so? Is it not the first touch of the mother's bosom which awakens in the infant's heart that spark of affection which is hereafter to spread itself out towards every human being, and to lose none of its devotion for its first object, as it expands itself

to innumerable new ones? Is it not by love, too, by looking into loving human eyes, by feeling the care of loving hands, - that the infant first learns that there exist other beings beside itself? - that every body which it sees expresses a heart and will like its own? Be sure of it: Be sure that to have found the key to one heart is to have found the key to all; that truly to love is truly to know; and truly to love one, is the first step towards truly loving all who bear the same flesh and blood with the beloved. Like children, we must dress up even our unseen future in stage properties borrowed from the tried and palpable present, ere we can look at it without horror. We fear and hate the utterly unknown, and it only. Even pain we hate only when we cannot know it; when we can only feel it, without explaining it, and making it harmonise with our notions of our own deserts and destiny. And as for human beings, there surely it stands true, wherever else it may not, that all knowledge is love, and all love knowledge; that even with the meanest, we cannot gain a glimpse into their inward trials and struggles, without an increase of sympathy and affection.

Whether he reasoned thus or not, Lancelot found that his new interest in the working-classes was strangely quickened by his passion. It seemed the shortest and clearest way toward a practical knowledge of the present. "Here," he said to himself, "in the investigation of existing relations between poor and rich, I shall gain more real acquaintance with English society, than by dawdling centuries in exclusive drawing-rooms."

The inquiry had not yet presented itself to him as

a duty; perhaps so much the better, that it might be the more thoroughly a free-will offering of love. At least, it opened a new field of amusement and knowledge; it promised him new studies of human life; and as he lay on his sofa and let his thoughts flow, Tregarva's dark revelations began to mix themselves with dreams about the regeneration of the Whitford poor, and those again with dreams about the heiress of Whitford; and many a luscious scene and noble plan rose brightly detailed in his exuberant imagination. For Lancelot, like all born artists, could only think in a concrete form. He never worked out a subject without embodying it in some set oration, dialogue, or dramatic castle in the air.

But the more he dreamt, the more he felt that a material beauty of flesh and blood required a material house, baths and boudoirs, conservatories and carriages; a safe material purse, and fixed material society; law, and order, and the established framework of society, gained an importance in his eyes which they had never had before.

"Well," he said to himself, "I am turning quite practical and auld-warld. Those old Greeks were not so far wrong when they said that what made men citizens, patriots, heroes, was the love of wedded wife and child."

"Wedded wife and child!" — He shrank in from the daring of the delicious thought, as if he had intruded without invitation into a hidden sanctuary, and looked round for a book to drive away the dazzling picture. But even there his thoughts were haunted by Argemone's face, and When his regard Was raised by intense peusiveness, two eyes, Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought, And seemed, with their serene and azure smiles, To beckon him.

He took up, with a new interest, "Chartism," which alone of all Mr. Carlyle's works he had hitherto disliked, because his own luxurious day-dreams had always flowed in such sad discord with the terrible warnings of the modern seer, and his dark vistas of starvation, crime, neglect, and discontent.

"Well," he said to himself, as he closed the book, "I suppose it is good for us easy-going ones now and then to face the possibility of a change. Gold has grown on my back as feathers do on geese, without my own will or deed; but considering that gold, like feathers, is equally useful to those who have and those who have not, why, it is worth while for the goose to remember that he may possibly one day be plucked. And what remains? 'Io,' as Medea says. . . . But Argemone?".... And Lancelot felt, for the moment, as conservative as the tutelary genius of all special constables.

As the last thought passed through his brain, Bracebridge's little mustang slouched past the window, ridden (without a saddle) by a horseman whom there was no mistaking, for no one but the immaculate colonel, the *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche* dared to go about the country "such a figure." A minute afterwards he walked in, in a felt student's hat, a ragged heather-coloured coatee, and old white "regulation drills," shrunk half way up his legs, a pair of embroidered Indian mocassins, and an enormous meerschaum at his button-hole. "Where have you been this last week?"

"Over head and ears in Young England, till I fled to you for a week's common-sense. A glass of cider, for mercy's sake, 'to take the taste of it out of my mouth,' as Bill Sykes has it."

"Where have you been staying?"

"With young Lord Vieuxbois, among high art and painted glass, spade farms, and model smell-traps, rubricalities and sanitary reforms, and all other inventions, possible and impossible, for 'stretching the old formula to meet the new fact,' as your favourite prophet says."

"Till the old formula cracks under the tension."

"And cracks its devotees, too, I think. Here comes the cider!"

"But my dear fellow, you must not laugh at all this. Young England or Peelite, this is all right and noble. What a yet unspoken poetry there is in that very sanitary reform! It is the great fact of the age. We shall have men arise and write epics on it, when they have learnt that 'to the pure all things are pure,' and that science and usefulness contain a divine element, even in their lowest appliances."

"Write one yourself, and call it the Chadwickiad." "Why not?

Smells and the Man I sing.

"There's a beginning at once. Why don't you rather, with your practical power, turn sanitary reformer the only true soldier — and conquer those real devils and 'natural enemies' of Englishmen, carbonic acid and sulphuretted hydrogen?" "Ce n'est pas mon métier, my dear fellow. I am miserably behind the age. People are getting so cursedly in earnest now-a-days, that I shall have to bolt to the backwoods to amuse myself in peace; or else sham dumb as the monkeys do, lest folks should find out that I'm rational, and set me to work."

Lancelot laughed and sighed.

"But how on earth do you contrive to get on so well with men with whom you have not an idea in common?"

"Savoir faire, oh infant Hercules! own daddy to savoir vivre. I am a good listener; and, therefore, the most perfect, because the most silent, of flatterers. When they talk Puginesquery, I stick my head on one side attentively, and 'think the more,' like the lady's parrot. I have been all the morning looking over a set of drawings for my lord's new chapel; and every soul in the party fancies me a great antiquary, just because I have been retailing to B as my own every thing that A told me the moment before."

"I envy you your tact, at all events."

"Why the deuce should you? You may rise in time to something better than tact; to what the good book, I suppose, means by 'wisdom.' Young geniuses like you, who have been green enough to sell your souls to 'truth,' must not meddle with tact, unless you wish to fare as the donkey did when he tried to play lap-dog."

"At all events I would sooner remain cub till they run me down and eat me, than give up speaking my mind," said Lancelot. "Fool I may be, but the devil himself shan't make me knave."

"Quite proper. On two thousand a-year a man

can afford to be honest. Kick out lustily right and left! — After all, the world is like a spaniel; the more you beat it, the better it likes you — if you have money. Only don't kick too hard; for, after all, it has a hundred million pair of shins to your one."

"Don't fear that I shall run a-muck against society just now. I am too throughly out of my own good books. I have been for years laughing at Young England, and yet its little finger is thicker than my whole body, for it is trying to do something; and I, alas, am doing utterly nothing. I should be really glad to take a lesson of these men and their plans for social improvement."

"You will have a fine opportunity this evening. Don't you dine at Minchampstead?"

"Yes. Do you?"

"Mr. Jingle dines everywhere, except at home. Will you take me over in your trap?"

"Done. But whom shall we meet there?"

"The Lavingtons, and Vieuxbois, and Vaurien, and a parson or two, I suppose. But between Saint Venus and Vieuxbois you may soon learn enough to make you a sadder man, if not a wiser one."

"Why not a wiser one? Sadder than now I cannot be; or less wise, God knows."

The colonel looked at Lancelot with one of those kindly, thoughtful smiles, which came over him whenever his better child's heart could bubble up through the thick crust of worldliness.

"My young friend, you have been a little too much on the stilts heretofore. Take care that, now you are off them, you don't lie down and sleep, instead of walking honestly on your legs. Have faith in yourself; pick these men's brains, and all men's. You can do it. Say to yourself boldly, as the false prophet in India said to the missionary, 'I have fire enough in my stomach to burn up' a dozen stucco and filagree reformers and 'assimilate their ashes' into the bargain, like one of Liebig's cabbages."

"How can I have faith in myself; when I am playing traitor to myself every hour in the day? And yet faith in something I must have: in woman, perhaps."

"Never!" said the colonel, energetically. "In anything but woman! She must be led, not leader. If you love a woman, make her have faith in you. If you lean on her, you will ruin yourself, and her as well."

Lancelot shook his head. There was a pause.

"After all, colonel, I think there must be a meaning in those old words our mothers used to teach us, about 'having faith in God.""

The colonel shrugged his shoulders.

"Quien sabe? said the Spanish girl, when they asked her who was her child's father. But here comes my kit on a clod's back, and it is time to dress for dinner."

So to the dinner-party they went.

Lord Minchampstead was one of the few noblemen Lancelot had ever met who had aroused in him a thorough feeling of respect. He was always and in all things a strong man. Naturally keen, ready, business-like, daring, he had carved out his own way through life, and opened his oyster — the world, neither with sword nor pen, but with steam and cotton. His father was Mr. Obadiah Newbroom, of the

well-known manufacturing firm of Newbroom, Stag, and Payforall. A stanch Dissenter himself, he saw with a slight pang his son Thomas turn Churchman, as soon as the young man had worked his way up to be the real head of the firm. But this was the only sorrow which Thomas Newbroom, now Lord Minchampstead, had ever given his father. "I stood behind a loom myself, my boy, when I began life; and you must do with great means what I did with little ones. I have made a gentleman of you, you must make a nobleman of yourself." Those were almost the last words of the stern, thrifty, old Puritan craftsman, and his son never forgot them. From a mill-owner he grew to coal-owner, ship-owner, banker, railway director, money-lender to kings and princes; and last of all, as the summit of his own and his compeer's ambition, to land-owner. He had halfa-dozen estates in as many different counties. He had added house to house, and field to field; and at last bought Minchampstead Park and ten Thousand acres, for two-thirds its real value, from that enthusiastic sportsman Lord Peu de Cervelle, whose family had come in with the Conqueror and gone out with George IV. So, at least, they always said; but it was remarkable that their name could never be traced further back than the dissolution of the monasteries; and calumnious Dryasdusts would sometimes insolently father their title on James I. and one of his batches of bought peerages. But let the dead bury their dead. There was now a new lord in Minchampstead; and every country Caliban was finding, to his disgust, that he had "got a new master," and must, perforce, "be a

new man." Oh! how the squires swore and the farmers chuckled, when the "Parvenu" sold the Minchampstead hounds, and celebrated his 1st of September by exterminating every hare and pheasant on the estate! How the farmers swore and the labourers chuckled, when he took all the cottages into his own hands and rebuilt them, set up a first-rate industrial school, gave every man a pig and a garden, and broke up all the commons "to thin the labour market." Oh, how the labourers swore and the farmers chuckled, when he put up steam-engines on all his farms, refused to give away a farthing in alms, and enforced the new Poorlaw to the very letter. How the country tradesmen swore, when he called them, "a pack of dilatory jobbers," and announced his intention of employing only London workmen for his improvements. Oh! how they all swore together (behind his back, of course, for his dinners were worth eating), and the very ladies said naughty words, when the stern political economist proclaimed at his own table that "he had bought Minchampstead for merely commercial purposes, as a profitable investment of capital, and he would see that, whatever else it did, it should pay."

But the new lord heard of all the hard words with a quiet self-possessed smile. He had formed his narrow theory of the universe, and he was methodically and conscientiously carrying it out. True, too often, like poor Keats' merchant brothers, —

Half-ignorant, he turned an easy wheel, Which set sharp racks at work to pinch and peel.

But of the harm which he did he was unconscious; in the good which he did he was consistent and indefatigable; infinitely superior, with all his defects, to the ignorant, extravagant, do-nothing Squire Lavingtons around him. At heart, however Mammon-blinded, he was kindly and upright. A man of a stately presence; a broad honest north-country face; a high square forehead, bland and unwrinkled. I sketch him here once for all, because I have no part for him after this scene in my corps de ballet.

Lord Minchampstead had many reasons for patronising Lancelot. In the first place, he had a true eye for a strong man wherever he met him; in the next place, Lancelot's uncle, the banker, was a stanch Whig ally of his in the House. "In the rottenborough times, Mr. Smith," he once said to Lancelot, "we could have made a senator of you at once; but, for the sake of finality, we were forced to relinquish that organ of influence. The Tories had abused it, really, a little too far; and now we can only make a commissioner of you, — which, after all, is a more useful post, and a more lucrative one." But Lancelot had not as yet "Galliolised," as the Irish schoolmaster used to call it, and cared very little to play a political ninth fiddle.

The first thing which caught his eyes as he entered the drawing-room before dinner was Argemone listening in absorbed reverence to her favourite vicar, — a stern, prim, close-shaven, dyspeptic man, with a meek, cold smile, which might have become a cruel one. He watched and watched in vain, hoping to catch her eye; but no, — there she stood, and talked, and listened —

"Ah," said Bracebridge, smiling, "it is in vain, Smith! When did you know a woman leave the Church for one of us poor laymen?"

Yeast.

"Good heavens!" said Lancelot, impatiently, "why will they make such fools of themselves with clergymen?"

"They are quite right. They always like the strong men — the fighters and the workers. In Voltaire's time they all ran after the philosophers. In the middle ages, books tell us, they worshipped the knights errant. They are always on the winning side, the cunning little beauties. In the war-time, when the soldiers had to play the world's game, the ladies all caught the red-coat fever; now, in these talking and thinking days (and be hanged to them for bores), they have the black-coat fever for the same reason. The parsons are the workers nowadays, — or, rather, all the world expects them to be so. They have the game in their own hands, if they did but know how to play it."

Lancelot stood still, sulking over many thoughts. The colonel lounged across the room towards Lord Vieuxbois, a quiet, truly high-bred young man, with a sweet open countenance, and an ample forehead, whose size would have vouched for great talents, had not the promise been contradicted by the weakness of the over-delicate mouth and chin.

"Who is that with whom you came into the room, Bracebridge?" asked Lord Vieuxbois. "I am sure I know his face."

"Lancelot Smith, the man who has taken the shooting-box at Lower Whitford."

"Oh, I remember him well enough at Cambridge! He was one of a set who tried to look like blackguards, and really succeeded tolerably. They used to eschew gloves, and drink nothing but beer, and smoke disgusting short pipes; and when we established the Coverley Club in Trinity they set up an opposition, and called themselves the Navvies. And they used to make piratical expeditions down to Lynn in eight-oars, to attack bargemen and fen girls, and shoot ducks, and sleep under turf-stacks, and come home when they had drank all the public-house taps dry. I remember the man perfectly."

"Navvy or none," said the colonel, "he has just the longest head and the noblest heart of any man I ever met. If he does not distinguish himself before he dies, I know nothing of human nature."

"Ah, yes, I believe he is clever enough! — took a good degree, a better one than I did — but horribly eclectic; full of mesmerism, and German metaphysics, and all that sort of thing. I heard him one night last spring, on which he had been seen, if you will believe it, going successively into a Swedenborgian chapel, the Garrick's Head, and one of Elliotson's magnetic soirées. What can you expect after that?"

"A great deal," said Bracebridge, drily. "With such a head as he carries on his shoulders the man might be another Mirabeau, if he held the right cards in the right rubber. And he really ought to suit you, for he raves about the middle ages, and chivalry, and has edited a book full of old ballads."

"Oh, all the eclectics do that sort of thing, and small thanks to them. However, I will speak to him after dinner, and see what there is in him."

And Lord Vieuxbois turned away, and, alas for Lancelot! sat next to Argemone at dinner. Lancelot, who was cross with everybody for what was nobody's fault, revenged himself all dinner-time by never speaking a word to his next neighbour, Miss Newbroom,

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who was longing with all her heart to talk sentiment to him about the Exhibition; and when Argemone, in the midst of a brilliant word-skirmish with Lord Vieuxbois, stole a glance at him, he chose to fancy that they were both talking of him, and looked more cross than ever.

After the ladies retired, Lancelot, in his sulky way, made up his mind that the conversation was going to be ineffably stupid; and set to to dream, sip claret, and count the minutes till he found himself in the drawingroom with Argemone. But he soon discovered, as I suppose we all have, that "it never rains but it pours," and that one cannot fall in with a new fact or a new acquaintance but next day twenty fresh things shall spring up as if by magic, throwing unexpected light on one's new phenomenon. Lancelot's head was full of the condition-of-the-poor question, and lo! every body seemed destined to talk about it.

"Well, Lord Vieuxbois," said the host, casually, "My girls are raving about your new school. They say it is a perfect antiquarian gem."

"Yes, tolerable, I believe. But Wales has disappointed me a little. That vile modernist naturalism is creeping back even into our painted glass. I could have wished that the artist's designs for the windows had been a little more Catholic."

"How then?" asked the host, with a puzzled face.

"Oh, he means," said Bracebridge, "that the figures' wrists and ankles were not sufficiently dislocated, and the patron saint did not look quite like a starved rabbit with its neck wrung. Some of the faces, I am sorry to say, were positively like good-looking men and women." "Oh, I understand," said Lord Minchampstead; "Bracebridge's tongue is privileged, you know, Lord Vieuxbois, so you must not be angry."

"I don't see my way into all this," said Squire Lavington (which was very likely to be true, considering that he never looked for his way). "I don't see how all these painted windows, and crosses, and chanting, and the deuce and the Pope only know what else, are to make boys any better."

"We have it on the highest authority," said Vieuxbois, "that pictures and music are the books of the unlearned. I do not think that we have any right in the nineteenth century to contest an opinion which the fathers of the Church gave in the fourth."

"At all events," said Lancelot, "it is by pictures and music, by art, and song, and symbolic representations, that all nations have been educated in their adolescence; and as the youth of the individual is exactly analogous to the youth of the collective race, we should employ the same means of instruction with our children which succeeded in the early ages with the whole world."

Lancelot might as well have held his tongue nobody understood him but Vieuxbois, and he had been taught to scent German neology in everything, as some folks are taught to scent Jesuitry, especially when it involved an inductive law, and not a mere red-tape precedent, and, therefore, could not see that Lancelot was arguing for him.

"All very fine, Smith," said the squire; "it's a pity you won't leave off puzzling your head with books and stick to fox-hunting. All you young gentlemen will do is to turn the heads of the poor with your cursed education." The national oath followed, of course. "Pictures and chanting! Why, when I was a boy, a good honest labouring man wanted to see nothing better than a halfpenny ballad, with a wood-cut at the top, and they worked very well then and wanted for nothing."

"Oh, we shall give them the halfpenny ballads in time!" said Vieuxbois, smiling.

"You will do a very good deed, then," said mine host. "But I am sorry to say that, as far as I can find from my agents, when the upper classes write cheap publications the lower classes will not read them."

"Too true," said Vieuxbois.

"Is not the cause," asked Lancelot, "just that the upper classes do write them?"

"The writings of working men certainly," said Lord Minchampstead, "have an enormous sale among their own class."

"Just because they express the feelings of that class, of which I am beginning to fear that we know very little. Look, again, what a noble literature of people's songs and hymns Germany has. Some of Lord Vieuxbois' friends, I know, are busy translating many of them."

"As many of them, that is to say," said Vieuxbois, "as are compatible with a real Church spirit."

"Be it so; but who wrote them? Not the German aristocracy for the people, but the German people for themselves. There is the secret of their power. Why not educate the people up to such a standard that they should be able to write their own literature?"

"What," said Mr. Chalklands, of Chalklands, who

sat opposite, "would you have working-men turn ballad writers? There would be an end of work then, I think."

"I have not heard," said Lancelot, "that the young women — *ladies*, I ought to say, if the word mean anything — who wrote the Lowell offering, spun less or worse cotton than their neighbours."

"On the contrary," said Lord Minchampstead, "we have the most noble accounts of heroic industry and self-sacrifice in girls whose education, to judge by its fruits, might shame that of most English young ladies."

Mr. Chalklands expressed certain confused notions that, in America, factory-girls carried green silk parasols, put the legs of pianos in trowsers, and were too prudish to make a shirt, or call it a shirt after it was made, he did not quite remember which.

"It is a great pity," said Lord Minchampstead, "that our factory-girls are not in the same state of civilization. But it is socially impossible. America is in an abnormal state. In a young country the laws of political economy do not make themselves fully felt. Here, where we have no uncleared world to drain the labour-market, we may pity and alleviate the condition of the working-classes, but we can do nothing more. All the modern schemes for the amelioration which ignore the laws of competition, must end either in pauperisation," — (with a glance at Lord Vieuxbois), — "or in the destruction of property."

Lancelot said nothing, but thought the more. It did strike him at the moment that the few might, possibly, be made for the many, and not the many for the few; and that property was made for man, not man for property. But he contented himself with asking, --

"You think, then, my lord, that, in the present state of society, no dead lift can be given to the condition — in plain English, the wages — of working men, without the destruction of property?"

Lord Minchampstead smiled, and parried the question.

"There may be other dead-lift ameliorations, my young friend, besides a dead lift of wages."

So Lancelot thought, also; but Lord Minchampstead would have been a little startled could he have seen Lancelot's notion of a dead lift. Lord Minchampstead was thinking of cheap bread and sugar. Do you think that I will tell you of what Lancelot was thinking?

But here Vieuxbois spurred in to break a last lance. He had been very much disgusted with the turn the conversation was taking, for he considered nothing more heterodox than the notion that the poor were to educate themselves. In his scheme, of course, the clergy and the gentry were to educate the poor, who were to take down thankfully as much as it was thought proper to give them; and all beyond was "selfwill" and "private judgment," the fathers of Dissent and Chartism, Trades'-union strikes and French Revolutions, *et si qua alia*.

"And pray, Mr. Smith, may I ask what limit you would put to education?"

"The capacities of each man," said Lancelot. "If man living in civilised society has one right which he can demand it is this, that the State which exists by his labour, shall enable him to develope, or, at least not hinder his developing, his whole faculties to their very utmost, however lofty that may be. While a man who might be an author remains a spade-drudge, or a journeyman while he has capacities for a master; while any man able to rise in life remains by social circumstances lower than he is willing to place himself, that man has a right to complain of the State's injustice and neglect."

"Really, I do not see," said Vieuxbois, "why people should wish to rise in life. They had no such self-willed fancy in the good old times. The whole notion is a product of these modern days"—

He would have said more, but he luckily remembered at whose table he was sitting.

"I think, honestly," said Lancelot, whose blood was up, "that we gentlemen all run into the same fallacy. We fancy ourselves the fixed and necessary element in society, to which all others are to accommodate themselves. 'Given the rights of the few rich, to find the condition of the many poor.' It seems to me that other postulate is quite as fair: 'Given the rights of the many poor, to find the condition of the few rich.'"

Lord Minchampstead laughed.

"If you hit us so hard, Mr. Smith, I must really denounce you as a Communist. Lord Vieuxbois, shall we join the ladies?"

In the drawing-room, poor Lancelot, after rejecting overtures of fraternity from several young ladies, set himself steadily again against the wall to sulk and watch Argemone. But this time she spied in a few minutes his melancholy, moonstruck face, swam up to him, and said something kind and commonplace. She spoke in the simplicity of her heart, but he chose to think she was patronising him — she had not talked commonplaces to the vicar. He tried to say something smart and cutting, — stuttered, broke down, blushed, and shrunk back again to the wall, fancying that every eye in the room was on him; and for one moment a flash of sheer hatred to Argemone swept through him.

Was Argemone patronising him? Of course she was. True, she was but three-and-twenty, and he was of the same age; but, spiritually and socially, the girl develops ten years earlier than the boy. She was flattered and worshipped by grey-headed men, and in her simplicity she thought it a noble self-sacrifice to stoop to notice the poor awkward youth. And yet if he could have seen the pure moonlight of sisterly pity which filled all her heart as she retreated, with something of a blush and something of a sigh, and her heart fluttered and fell, would he have been content? Not he. It was her love he wanted, and not her pity; it was to conquer her, and possess her, and inform himself with her image and her with his own; though as yet he did not know it; though the moment that she turned away he cursed himself for selfish vanity, and moroseness, and conceit.

"Who am I to demand her all to myself? Her, the glorious, the saintly, the unfallen! Is not a look, a word, infinitely more than I deserve? And yet I pretend to admire tales of chivalry! Old knightly hearts would have fought and wandered for years to earn a tithe of the favours which have been bestowed on me unasked."

Peace! poor Lancelot! Thy egg is by no means

addle; but the chick is breaking the shell in somewhat a cross-grained fashion.

## CHAPTER VII.

### The Drive home, and what came of it.

Now it was not extraordinary that Squire Lavington had "assimilated" a couple of bottles of Carbonel's best port; for however abstemious the new lord himself might be, he felt for the habits, and for the vote of an old-fashioned Whig squire. Nor was it extraordinary that he fell fast asleep the moment he got into the carriage; nor, again, that his wife and daughters were not solicitous about waking him; nor, on the other hand, that the coachman and footman, who were like all the squire's servants, of the good old sort, honest, faithful, boozing, extravagant, happy go-lucky souls, who had "been about the place these forty years," were somewhat owlish and unsteady on 'the box. Nor was it extraordinary that there was a heavy storm of lightning, for that happened three times a-week in the chalk-hills the summer through; nor, again, that under these circumstances the horses, who were of the squire's own breeding, and never thoroughly broke (nothing was done thoroughly at Whitford) went rather wildly home, and that the carriage swung alarmingly down the steep hills, and the boughs brushed the windows rather too often. But it was extraordinary that Mrs. Lavington had cast off her usual primness, and seemed to-night, for the first time in her life, in an exuberant good humour, which she evinced by snubbing her usual favourite Honoria,

and lavishing caresses on Argemone, whose vagaries she usually regarded with a sort of puzzled terror, like a hen who has hatched a duckling.

"Honoria, take your feet off my dress. Argemone, my child, I hope you spent a pleasant evening?"

Argemone answered by some tossy commonplace.

A pause — and then Mrs. Lavington re-commenced, —

"How very pleasing that poor young Lord Vieuxbois is, after all!"

"I thought you disliked him so much."

"His opinions, my child; but we must hope for the best. He seems moral, and well inclined, and really desirous of doing good in his way; and so successful in the House, too, I hear."

"To me," said Argemone, "he seems to want life, originality, depth, everything that makes a great man. He knows nothing but what he has picked up readymade from books. After all, his opinions are the one redeeming point in him."

"Ah, my dear, when it pleases Heaven to open your eyes, you will see as I do!"

Poor Mrs. Lavington! Unconscious spokeswoman for the ninety-nine hundredths of the human race! What are we all doing from morning to night, but setting up our own fancies as the measure of all heaven and earth, and saying, each in his own dialect, Whig, Radical, or Tory, Papist or Protestant, "When it pleases Heaven to open your eyes, you will see as I do?"

"It is a great pity," went on Mrs. Lavington, meditatively, "to see a young man so benighted and thrown away. With his vast fortune, too, — such a means of good! Really we ought to have seen a little more of him. I think Mr. O'Blareaway's conversation might be a blessing to him. I think of asking him over to stay a week at Whitford, to meet that sainted young man."

Now Argemone did not think the Reverend Panurgus O'Blareaway, incumbent of Lower Whitford, at all a sainted young man, but on the contrary, a very vulgar, slippery Irishman; and she had, somehow, tired of her late favourite, Lord Vieuxbois; so she answered tossily enough, —

"Really, mamma, a week of Lord Vieuxbois will be too much. We shall be bored to death with the Cambridge Camden Society, and ballads for the people."

"I think my dear," said Mrs. Lavington (who had half-unconsciously to herself, more reasons than one for bringing the young lord to Whitford), "I think, my dear, that his conversation, with all its faults, will be a very improving change for your father. I hope he's asleep."

The squire's nose answered for itself.

"Really, what between Mr. Smith and Colonel Bracebridge, and their very ineligible friend, Mr. Mellot, whom I should never have allowed to enter my house if I had suspected his religious views, the place has become a hot bed of false doctrine and heresy. I have been quite frightened when I have heard their conversation at dinner, lest the footmen should turn infidels!"

"Perhaps, mamma," said Honoria, slily, "Lord Vieuxbois might convert them to something quite as bad. How shocking if old Giles, the butler, should turn Papist!" "Honoria, you are very silly. Lord Vieuxbois at least can be trusted. He has no liking for low companions. He is above joking with grooms, and taking country walks with gamekeepers."

It was lucky that it was dark, for Honoria and Argemone both blushed crimson.

"Your poor father's mind has been quite unsettled by all their ribaldry. They have kept him so continually amused, that all my efforts to bring him to a sense of his awful state have been more unavailing than ever."

Poor Mrs. Lavington! She had married, at eighteen, a man far her inferior in intellect; and had become -as often happens in such cases — a prude and a devotee. The squire, who really admired and respected her, confined his disgust to sly curses at the Methodists (under which name he used to include every species of religious earnestness, from Quakerism to that of Mr. Newman). Mrs. Lavington used at first to dignify these disagreeables by the name of persecution, and now she was trying to convert the old man by coldness, severity, and long curtain-lectures, utterly unintelligible to their victim, because couched in the peculiar conventional phraseology of a certain school. She forgot, poor earnest soul, that the same form of religion which had captivated a disappointed girl of twenty, might not be the most attractive one for a jovial old man of sixty.

Argemone, who, a fortnight before, would have chimed in with all her mother's lamentations, now felt a little nettled and jealous. She could not bear to hear Lancelot classed with the colonel.

"Indeed," she said, "if amusement is bad for my

father, he is not likely to get much of it during Lord Vieuxbois' stay. But, of course, mamma, you will do as you please."

"Of course I shall, my dear," answered the good lady, in a tragedy-queen tone. "I shall only take the liberty of adding, that it is very painful to me to find you adding to the anxiety which your unfortunate opinions give me, by throwing every possible obstacle in the way of my plans for your good."

Argemone burst into proud tears (she often did so after a conversation with her mother). "Plans for my good!" — And an unworthy suspicion about her mother crossed her mind, and was peremptorily expelled again. What turn the conversation would have taken next, I know not, but at that moment Honoria and her mother uttered a fearful shriek, as their side of the carriage jolted half-way up the bank, and stuck still in that pleasant position.

The squire awoke, and the ladies simultaneously clapped their hands to their ears, knowing what was coming. He thrust his head out of the window, and discharged a broadside of at least ten pounds' worth of oaths (Bow Street valuation) at the servants, who were examining the broken wheel, with a side-volley or two at Mrs. Lavington for being frightened. He often treated her and Honoria to that style of oratory. At Argemone he had never sworn but once since she left the nursery, and was so frightened at the consequences, that he took care never to do it again.

But there they were fast, with a broken wheel, plunging horses, and a drunken coachman. Luckily for them, the colonel and Lancelot were following close behind, and came to their assistance. The colonel, as usual, solved the problem.

"Your dog-cart will carry four, Smith?"

"It will."

"Then let the ladies get in, and Mr. Lavington drive them home."

"What?" said the squire, "with both my hands red-hot with the gout? You must drive three of us, colonel, and one of us must walk."

"I will walk," said Argemone, in her determined way.

Mrs. Lavington began something about propriety, but was stopped with another pound's worth of oaths by the squire, who, however, had tolerably recovered his good humour, and hurried Mrs. Lavington and Honoria, laughingly, into the dog-cart, saying —

"Argemone's safe enough with Smith; the servants will lead the horses behind them. It's only three miles home, and I should like to see any one speak to her twice while Smith's fists are in the way."

Lancelot thought so, too.

"You can trust yourself to me, Miss Lavington?"

"By all means. I shall enjoy the walk, after —:" and she stopped. In a moment the dog-cart had rattled off, with a parting curse from the squire to the servants, who were unharnessing the horses.

Argemone took Lancelot's arm. The soft touch thrilled through and through him; and Argemone felt, she knew not why, a new sensation run through her frame. She shuddered — not with pain.

"You are cold, Miss Lavington?"

"Oh, not in the least." Cold! when every vein was boiling so strangely! A soft luscious melancholy crept over her. She had always had a terror of darkness; but now she felt quite safe in his strength. The thought of her own unprotected girlhood drew her heart closer to him. She remembered with pleasure the stories of his personal prowess, which had once made her think him coarse and brutal. For the first time in her life she knew the delight of dependence — the holy charm of weakness. And as they paced on silently together, through the black awful night, while the servants lingered, far out of sight, about the horses, she found out how utterly she trusted to him.

"Listen!" she said. A nightingale was close to them, pouring out his whole soul in song.

"Is it not very late in the year for a nightingale?"

"He is waiting for his mate. She is rearing a late brood, I suppose."

"What do you think it is which can stir him up to such an ecstasy of joy, and transfigure his whole heart into melody?"

"What but love, the fulness of all joy, the evoker of all song?"

"All song? — The angels sing in heaven."

"So they say: but the angels must love if they sing."

"They love God!"

"And no one else?"

"Oh, yes! but that is universal, spiritual love; not earthly love — a narrow passion for an individual."

"How do we know that they do not learn to love all, by first loving one?"

"Oh, the angelic life is single."

"Who told you so, Miss Lavington?"

She quoted the stock text, of course: — "'In heaven Yeast. 8 they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels.""

"As the tree falls, so it lies.' And God forbid that those who have been true lovers on earth should contract new marriages in the next world. Love is eternal. Death may part lovers, but not love. And how do we know that these angels, as they call them, if they be really persons, may not be united in pairs by some marriage bond, infinitely more perfect than any we can dream of on earth?"

"That is a very wild view, Mr. Smith, and not sanctioned by the Church," said Argemone, severely, (Curious and significant it is, how severe ladies are apt to be whenever they talk of the Church).

"In plain historic fact, the early fathers and the middle-age monks did not sanction it: and are not they the very last persons to whom one would go to be taught about marriage? Strange, that people should take their notions of love from the very men who prided themselves on being bound, by their own vows, to know nothing about it!"

"They were very holy men!"

"But still men, as I take it. And do you not see that Love is, like all spiritual things, only to be understood by experience — by loving?"

"But is love spiritual?"

"Pardon me, but what a question for one who believes that 'God is love!'"

"But the divines tell us that the love of human beings is earthly."

"How did they know? They had never tried. Oh, Miss Lavington! cannot you see that in those barbarous and profligate ages of the later empire, it was impossible

for men to discern the spiritual beauty of marriage, degraded as it had been by heathen brutality? Do you not see that there must have been a continual tendency in the minds of a celibate clergy to look with contempt, almost with spite, on pleasures which were forbidden to them?"

Another pause.

"It must be very delicious," said Argemone, thoughtfully, "for any one who believes it, to think that marriage can last through eternity. But then, whatbecomes of entire love to God? How can we part our hearts between him and his creatures?"

"It is a sin, then, to love your sister? or your friend? What a low, material view of love, to fancy that you can cut it up into so many pieces, like a cake, and give to one person one tit-bit, and another to another, as the Popish books would have you believe! Love is like flame - light as many fresh flames at it as you will, it grows, instead of diminishing, by the dispersion."

"It is a beautiful imagination."

"But, oh, how miserable and tantalizing a thought, Miss Lavington, to those who know that a priceless spirit is near them, which might be one with theirs through all eternity, like twin stars in one common atmosphere, for ever giving and receiving wisdom and might, beauty and bliss, and yet are barred from their bliss by some invisible adamantine wall, against which they must beat themselves to death, like butterflies against the window-pane, gazing, and longing, and unable to guess why they are forbidden to enjoy!"

Why did Argemone withdraw her arm from his?

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He knew, and he felt that she was entrusted to him. He turned away from the subject.

"I wonder whether they are safe home by this time?"

"I hope my father will not catch cold. How sad, Mr. Smith, that he will swear so. I do not like to say it; and yet you must have heard him too often yourself."

"It is hardly a sin with him now, I think. He has become so habituated to it, that he attaches no meaning or notion whatsoever to his own oaths. I have heard him do it with a smiling face to the very beggar to whom he was giving half-a-crown. We must not judge a man of his school by the standard of our own day."

"Let us hope so," said Argemone, sadly.

There was another pause. At a turn of the hillroad the black masses of beech-wood opened, and showed the priory lights twinkling right below. Strange, that Argemone felt sorry to find herself so near home.

"We shall go to town next week," said she; "and then — You are going to Norway this summer, are you not?"

"No. I have learnt that my duty lies nearer home?"

"What are you going to do?"

"I wish this summer, for the first time in my life, to try and do some good — to examine a little into the real condition of English working men."

"I am afraid, Mr. Smith, that I did not teach you that duty."

"Oh, you have taught me priceless things! You

have taught me beauty is the sacrament of heaven, and love its gate; that that which is the most luscious is also the most pure."

"But I never spoke a word to you on such subjects."

"There are those, Miss Lavington, to whom a human face can speak truths too deep for books."

Argemone was silent; but she understood him. Why did she not withdraw her arm a second time?

In a moment more the colonel hailed them from the dog-cart, and behind him came the britschka with a relay of servants.

They parted with a long, lingering pressure of the hand, which haunted her young palm all night in dreams. Argemone got into the carriage, Lancelot jumped into the dog-cart, took the reins, and relieved his heart by galloping Sandy up the hill, and frightening the returning coachman down one bank and his led horses up the other.

"Vogue la Galère, Lancelot! I hope you have made good use of your time?"

But Lancelot spoke no word all the way home, and wandered till dawn in the woods around his cottage kissing the hand which Argemone's palm had pressed.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## Whither?

Some three months slipped away — right dreary months for Lancelot, for the Lavingtons went to Baden-Baden for the summer. "The waters were necessary for their health." . . . How wonderful it is, by-the-

bye, that those German Brunnen are never necessary for poor people's health! . . . and they did not return till the end of August. So Lancelot buried himself up to the eyes in the Condition-of-the-Poor question that is, in blue books, red books, sanitary reports, mine reports, factory reports; and came to the conclusion, which is now pretty generally entertained, that something was the matter, - but what, no man knew, or, if they knew, thought proper to declare. Hopeless and bewildered, he left the books, and wandered day after day from farm to hamlet, and from field to tramper's tent, in hopes of finding out the secret for himself. What he saw, of course I must not say; for if I did the reviewers would declare, as usual, one and all, that I copied out of the Morning Chronicle; and the fact that these pages, ninety-nine hundredths of them at least, were written two years before the Morning Chronicle began its invaluable investigations, would be contemptuously put aside as at once impossible and arrogant. I shall therefore only say, that he saw what every one else has seen, at least heard of, and got tired of hearing - though, alas! they have not got tired of seeing it; and so proceed with my story, only mentioning therein certain particulars which folks seem, to me, somewhat strangely, to have generally overlooked.

But whatever Lancelot saw, or thought he saw, I cannot say that it brought him any nearer to a solution of the question; and he at last ended by a sulky acquiescence in Sam Weller's memorable dictum: "Who it is I can't say; but all I can say is, that somebody ought to be wopped for this!"

But one day, turning over, as hopelessly as he was

beginning to turn over everything else, a new work of Mr. Carlyle's, he fell on some such words as these: —

"The beginning and the end of what is the matter with us in these days is — that we have forgotten God.".

Forgotten God? That was at least a defect of which blue books had taken no note. And it was one which, on the whole — granting, for the sake of argument, any real, living, or practical existence to That Being, might be a radical one, — it brought him many hours of thought, that saying; and when they were over, he rose up and went to find — Tregarva.

"Yes, he is the man. He is the only man with whom I have ever met, of whom I could be sure, that independent of his own interest, without the allurements of respectability and decency, of habit and custom, he believes in God. And he, too, is a poor man; he has known the struggles, temptations, sorrows of the poor. I will go to him."

But as Lancelot rose to find him, there was put into his hand a letter, which kept him at home a while longer — none other, in fact, than the long-expected answer from Luke.

"Well, MY DEAR COUSIN, — You may possibly have some logical ground from which to deny Popery, if you deny all other religions with it; but how those who hold any received form of Christianity whatsoever can fairly side with you against Rome, I cannot see. I am sure I have been sent to Rome by them, not drawn thither by Jesuits. Not merely by their

defects and inconsistencies; not merely because they go on taunting us, and shrieking at us, with the cry that we ought to go to Rome, till we at last, wearied out, take them at their word, and do at their bidding the thing we used to shrink from with terror - not this merely but the very doctrines we hold in common with them, have sent me to Rome. For would these men have known of them, if Rome had not been? The Trinity — the Atonement — The Inspiration of Scripture. - A future state - that point on which the present generation, without a smattering of psychological science, without even the old belief in apparitions, dogmatizes so narrowly and arrogantly - what would they have known of them but for Rome? And she says there are three realms in the future state .... heaven, hell, and purgatory. . . What right have they to throw away the latter, and arbitrarily retain the two former? I am told that Scripture gives no warrant for a third state. She says that it does - that it teaches that implicitly, as it teaches other, the very highest doctrines; - some hold, the Trinity itself. . . . It may be proved from Scripture; for it may be proved from the love and justice of God, revealed in Scripture. The Protestants divide - in theory, that is - mankind into two classes, the righteous, who are destined to infinite bliss; the wicked, who are doomed to infinite torment; in which latter class, to make their arbitrary division exhaustive, they put of course nine hundred and ninety-nine out of the thousand, and doom to everlasting companionship with Borgias and Cagliostros, the gentle frivolous girl, or the peevish boy, who would have shrunk, in life, with horror from the contact. . . . Well, at least their hell is hellish enough

.... if it were but just. ... But I, Lancelot, I cannot believe it! I will not believe it! I had a brother once — affectionate, simple, generous, full of noble aspirations - but without, alas! a thought of God; yielding in a hundred little points, and some great ones too, to the infernal temptations of a public school. ... He died at seventeen. - Where is he now? Lancelot! where is he now? Never for a day has that thought left my mind for years. Not in heaven - for he has no right there; Protestants would say that as well as I. . . . Where then? - Lancelot! not in that other place. I cannot, I will not believe it. For the sake of God's honour, as well as of my own sanity, I will not believe it! There must be some third place -some intermediate chance, some door of hope - some purifying and redeeming process beyond the grave. . . . Why not a purifying fire? Ages of that are surely punishment enough — and if there be a fire of hell, why not a fire of purgatory? .... After all, the idea of purgatory as a fire is only an opinion, not a dogma of the church. . . . But if the gross flesh which has sinned is to be punished by the matter which it has abused, why may it not be purified by it?

"You may laugh, if you will, at both, and say again, as I have heard you say ere now, that the popular Christian paradise and hell are but a Pagan Olympus and Tartarus, as grossly material as Mahomet's, without the honest thorough-going sexuality, which you thought made his notion logical and consistent. ... Well, you may say that, but Protestants cannot; for their idea of heaven and ours is the same — with this exception, that theirs will contain but

a thin band of saved ones, while ours will fill and grow to all eternity. . . I tell you, Lancelot, it is just the very doctrines for which England most curses Rome, and this very purgatory at the head of them, which constitute her strength and her allurement; which appeal to the reason, the conscience, the heart of men like me, who have revolted from the novel superstition which looks pitilessly on at the fond memories of the brother, the prayers of the orphan, the doubled desolation of the widow, with its cold terrible assurance, 'There is no hope for thy loved and lost ones — no hope, but hell for evermore!'

"I do not expect to convert you. You have your metempsychosis, and your theories of progressive incarnation, and your monads, and your spirits of the stars and flowers. I have not forgotten a certain talk of ours over Falk von Müller's Recollections of Göthe, and how you materialists are often the most fantastic of theorists.... I do not expect, I say, to convert you. I only want to show you there is no use trying to show the self-satisfied Pharisees of the popular sect — why, in spite of all their curses, men still go back to Rome."

Lancelot read this, and re-read it; and smiled, but sadly — and the more he read, the stronger its arguments seemed to him, and he rejoiced thereat. For there is a bad pleasure — happy he who has not felt it — in a pitiless reductio ad absurdum, which asks tauntingly, "Why do you not follow out your own conclusions?" — instead of thanking God that people do not follow them out, and that their hearts are sounder than their heads. Was it with this feeling that the fancy took possession of him to show the

letter to Tregarva? I hope not - perhaps he did not altogether wish to lead him into temptation, any more than I wish to lead my readers, but only to make him, just as I wish to make them, face manfully a real awful question now racking the hearts of hundreds, and see how they will be able to answer the sophist fiend - for honestly, such he is - when their time comes, as come it will. At least he wanted to test at once Tregarva's knowledge and his logic. As for his "faith," alas! he had not so much reverence for it as to care what effect Luke's arguments might have there. "The whole man," quoth Lancelot to himself, "is a novel phenomenon; and all phenomena, however magnificent, are surely fair subjects for experiment. Majendie may have gone too far certainly, in dissecting a live dog - but what harm in my pulling the mane of a dead lion?"

So he showed the letter to Tregarva as they were fishing together one day — for Lancelot had been installed duly in the Whitford trout preserves — Tregarva read it slowly; asked, shrewdly enough, the meaning of a word or two as he went on; at last folded it up deliberately, and returned it to its owner with a deep sigh. Lancelot said nothing for a few minutes; but the giant seemed so little inclined to open the conversation, that he was forced at last to ask him what he thought of it.

"It isn't a matter for thinking, Sir, to my mind — There's a nice fish on the feed there, just overright that alder."

"Hang the fish! Why not a matter for thinking?" "To my mind, Sir, a man may think a deal too much about many matters that come in his way." "What should he do with them then?"

"Mind his own business."

"Pleasant for those whom they concern! - That's rather a cold-blooded speech for you, Tregarva."

The Cornishman looked up at him earnestly. His eyes were glittering - was it with tears?

"Don't fancy I don't feel for the poor young gentleman - God help him! - I've been through it all - or not through it, that's to say. I had a brother once, as fine a young fellow as ever handled pick, as kind-hearted as a woman, and as honest as the sun in heaven. - But he would drink, Sir; - that one temptation, he never could stand it. And one day at the shaft's mouth, reaching after the kibblechain — maybe he was in liquor, maybe not — the Lord knows; but --

"I didn't know him again, Sir, when we picked him up, any more than -" and the strong man shuddered from head to foot, and beat impatiently on the ground with his heavy heel, as if to crush down the rising horror.

"Where is he, Sir?"

A long pause.

"Do you think I didn't ask that, Sir, for years and years after, of God, and my own soul, and heaven and earth — and the things under the earth, too? -For many a night did I go down that mine out of my turn, and sat for hours in that level, watching and watching, if perhaps the spirit of him might haunt about, and tell his poor brother one word of news one way or the other - anything would have been a comfort - but the doubt I couldn't bear. And yet at last I learnt to bear it - and what's more, I learnt

not to care for it. It's a bold word — there's one who knows whether or not it is a true one."

"Good heavens! — and what then did you say to yourself?"

"I said this, Sir — or rather, one came as I was on my knees, and said it to me — What's done you can't mend. What's left, you can. Whatever has happened is God's concern now, and none but His. Do you see that as far as you can, no such thing ever happen again, on the face of His earth. And from that day, Sir, I gave myself up to that one thing, and will until I die, to save the poor young fellows like myself, who are left now-a-days to the Devil, body and soul, just when they are in the prime of their power to work for God."

"Ah!" said Lancelot — "if poor Luke's spirit were but as strong as yours!"

"I strong?" answered he, with a sad smile; "and so you think, Sir. But it's written, and it's true — The heart knoweth its own bitterness."

"Then you absolutely refuse to try to fancy your - his present state?"

"Yes, Sir, because if I did fancy it, that would be a certain sign I didn't know it. If we can't conceive what God has prepared for those that we know loved him, how much less can we for them of whom we don't know whether they loved him or not?"

"Well," thought Lancelot to himself, "I did not do so very wrong in trusting your intellect to cut through a sophism."

"But what do you believe, Tregarva?"

"I believe this, Sir — and your cousin will believe the same, if he will only give up, as I am sore afraid

he will need to some day, sticking to arguments and doctrines about the Lord, and love and trust the Lord himself. I believe, Sir, that the judge of all the earth will do right — and what's right can't be wrong, nor cruel either, else it would not be like him who loved us to the death. That's all I know; and that's enough for me. To whom little is given, of him is little required. He that didn't know his master's will, will be beaten with few stripes, and he that did know it, as I do, will be beaten with many, if he neglects it and that latter, not the former, is my concern."

"Well," thought Lancelot to himself, "this great heart has gone down to the root of the matter — the right and wrong of it. He, at least, has not forgotten God. Well, I would give up all the Teleologies and cosmogonies that I ever dreamt or read, just to believe what he believes — Heigho and well-a-day! — Paul! hist! I'll swear that was an otter!"

"I hope not, Sir, I'm sure. I haven't seen the spraint of one here this two years."

"There again — don't you see something move under that marl bank?"

Tregarva watched a moment, and then ran up to the spot, and throwing himself on his face on the edge, leant over, grappled something — and was instantly, to Lancelot's astonishment, grappled in his turn by a rough lank white dog, whose teeth, however, could not get through the velveteen sleeve.

"I'll give in, keper! I'll give in! Doant'ye harm the dog! he's deaf as a post, you knows."

"I won't harm him if you take him off, and come up quietly."

This mysterious conversation was carried on with

a human head, which peeped above the water, its arms supporting from beneath the growling cur — such a visage as only worn-out poachers, or tramping drovers, or London chiffoniers carry; pear-shaped and retreating to a narrow peak above, while below, the bleared cheeks and drooping lips, and peering purblind eyes, perplexed, hopeless, defiant and yet sneaking, bespeak *their* share in the "inheritance of the kingdom of heaven." — Savages without the resources of a savage — slaves without the protection of a master — to whom the cart-whip and the rice-swamp would be a change for the better — for there, at least, is food and shelter.

Slowly and distrustfully a dripping scarecrow of rags and bones rose from his hiding-place in the water, and then stopped suddenly, and seemed inclined to dash through the river; but Tregarva held him fast.

"There's two on ye! That's a shame! I'll surrender to no man but you, Paul. Hold off, or I'll set the dog on ye!"

"It's a gentleman fishing. He won't tell — will you, Sir?" And he turned to Lancelot. "Have pity on the poor creature, Sir, for God's sake — it isn't often he gets it."

"I won't tell, my man. I've not seen you doing any harm. Come out like a man, and let 's have a look at you."

The creature crawled up the bank, and stood, abject and shivering, with the dog growling from between his legs.

"I was only looking for a kingfisher's nest; indeed now, I was, Paul Tregarva."

"Don't lie; you were setting night-lines. I saw a minnow lie on the bank as I came up. Don't lie; I hate liars."

"Well indeed, then - a man must live somehow."

"You don't seem to live by this trade, my friend," quoth Lancelot; "I cannot say it seems a prosperous business, by the look of your coat and trousers."

"That Tim Goddard stole all my clothes, and no good may they do him; last time as I went to gaol I gave them him to kep, and he went off for a navvy meantimes; so there I am."

"If you will play with the dogs," quoth Tregarva, "you know what you'll be bit by. Haven't I warned you? Of course you won't prosper: as you make your bed, so you must lie in it. The Lord can't be expected to let those prosper that forget him. What mercy would it be to you if He did let you prosper by setting snares all church-time, as you were last Sunday, instead of going to church?"

"I say, Paul Tregarva, I've told you my mind about that afore. If I don't do what I knows to be right and good already, there aint no use in me a damning myself all the deeper by going to church to hear more."

"God help you!" quoth poor Paul.

"Now, I say," quoth Crawy, with the air of a man who took the whole thing as a matter of course, no more to be repined at than the rain and wind — "what be you a going to do with me this time? I do hope you won't have me up to bench. 'Taint a month now as I'm out o' prizzum along o' they fir-toppings, and I should, you see" — with a look up and down

and round at the gay hay-meadows, and the fleet water, and the soft gleaming clouds, which to Lancelot seemed most pathetic, — "I should like to ha' a spell o' fresh air, like, afore I goes in again."

Tregarva stood over him and looked down at him, like some huge stately bloodhound on a trembling mangy cur. "Good heavens!" thought Lancelot, as his eye wandered from the sad steadfast dignity of the one, to the dogged helpless misery of the other — "can those two be really fellow-citizens? fellow-christians? — even animals of the same species? — Hard to believe!"

True, Lancelot; but to quote you against yourself, Bacon, or rather the instinct which taught Bacon, teaches you to discern the invisible common law under the deceitful phenomena of sense.

"I must have those night-lines, Crawy," quoth Tregarva, at length.

"Then I must starve. You might ever so well take away the dog. They're the life of me."

"They're the death of you. Why don't you go and work, instead of idling about stealing trout?"

"Be you a laughing at a poor fellow in his trouble? Who'd gie me a day's work, I'd like to know? It's twenty year too late for that!"

Lancelot stood listening. Yes, that wretch, too, was a man and a brother — at least so books used to say. Time was when he had looked on a poacher as a Pariah "hostem humani generis" — and only deplored that the law forbid him to shoot them down, like cats and otters; but he had begun to change his mind.

He had learnt, and learnt rightly, the self-indul-Yeast. 9

gence, the danger, the cruelty of indiscriminate alms. It looked well enough in theory, on paper. 'But -but - but,' thought Lancelot, 'in practice, one can't help feeling a little of that un-economic feeling called pity. No doubt the fellow has committed an unpardonable sin in daring to come into the world when there was no call for him; one used to think, certainly, that children's opinions were not consulted on such points before they were born, and that therefore it might be hard to visit the sins of the fathers on the children, even though the labour-market were a little overstocked — 'mais nous avons changé tout cela,' like M. Jourdain's doctors. No doubt, too, the fellow might have got work if he had chosen - in Kamschatka or the Cannibal Islands; for the political economists have proved, beyond a doubt, that there is work somewhere or other for every one who chooses to work. But as, unfortunately, society has neglected to inform him of the state of the Cannibal Island labour-market, or to pay his passage thither when in-" formed thereof, he has had to choose in the somewhat limited labour-field of the Whitford-Priors' union, whose workhouse is already every winter filled with abler-bodied men than he, between starvation - and this -. Well, as for employing him, one would have thought that there was a little work waiting to be done in those five miles of heather and snipe-bog, which I used to tramp over last winter - but those, it seems, are still on the 'margin of cultivation,' and not a remunerative investment — that is, to capitalists. I wonder if anyone had made Crawy a present of ten acres of them when he came of age, and commanded him to till that or be hanged, he would not have found

it a profitable investment to him? But bygones are bygones, and there he is, and the moors, thanks to the rights of property - in this case the rights of the dog in the manger - belong to poor old Lavington - that is, the game and timber on them; and neither Crawy nor any one else can touch them. What can I do for him? Convert him? to what? For the next life, even Tregarva's talisman seems to fail. And for this life - perhaps if he had had a few more practical proofs of a divine justice and government - that 'kingdom of heaven' of which Luke talks, in the sensible bodily matters which he does appreciate, he might not be so unwilling to trust to it for the invisible spiritual matters which he does not appreciate. At all events, one has but one chance of winning him, and that is, through those five senses which he has left. What if he does spend the money in gross animal enjoyment? What will the amount of it be, compared with the animal enjoyments which my station allows me daily without reproach? A little more bacon - a little more beer - a little more tobacco; at all events they will be more important to him than a pair of new boots or an extra box of cigars to me." - And Lancelot put his hand in his pocket, and pulled out a sovereign. No doubt he was a great goose; but if you can answer his arguments, reader, I cannot.

"Look here — what are your night-lines worth?"

"A matter of seven shilling; ain't they now, Paul Tregarva?"

"I should suppose they are."

"Then do you give me the lines, one and all, and there's a sovereign for you. — No, I can't trust you with it all at once. I'll give it Tregarva, and he shall

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allow you four shillings a-week as long as it lasts, if you'll promise to keep off Squire Lavington's river."

It was pathetic, and yet disgusting, to see the abject joy of the poor creature. "Well," thought Lancelot, "if he deserves to be wretched, so do I — why, therefore, if we are one as bad as the other, should I not make his wretchedness a little less for the time being?"

"I waint come a-near the water. — You trust me. — I minds them as is kind to me — " and a thought seemed suddenly to lighten up his dull intelligence.

"I say, Paul, hark you here. I see that Bantam into D\*\*\*\* t'other day."

"What! is he down already?"

"With a dog-cart; he and another of his pals; and I see 'em take out a silk flue, I did. So, says I, you maunt be trying that ere along o' the Whitford trout; they kepers is out o' nights so sure as the moon."

"You didn't know that. Lying again!"

"No, but I sayed it in course. I didn't want they a-robbing here; so I think they worked mainly up Squire Vaurien's water."

"I wish I'd caught em here," quoth Tregarva, grimly enough; "though I don't think they came, or I should have seen the track on the banks."

"But he sayed like, as how he should be down here again about pheasant shooting."

"Trust him for it. Let us know, now, if you see him."

"And that I will, too. I wouldn't save a feather for that 'ere old rascal Harry. If the devil don't have he, I don't see no use in keeping no devil. But I minds them as has marcy on me, though my name is Crawy. Ay," he added, bitterly, "'taint so many kind turns as I gets in this life, that I can afford to forget e'er a one." And he sneaked off, with the deaf dog at his heels.

"How did that fellow get his name, Tregarva?"

"Oh, most of them have nicknames round here. Some of them hardly know their own real names, Sir." ("A sure sign of low civilization," thought Lancelot.) "But he got his a foolish way; and yet it was the ruin of him. When he was a boy of fifteen, he got miching away in church-time, as boys will, and took off his clothes to get in somewhere here in this very river, groping in the banks after craw-fish; and as the devil — for I can think no less — would have it, a big one catches hold of him by the fingers with one claw, and a root with the other, and holds him there till Squire Lavington comes out to take his walk after church, and there he caught the boy, and gave him a thrashing there and then, naked as he stood. And the story got wind, and all the chaps round called him Crawy ever afterwards, and the poor fellow got quite reckless from that day, and never looked anyone in the face again; and being ashamed of himself, you see, Sir, was never ashamed of anything else - and there he is. That dog's his only friend, and gets a livelihood for them both. It's growing old now; and when it dies, he'll starve."

"Well — the world has no right to blame him for not doing his duty, till it has done its own by him a little better."

"But the world will, Sir, because it hates its duty, and cries all day long, like Cain, 'Am I my brother's keeper?"

"Do you think it knows its duty? I have found it easy enough to see that something is diseased, Tregarva; but to find the medicine first, and to administer it afterwards, is a very different matter."

"Well-I suppose the world will never be mended till the day of judgment."

"In plain English, not mended till it is destroyed. — Hopeful for the poor world! I should fancy, if I believed that, that the devil in the old history — which you believe — had had the best of it with a vengeance, when he brought sin into the world and ruined it. I dare not believe that. How dare you, who say that God sent his Son into the world to defeat the devil?"

Tregarva was silent awhile.

"Learning and the Gospel together ought to do something, Sir, towards mending it. — One would think so — But the prophecies are against that."

"As folks happen to read them just now. A hundred years hence they may be finding the very opposite meaning in them. Come, Tregarva. — Suppose I teach you a little of the learning, and you teach me a little of the Gospel — do you think we two could mend the world between us, or even mend Whitford Priors?"

"God knows, Sir," said Tregarva.

"Tregarva," said Lancelot, as they were landing the next trout, "where will that Crawy go, when he dies?"

"God knows, Sir," said Tregarva.

Lancelot went thoughtful home, and sat down -

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not to answer Luke's letter — for he knew no answer but Tregarva's, and that, alas! he could not give, for he did not believe it, but only longed to believe it. So he turned off the subject by a question —

"You speak of yourself as being already a member of the Romish communion. How is this? Have you given up your curacy? Have you told your father? I fancy that if you had done so, I must have heard of it ere now. I entreat you to tell me the state of the case. For, heathen as I am, I am still an Englishman; and there are certain old superstitions still lingering among us — whencesoever we may have got them first — about truth and common honesty — you understand me.—

"Do not be angry. But there is a prejudice against the truthfulness of Romish priests and Romish converts. — It's no affair of mine. I see quite enough Protestant rogues and liars, to prevent my having any pleasure in proving Romanists, or any other persons, rogues and liars also. But I am — if not fond of you — at least sufficiently fond to be anxious for your good name. You used to be an open-hearted fellow enough. Do prove to the world that cœlum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt."

#### CHAPTER IX.

Harry Verney hears his Last Shot fired.

THE day after the Lavingtons' return, when Lancelot walked up to the Priory with a fluttering heart to inquire after all parties, and see one, he found the squire in a great state of excitement.

A large gang of poachers, who had come down

from London by rail, had been devastating all the covers round, to stock the London markets by the first of October, and intended, as Tregarva had dis-covered, to pay Mr. Lavington's preserves a visit that covered, to pay Mr. Lavington's preserves a visit that night. They didn't care for country justices, not they. Weren't all their fines paid by highly respectable game-dealers at the West End? They owned three dog-carts among them; a parcel by railway would bring them down bail to any amount; they tossed their money away at the public-houses, like gentlemen; thanks to the Game-laws, their profits ran high, and when they had swept the county pretty clean of game, why, they would just finish off the season by a stray highway robbery or two, and 'vanish into Babylon and their native night. their native night.

Such was Harry Verney's information, as he strutted about the court-yard waiting for the squire's orders.

"But they've put their nose into a furse-bush, Muster Smith, they have. We've got our posse-commontaturs, fourteen men, Sir, as 'll play the whole vale to cricket, and whap them; and everyone 'll fight, for they're half poachers themselves, you see" (and Harry winked and chuckled); "and they can't abide no interlopers to come down and take the sport out of their mouths."

"But are you sure they'll come to-night?" "That 'ere Paul says so. Wonder how he found out — some of his underhand, colloguing, Methodist ways, I'll warrant. I seed him preaching to that 'ere Crawy, three or four times, when he ought to have hauled him up. He consorts with them poachers, Sir, uncommon. I hope he ben't one himself, that's all."

"Nonsense, Harry!"

"Oh? Eh? Don't say old Harry don't know nothing, that's all. I've fixed his flint, anyhow." "Ah! Smith!" shouted the squire, out of his stu-

"Ah! Smith!" shouted the squire, out of his study-window, with a cheerful and appropriate oath. "The very man I wanted to see! You must lead these keepers for me to-night. They always fight better with a gentleman among them. Breeding tells, you know — breeding tells."

Lancelot felt a strong disgust at the occupation, but he was under too many obligations to the squire to refuse.

"Ay, I knew you were game," said the old man. "And you'll find it capital fun. I used to think it so, I know, when I was young. Many a shindy have I had here in my uncle's time, under the very windows, before the chase was disparked, when the fellows used to come down after the deer."

Just then Lancelot turned, and saw Argemone standing close to him. He almost sprung towards her — and retreated, for he saw that she had overheard the conversation between him and her father.

"What! Mr. Smith!" said she, in a tone in which tenderness and contempt, pity and affected carelessness, were strangely mingled. "So! you are going to turn gamekeeper to-night?"

Lancelot was blundering out something, when the squire interposed.

"Let her alone, Smith. Women will be tenderhearted, you know. Quite right — but they don't understand these things. They fight with their tongues, and we with our fists; and then they fancy their weapons don't hurt — Ha! ha! ha!" "Mr. Smith," said Argemone, in a low, determined voice, "if you have promised my father to go on this horrid business — go. But promise me, too, that you will only look on, or I will never —"

Argemone had not time to finish her sentence before Lancelot had promised seven times over, and meant to keep his promise, as we all do.

About ten o'clock that evening Lancelot and Tregarva were walking stealthily up a ride in one of the home-covers, at the head of some fifteen fine young fellows, keepers, grooms, and not ex tempore "watchers," whom old Harry was marshalling and tutoring, with exhortations as many and as animated as if their ambition was "Mourir pour la patrie."

"How does this sort of work suit you, Tregarva, for I don't like it at all? The fighting's all very well, but it's a poor cause."

"Oh, Sir, I have no mercy on these Londoners. If it was these poor half-starved labourers, that snare the same hares that have been eating up their garden-stuff all the week, I can't touch them, Sir, and that's truth; but these ruffians — And yet, Sir, wouldn't it be better for the parsons to preach to them, than for the keepers to break their heads?"

"Oh!" said Lancelot, "the parsons say all to them that they can."

Tregarva shook his head.

"I doubt that, Sir. But, no doubt, there's a great change for the better in the parsons. I remember the time, Sir, that there wasn't an earnest clergyman in the vale; and now, every other man you meet is trying to do his best. But those London parsons, Sir, what's the matter with them? For all their societies and their schools, the devil seems to keep a-head of them sadly. I doubt they haven't found the right fly yet for publicans and sinners to rise at."

A distant shot in the cover.

"There they are, Sir. I thought that Crawy wouldn't lead me false when I let him off."

"Well, fight away, then, and win. I have promised Miss Lavington not to lift a hand in the business."

"Then you're a lucky man, Sir. But the squire's game is his own, and we must do our duty by our master."

There was a rustle in the bushes, and the tramp of feet on the turf.

"There they are, Sir, sure enough. The Lord keep us from murder this night!" And Tregarva pulled off his neckcloth, and shook his huge limbs, as if to feel that they were all in their places, in a way that augured ill for the man who came across him.

They turned the corner of a ride, and, in an instant, found themselves face to face with five or six armed men, with blackened faces, who, without speaking a word, dashed at them, and the fight began; reinforcements came up on each side, and the engagement became general.

> The forest-laws were sharp and stern, The forest blood was keen,

They lashed together for life and death Beneath the hollies green.

The metal good and the walnut-wood Did soon in splinters flee;

They tossed the orts to south and north, And grappled knee to knee.

They wrestled up, they wrestled down, They wrestled still and sore; The herbage sweet beneath their feet Was stamped to mud and gore. And all the while the broad still moon stared down on them grim and cold, as if with a saturnine sneer at the whole humbug; and the silly birds, about whom all this butchery went on, slept quietly over their heads, every one with his head under his wing. Oh! if pheasants had but understanding, how they would split their sides with chuckling and crowing at the follies which civilized Christian men perpetrate for their precious sake!

Had I the pen of Homer (though they say he never used one), or even that of the worthy who wasted precious years in writing a *Homer Burlesqued*, what heroic exploits might I not immortalise! In every stupid serf and cunning ruffian there, there was a heart as brave as Ajax' own; but then they fought with sticks instead of lances, and hammered away on fustian jackets instead of brazen shields; and, therefore, poor fellows, they were beneath "the dignity of poetry," whatever that may mean. If one of your squeamish "dignity-of-poetry" critics had just had his head among the gun-stocks for five minutes that night, he would have found it grim tragic earnest enough; not without a touch of fun though, here and there.

Lancelot leant against a tree and watched the riot with folded arms, mindful of his promise to Argemone, and envied Tregarva as he hurled his assailants right and left with immense strength, and led the van of battle royally. Little would Argemone have valued the real proof of love which he was giving her as he looked on sulkily, while his fingers tingled with longing to be up and doing. Strange — that mere lust of fighting, common to man and animals, whose traces even the lamb and the civilised child evince in their mock-fights, the earliest and most natural form of play. Is it, after all, the one human propensity which is utterly evil, incapable of being turned to any righteous use? Gross and animal, no doubt it is, but not the less really pleasant, as every Irishman and many an Englishman knows well enough. A curious instance of this, by the bye, occurred in Paris during the February Revolution. A fat English coachman went out, from mere curiosity, to see the fighting. As he stood and watched, a new passion crept over him; he grew madder and madder as the bullets whistled past him; at last, when men began to drop by his side, he could stand it no longer, seized a musket, and rushed in, careless which side he took, —

#### To drink delight of battle with his peers.

He was not heard of for a day or two, and then they found him, stiff and cold, lying on his face across a barricade, with a bullet through his heart. Sedentary persons may call him a sinful fool. Be it so. *Homo* sum: nihil humani à me alienum puto.

Lancelot, I verily believe, would have kept his promise, though he saw that the keepers gave ground, finding Cockney skill too much for their clumsy strength; but at last Harry Verney, who had been fighting as venomously as a wild cat, and had been once before saved from a broken skull by Tregarva, rolled over at his very feet with a couple of poachers on him.

"You won't see an old man murdered, Mr. Smith?" cried he, imploringly.

Lancelot tore the ruffians off the old man right and left. One of them struck him; he returned the blow; and, in an instant, promises and Argemone, philosophy and anti-game-law prejudices, were swept out of his head, and "he went," as the old romances say, "hurling into the midst of the press," as mere a wild animal for the moment as angry bull or boar. An instant afterwards, though, he burst out laughing, in spite of himself, as "The Battersea Bantam," who had been ineffectually dancing round Tregarva like a game-cock spurring at a bull, turned off with a voice of ineffable disgust, —

"That big cove's a yokel; 'ta'nt creditable to waste science on him. You're my man, if you please, Sir," and the little wiry lump of courage and conceit, rascality and good humour, flew at Lancelot, who was twice his size, "with a heroism worthy of a better cause," as respectable papers, when they are not too frightened, say of the French.

"Do you want any more?" asked Lancelot.

"Quite a pleasure, Sir, to meet a scientific gen'lman. Beg your pardon, Sir; stay a moment while I wipes my face. Now, Sir, time, if you please."

Alas, for the little man; in another moment he tumbled over and lay senseless — Lancelot thought he had killed him. The gang saw their champion fall, gave ground, and limped off, leaving three of their party groaning on the ground, beside as many Whitford men.

As it was in the beginning, so is it to be to the end, my foolish brothers? From the poacher to the prime minister — wearying yourselves for very vanity! The soldier is not the only man in England who is fool enough to hire himself to be shot at for a shilling a-day. But while all the rest were busy picking up the wounded men and securing the prisoners, Harry Verney alone held on, and as the poachers retreated slowly up the ride, he followed them, peering into the gloom, as if in hopes of recognising some old enemy.

"Stand back, Harry Verney; we know you, and we'd be loth to harm an old man," cried a voice out of the darkness.

"Eh? Do you think old Harry 'd turn back when he was once on the track of ye? You soft-fisted, gindrinking, counter-skipping Cockney rascals, that fancy you're to carry the county before you, because you get your fines paid by London tradesmen! Eh? What do you take old Harry for?"

"Go back, you old fool!" and a volley of oaths followed. "If you follow us, we'll fire at you, as sure as the moon's in heaven!"

"Fire away then! I'll follow you to ---!" and the old man paced stealthily but firmly up to them.

Tregarva saw his danger and sprung forward, but it was too late.

"What, you will have it, then?"

A sharp crack followed, — a bright flash in the darkness — every white birch-stem and jagged oakleaf shone out for a moment as bright as day — and in front of the glare Lancelot saw the old man throw his arms wildly upward, fall forward, and disappear on the dark ground.

"You've done it! off with you!" And the rascals rushed off up the ride.

In a moment Tregarva was by the old man's side, and lifted him tenderly up.

"They've done for me, Paul. Old Harry's got his

gruel. He's heard his last shot fired. I knowed it 'ud come to this, and I said it. Eh? Didn't I now, Paul?" And as the old man spoke, the working of his lungs pumped great jets of blood out over the still heather-flowers as they slept in the moonshine, and dabbled them with smoking gore.

"Here, men," shouted the colonel, "up with him at once, and home! Here, put a brace of your guns together, muzzle and lock. Help him to sit on them, Lancelot. There, Harry, put your arms round their necks. Tregarva, hold him up behind. Now then, men, left legs foremost — keep step — march!" And they moved off toward the Priory.

"You seem to know everything, colonel," said Lancelot.

The colonel did not answer for a moment.

"Lancelot, I learnt this dodge from the only friend I ever had in the world, or ever shall have; and a week after I marched him home to his death-bed in this very way."

"Paul — Paul Tregarva," whispered old Harry, "put your head down here: wipe my mouth, there's a man; it's wet, uncommon wet." It was his own lifeblood. "I've been a beast to you, Paul. I've hated you, and envied you, and tried to ruin you. And now you've saved my life once this night; and here you be a-nursing of me as my own son might do, if he was here, poor fellow! I've ruined you, Paul; the Lord forgive me!"

"Pray! pray!" said Paul, "and He will forgive you. He is all mercy. He pardoned the thief on the cross ——"

"No, Paul, no thief, - not so bad as that, I hope,

anyhow; never touched a feather of the squire's. But you dropped a song, Paul, — a bit of writing."

Paul turned pale.

"And — the Lord forgive me! — I put it in the squire's fly-book."

"The Lord forgive you! Amen!" said Paul, solemnly.

Wearily and slowly they stepped on towards the old man's cottage. A messenger had gone on before, and in a few minutes the squire, Mrs. Lavington, and the girls, were round the bed of their old retainer.

They sent off right and left for the doctor and the vicar; the squire was in a frenzy of rage and grief.

"Don't take on, master, don't take on," said old Harry, as he lay; while the colonel and Honoria in vain endeavoured to stanch the wound. "I knowed it would be so, sooner or later; 'tis all in the way of business. They haven't carried off a bird, squire, not a bird; we was too many for 'em — eh, Paul? eh?"

"Where is that cursed doctor?" said the squire. "Save him, colonel, save him; and I'll give you —"

Alas! the charge of shot at a few feet distance had entered like a bullet, tearing a great ragged hole. — There was no hope, and the colonel knew it; but he said nothing.

"The second keeper," sighed Argemone, "who has been killed here! Oh, Mr. Smith, must this be? Is God's blessing on all this?"

Lancelot said nothing. The old man lighted up at Argemone's voice.

"There's the beauty, there's the pride of Whitford! And sweet Miss Honor, too, — so kind to nurse a poor old man! But she never would let him Yeast. 10 teach her to catch perch, would she? She was always too tender-hearted. Ah, squire, when we're dead and gone, — dead and gone, squire, they'll be the pride of Whitford still! And they'll keep up the old place won't you, my darlings? And the old name, too? For, you know, there must always be a Lavington in Whitford Priors, till the Nun-pool runs up to Ashy Down."

"And a curse upon the Lavingtons," sighed Argemone to herself in an under-tone.

Lancelot heard what she said.

The vicar entered, but he was too late. The old man's strength was failing, and his mind began to wander.

"Windy," he murmured to himself, "windy, dark and windy — birds won't lie — not old Harry's fault. How black it grows! We must be home by nightfall, squire. Where's that young dog gone? Arter the larks, the brute!"

Old Squire Lavington sobbed like a child.

"You will soon be home, my man," said the vicar "Remember that you have a Saviour in heaven. Cast yourself on His mercy."

Harry shook his head.

"Very good words, very kind, — very heavy gamebag, though. Never get home, never any more at all. Where's my boy Tom to carry it? Send for my boy Tom. He was always a good boy till he got along with them poachers."

"Listen," he said, "listen! There's bells a-ringing — ringing in my head. Come you here, Paul Tregarva."

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He pulled Tregarva's face down to his own, and whispered, —

"Them's the bells a-ringing for Miss Honor's weddings."

Paul started, and drew back. Harry chuckled and grinned for a moment in his old foxy, peering way, and then wandered off again.

"What's that thumping and roaring?" Alas! it was the failing pulsation of his own heart. "It's the weir, the weir — a-washing me away — thundering over me — Squire, I'm drowning, — drowning and choking! Oh, Lord, how deep! Now it's running quieter — now I can breathe again — swift and oily — running on, running on, down to the sea. See how the grayling sparkle! There's a pike! T'aint my fault, squire, so help me — Don't swear, now, squire; old men and dying maun't swear, squire. How steady the river runs down! Lower and slower lower and slower: now it's quite still — still —

His voice sank away — he was dead!

No! once more the light flashed up in the socket. He sprang upright in the bed, and held out his withered paw with a kind of wild majesty, as he shouted, —

"There ain't such a head of hares on any manor in the county. And them's the last words of Harry Verney!"

He fell back — shuddered — a rattle in his throat — another — and all was over.

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## CHAPTER X.

### "Murder will out," and Love too.

ARGEMONE need never have known of Lancelot's share in the poaching affray; but he dared not conceal anything from her. And so he boldly went up the next day to the Priory, not to beg pardon, but to justify himself, and succeeded. And, before long, he found himself fairly installed as her pupil, nominally in spiritual matters, but really in subjects of which she little dreamed.

Every day he came to read and talk with her, and whatever objections Mrs. Lavington expressed were silenced by Argemone. She would have it so, and her mother neither dared nor knew how to control her. The daughter had utterly outread and outthought her less-educated parent, who was clinging in honest bigotry to the old forms, while Argemone was wandering forth over the chaos of the strange new age, a poor homeless Noah's dove, seeking rest for the sole of her foot and finding none. And now all motherly influence and sympathy had vanished, and Mrs. Lavington, in fear and wonder, let her daughter go her own way. She could not have done better, perhaps; for Providence had found for Argemone a better guide than her mother could have done, and her new pupil was rapidly becoming her teacher. She was matched, for the first time, with a man who was her own equal in intellect and knowledge; and she felt how real was that sexual difference which she had been accustomed to consider as an insolent calumny against woman. Proudly and indignantly

she struggled against the conviction, but in vain. Again and again she argued with him, and was vanquished, - or, at least, what is far better, made to see how many different sides there are to every question. All appeals to authority he answered with a contemptuous smile. "The best authorities?" he used to say. "On what question do not the best authorities flatly contradict each other? And why? Because every man believes just what it suits him to believe. Don't fancy that men reason themselves into convictions; the prejudices and feelings of their hearts give them some idea, or theory, and then they find facts at their leisure to prove their theory true. Every man sees facts through narrow spectacles, red, or green, or blue, as his nation or his temperament colours them: and he is quite right, only he must allow us the liberty of having our spectacles too. Authority is only good for proving facts. We must draw our own conclusions." And Argemone began to suspect that he was right, at least to see that her opinions were mere hearsays, picked up at her own will and fancy; while his were living, daily-growing ideas. Her mind was beside his as the vase of cut flowers by the side of the rugged tree, whose roots are feeding deep in the mother earth. In him she first learnt how one great truth received into the depths of the soul germinates there, and bears fruit a thousand-fold; explaining, and connecting, and glorifying innumerable things, apparently the most unlike and insignificant; and daily she became a more reverent listener, and gave herself up, half against her will and conscience, to the guidance of a man whom she knew to be her inferior in morals and in orthodoxy. She had worshipped intellect, and now

it had become her tyrant; and she was ready to give up every belief which she once had prized, to flutter like a moth round its fascinating brilliance.

Who can blame her, poor girl? For Lancelot's humility was even more irresistible than his eloquence. He assumed no superiority. 'He demanded her assent to truths, not because they were his opinions, but simply for the truth's sake; and on all points which touched the heart he looked up to her as infallible and inspired. In questions of morality, of taste, of feeling, he listened not as a lover to his mistress, but rather as a baby to its mother; and thus, half unconsciously to himself, he taught her where her true kingdom lay, — that the heart, and not the brain, enshrines the priceless pearl of womanhood, the oracular jewel, the "Urim and Thummim," before which gross man can only inquire and adore.

And, in the meantime, a change was passing upon Lancelot. His morbid vanity — that brawl-begotten child of struggling self-conceit and self-disgust — was vanishing away; and as Mr. Tennyson says in one of those priceless idyls of his, before which the shade of Theocritus must hide his diminished head, —

> He was altered, and began To move about the house with joy, And with the certain step of man.

He had, at last, found one person who could appreciate him. And in deliberate confidence he set to work to conquer her, and make her his own. It was a traitorous return, but a very natural one. And she, sweet creature! walked straight into the pleasant snare, utterly blind, because she fancied that she saw clearly. In the pride of her mysticism, she had fancied herself

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above so commonplace a passion as love. It was a curious feature of lower humanity, which she might investigate and analyse harmlessly as a cold scientific spectator; and, in her mingled pride and purity, she used to indulge Lancelot in metaphysical disquisitions about love and beauty, like that first one in their walk home from Minchampstead, from which a less celestially innocent soul would have shrunk. She thought, forsooth, as the old proverb says, that she could deal in honey without putting her hand to her mouth. But Lancelot knew better, and marked her for his own. And daily his self-confidence and sense of rightful power developed, and with them, paradoxical as it may seem, the bitterest self-abasement. The contact of her stainless innocence, the growing certainty that the destiny of that innocence was irrevocably bound up with his own, made him shrink from her whenever he remembered his own guilty career. To remember that there were passages in it which she must never know — that she would cast him from her with abhorrence if she once really understood their vileness! To think that, amid all the closest bonds of love, there must for ever be an awful, silent gulf in the past, of which they must never speak! - That she would bring to him what he could never, never bring to her! -The thought was unbearable. And as hideous recollections used to rise before him, devilish caricatures of his former self, mopping and mowing at him in his dreams, he would start from his lonely bed, and pace the room for hours, or saddle his horse, and ride all night long aimlessly through the awful woods, vainly trying to escape himself. How gladly, at those moments, he would have welcomed centuries of a material hell, to escape from the more awful spiritual hell within him, — to buy back that pearl of innocence which he had cast recklessly to be trampled under the feet of his own swinish passions! But, no: that which was done could never be undone, — never, to all eternity. And more than once, as he wandered restlessly from one room to another, the barrels of his pistols seemed to glitter with a cold, devilish smile, and call to him, —

"Come to us! and, with one touch of your finger, send that bursting spirit which throbs against your brow to flit forth free, and never more to defile her purity by your presence!"

But, no, again: a voice within seemed to command him to go on, and claim her, and win her, spite of his own vileness. And in after years, slowly, and in fear and trembling, he knew it for the voice of God, who had been leading him to become worthy of her through that bitter shame of his own unworthiness.

As One higher than them would have it, she took a fancy to read Homer in the original, and Lancelot could do no less than offer his services as translator. She would prepare for him portions of the Odyssey, and every day that he came up to the Priory he used to comment on it to her; and so for many a week, in the dark-wainscotted library, and in the clipt yewalleys of the old gardens, and under the brown autumn trees, they quarried together in that unexhausted mine, among the records of the rich Titanyouth of man. And step by step Lancelot opened to her the everlasting significance of the poem; the unconscious purity which lingers in it, like the last rays of the Paradise dawn; its sense of the dignity of man as man; the religious reverence with which it speaks of all human ties, human strength and beauty, ay, even of merely animal human appetites, as Godgiven and Godlike symbols. She could not but listen and admire, when he introduced her to the sheer paganism of Schiller's Gods of Greece; for on this subject he was more eloquent than on any. He had gradually, in fact, as we have seen, dropped all faith in anything but Nature; the slightest fact about a bone or a weed was more important to him than all the books of divinity which Argemone lent him — to be laid by unread.

"What do you believe in?" she asked him one day, sadly.

"In this!" he said, stamping his foot on the ground. "In the earth I stand on, and the things I see walking and growing on it. There may be something beside it — what you call a spiritual world. But if He who made me intended me to think of spirit first, He would have let me see it first. But as he has given me material senses, and put me in a material world, I take it as a fair hint that I am meant to use those senses first, whatever may come after. I may be intended to understand the unseen world, but if so, it must be, as I suspect, by understanding the visible one; and there are enough wonders there to occupy me for some time to come."

"But the Bible?" (Argemone had given up long ago wasting words about the "Church.")

"My only Bible as yet is Bacon. I know that he is right, whoever is wrong. If that Hebrew Bible is to be believed by me, it must agree with what I know already from science." What was to be done with so intractable a heretic? Call him an Infidel and a Materialist, of course, and cast him off with horror. But Argemone was beginning to find out that, when people are really in earnest, it may be better sometimes to leave God's methods of educating them alone, instead of calling the poor honest seekers hard names, which the speakers themselves don't understand.

But words would fail sometimes, and in default of them Lancelot had recourse to drawings, and manifested in them a talent for thinking in visible forms which put the climax to all Argemone's wonder. A single profile, even a mere mathematical figure, would, in his hands, become the illustration of a spiritual truth. And, in time, every fresh lesson on the Odyssey was accompanied by its illustration, — some bold and simple outline drawing. In Argemone's eyes, the sketches were immaculate and inspired; for their chief, almost their only fault, was just those mere anatomical slips which a woman would hardly perceive, provided the forms were generally graceful and bold.

One day his fancy attempted a bolder flight. He brought a large pen-and-ink drawing, and laying it silently on the table before her, fixed his eyes intensely on her face. The sketch was labelled, the "Triumph of Woman." In the foreground, to the right and left, were scattered groups of men, in the dresses and insignia of every period and occupation. The distance showed, in a few bold outlines, a dreary desert, broken by alpine ridges, and furrowed here and there by a wandering watercourse. Long shadows pointed to the half-risen sun, whose disc was climbing above

the waste horizon. And in front of the sun, down the path of the morning beams, came Woman, clothed only in the armour of her own loveliness. Her bearing was stately, and yet modest; in her face pensive tenderness seemed wedded with earnest joy. In her right hand lay a cross, the emblem of self-sacrifice. Her path across the desert was marked by the flowers which sprang up beneath her steps; the wild gazelle stept forward trustingly to lick her hand; a single wandering butterfly fluttered round her head. As the group, one by one, caught sight of her, a human tenderness and intelligence seemed to light up every face. The scholar dropt his book, the miser his gold, the savage his weapons; even in the visage of the half-slumbering sot some nobler recollection seemed wistfully to struggle into life. The artist caught up his pencil, the poet his lyre, with eyes that beamed forth sudden inspiration. The sage, whose broad brow rose above the group like some torrent-furrowed Alp, scathed with all the temptations and all the sorrows of his race, watched with a thoughtful smile that preacher more mighty than himself. A youth, decked out in the most fantastic fopperies of the middle age, stood with clasped hands and brimming eyes, as remorse and pleasure struggled in his face; and as he looked, the fierce sensual features seemed to melt, and his flesh came again to him like the flesh of a little child. The slave forgot his fetters; little children clapped their hands; and the toil-worn, stunted, savage woman sprung forwards to kneel at her feet, and see herself transfigured in that new and divine ideal of her sex.

Descriptions of drawings are clumsy things at best;

the reader must fill up the sketch for himself by the eye of faith.

Entranced in wonder and pleasure, Argemone let her eyes wander over the drawing. And her feelings for Lancelot amounted almost to worship, as she apprehended the harmonious unity of the manifold conception, - the rugged boldness of the groups in front, the soft grandeur of the figure which was the lodestar of all their emotions, the virginal purity of the whole. And when she fancied that she traced in those bland aquiline lineaments, and in the crisp ringlets which floated like a cloud down to the knees of the figure, some traces of her own likeness, a dream of a new destiny flitted before her, - she blushed to her very neck; and as she bent her face over the drawing and gazed, her whole soul seemed to rise into her eyes, and a single tear dropped upon the paper. She laid her hand over it, and then turned hastily away.

"You do not like it? I have been too bold —" said Lancelot, fearfully.

"Oh, no! no! It is so beautiful — so full of deep wisdom! But — but — You may leave it."

Lancelot slipped silently out of the room, he hardly knew why; and when he was gone, Argemone caught up the drawing, pressed it to her bosom, covered it with kisses, and hid it, as too precious for any eyes but her own, in the furthest corner of her secrétaire.

And yet she fancied that she was not in love!

The vicar saw the growth of this intimacy with a fast-lengthening face; for it was very evident that Argemone could not serve two masters so utterly contradictory as himself and Lancelot, and that either

the lover or the father-confessor must speedily resign office. The vicar had had great disadvantages, bythe bye, in fulfilling the latter function; for his visits at the Priory had been all but forbidden; and Argemone's "spiritual state" had been directed by means of a secret correspondence, - a method which some clergymen, and some young ladies too, have discovered, in the last few years, to be quite consistent with moral delicacy and filial obedience. John Bull, like a stupid fellow as he is, has still his doubts upon the point; but he should remember, that though St. Paul tells women when they want advice to ask their husbands at home, yet if the poor woman has no husband, or, as often happens, her husband's advice is unpleasant, to whom is she to go but to the next best substitute, her spiritual cicisbeo, or favourite clergyman? In sad earnest, neither husband nor parent deserves pity in the immense majority of such cases. Woman will have guidance. It is her delight and glory to be led; and if her husband or her parents will not meet the cravings of her intellect, she must go elsewhere to find a teacher, and run into the wildest extravagances of private judgment, in the very hope of getting rid of it, just as poor Argemone had been led to do.

And, indeed, she had, of late, wandered into very strange paths: would to God they were as uncommon as strange! Both she and the vicar had a great wish that she should lead a "devoted life;" but then they both disdained to use common means for their object. The good old English plan of district visiting, by which ladies can have mercy on the bodies and souls of those below them, without casting off the holy discipline which a home, even the most ungenial, alone supplies, savoured too much of mere "Protestantism." It might be God's plan for Christianising England just now, but that was no reason, alas! for its being their plan: they wanted something more "Catholic," more in accordance with Church principles; (for, indeed, is it not the business of the Church to correct the errors of Providence?) and what they sought they found at once in a certain favourite establishment of the vicar's, a Church-of-England *béguinage*, or Quasi-Protestant nunnery, which he fostered in a neighbouring city, and went thither on all high tides to confess the young ladies, who were in all things nuns, but bound by no vows, except, of course, such as they might choose to make for themselves in private.

Here they laboured among the lowest haunts of misery and sin, piously and self-denyingly enough, sweet souls! in hope of "the peculiar crown," and a higher place in heaven than the relations whom they had left behind them "in the world," and unshackled by the interference of parents, and other such merely fleshly relationships, which, as they cannot have been instituted by God merely to be trampled under foot on the path to holiness, and cannot well have instituted themselves (unless, after all, the Materialists are right, and this world does grind of itself, except when its Maker happens to interfere once every thousand years), must needs have been instituted by the devil. And so more than one girl in that nunnery, and out of it too, believed in her inmost heart, though her "Catholic principles," by a happy inconsistency forbade her to say so.

In a moment of excitement, fascinated by the

romance of the notion, Argemone had proposed to her mother to allow her to enter this béguinage, and called in the vicar as advocate; which produced a correspondence between him and Mrs. Lavington, stormy on her side, provokingly calm on his; and when the poor lady, tired of raging, had descended to an affecting appeal to his human sympathies, entreating him to spare a mother's feelings, he had answered with the same impassive fanaticism, that "he was surprised at her putting a mother's selfish feelings in competition with the sanctity of her child," and that "had his own daughter shown such a desire for a higher vocation, he should have esteemed it the very highest honour:" to which Mrs. Lavington answered, naïvely enough, that "it depended very much on what his daughter was like." - So he was all but forbidden the house. Nevertheless he contrived, by means of this same secret correspondence, to keep alive in Argemone's mind the longing to turn nun, and fancied honestly that he was doing God service, while he was pampering the poor girl's lust for singularity and selfglorification.

But, lately, Argemone's letters had become less frequent and less confiding; and the vicar, who well knew the reason, had resolved to bring the matter to a crisis.

So he wrote earnestly and peremptorily to his pupil, urging her, with all his subtle and refined eloquence, to make a final appeal to her mother, and if that failed, to act "as her conscience should direct her;" and inclosed an answer from the superior of the convent, to a letter which Argemone had in a mad moment asked him to write. The superior's

letter spoke of Argemone's joining her as a settled matter, and of her room as ready for her, while it lauded to the skies the peaceful activity and usefulness of the establishment. This letter troubled Argemone exceedingly. She had never before been compelled to face her own feelings, either about the nunnery or about Lancelot. She had taken up the fancy of becoming a Sister of Charity, not as Honoria might have done, from genuine love of the poor, but from "a sense of duty." Almsgiving and visiting the sick was one of the methods of earning heaven prescribed by her new creed. She was ashamed of her own laziness by the side of Honoria's simple benevolence; and, sad though it may be to have to say it, she longed to outdo her by some signal act of self-sacrifice. She had looked to this nunnery, too, as an escape, once and for all, from her own luxury, just as people who have not strength to be temperate take refuge in tee-totalism; and the thought of menial services towards the poor, however distasteful to her, came in quite prettily to fill up the little ideal of a life of romantic asceticisms and mystic contemplation, which gave the true charm in her eyes to her wild project. But now - just as a field had opened to her cravings after poetry and art, wider and richer than she had ever imagined - just as those simple childlike views of man and nature, which she had learnt to despise, were assuming an awful holiness in her eyes - just as she had found a human soul to whose regeneration she could devote all her energies, - to be required to give all up, perhaps for ever (and she felt that, if at all, it ought to be for ever); - it was too much for her little heart to bear; and she cried

bitterly; and tried to pray, and could not; and longed for a strong and tender bosom on which to lay her head, and pour out all her doubts and struggles; and there was none. Her mother did not understand hardly loved her. Honoria loved her; but understood her even less than her mother. Pride — the pride of intellect, the pride of self-will, had long since sealed her lips to her own family....

And then, out of the darkness of her heart, Lancelot's image rose before her stronger than all, tenderer than all; and as she remembered his magical faculty of anticipating all her thoughts, embodying for her all her vague surmises, he seemed to beckon her towards him. — She shuddered and turned away. And now she first became conscious how he had haunted her thoughts in the last few months, not as a soul to be saved, but as a living man — his face, his figure, his voice, his every gesture and expression, rising clear before her, in spite of herself, by day and night.

And then she thought of his last drawing, and the looks which had accompanied it, — unmistakeable looks of passionate and adoring love. There was no denying it — she had always known that he loved her; but she had never dared to confess it to herself. But now the earthquake was come, and all the secrets of her heart burst upward to the light, and she faced the thought in shame and terror. "How unjust I have been to him! how cruel! thus to entice him on in hopeless love!"

She lifted up her eyes, and saw in the mirror opposite the reflexion of her own exquisite beauty.

"I could have known what I was doing! I knew all the while! And yet it is so delicious to feel that Yeast. 11 any one loves me! Is it selfishness? It is selfishness, to pamper my vanity on an affection which I do not, will not return. I will not be thus in debt to him, even for his love. I do not love him — I do not; and even if I did, to give myself up to a man of whom I know so little, who is not even a Christian, much less a Churchman! Ay! and to give up my will to any man! to become the subject, the slave, of another human being! I, who have worshipped the belief in woman's independence, the hope of woman's enfranchisement, who have felt how glorious it is to live like the angels, single, and self-sustained! What if I cut the Gordian knot, and here make, once for all, a vow of perpetual celibacy?"

She flung herself on her knees — she could not collect her thoughts.

"No," she said, "I am not prepared for this. It is too solemn to be undertaken in this miserable whirlwind of passion. I will fast, and meditate, and go up formally to the little chapel, and there devote myself to God; and, in the meantime, to write at once to the superior of the Béguines; to go to my mother, and tell her once for all - What! Must I lose him? - must I give him up? Not his love -I cannot give up that - would that I could! but no! he will love me for ever. I know it as well as if an angel told me. But to give up him! Never to see him! never to hear his voice! never to walk with him among the beech woods any more! Oh, Argemone! Argemone! miserable girl! and is it come to this?" And she threw herself on the sofa, and hid her face in her hands.

Yes, Argemone, it is come to this; and the best

thing you can do, is just what you are doing — to lie there and cry yourself to sleep, while the angels are laughing kindly (if a solemn public, who settles everything for them, will permit them to laugh) at the rickety old windwill of sham-Popery which you have taken for a real giant.

At that same day and hour, as it chanced, Lancelot, little dreaming what the said windmill was grinding for him, was scribbling a hasty and angry answer to a letter of Luke's, which, perhaps, came that very morning in order to put him into a proper temper for the demolishing of windmills. It ran thus, —

"Ay, my good Cousin, - So I expected -

Suane mari magno turbuntibus æguora ventis E terrà alterius magnum spectare laborem ....

Pleasant and easy for you Protestants (for I will call you what you are, in spite of your own denials, a truly consistent and logical Protestant — and therefore a materialist) — easy for you, I say, to sit on the shore, in cold cruel self-satisfaction and tell the poor wretch buffeting with the waves what he ought to do while he is choking and drowning..... Thank Heaven, the storm has stranded me upon the everlasting Rock of Peter; - but it has been a sore trouble to reach it. Protestants, who look at creeds as things to be changed like coats, whenever they seem not to fit them, little know what we Catholic-hearted ones suffer. . . . If they did, they would be more merciful and more chary in the requirements of us, just as we are in the very three of a new-born existence. The excellent man, to whose care I have committed myself, has a wise and a tender heart . . . he saw no harm in my

concealing from my father the spiritual reason of my giving up my curacy (for I have given it up), and only giving the outward, but equally true reason, that I found it on the whole an ineligible and distressing post. . . I know you will apply to such an act that disgusting monosyllable of which Protestants are so fond. He felt with me, and for me - for my horror of giving pain to my father, and for my wearied and excited state of mind; and strangely enough - to show how differently, according to the difference of the organs, the same object may appear to two people, he quoted in my favour that very verse which you wrest against me. He wished me to show my father that I had only changed my heaven, and not my character, by becoming an Ultramontane-Catholic .... that as far as his esteem and affection were founded on anything in me, the ground of it did not vanish with my conversion. If I had told him at once of my altered opinions, he would have henceforth viewed every word and action with a prejudiced eye. . . . Protestants are so bigoted .... but if, after seeing me for a month or two the same Luke that he had ever known me, he were gradually informed that I had all the while held that creed which he had considered incompatible with such a life as I hope mine would be - you must see the effect which it ought to have. . . . I don't doubt that you will complain of all this. . . . All I can say is, that I cannot sympathise with that superstitious reverence for mere verbal truth, which is so common among Protestants. . . . It seems to me they throw away the spirit of truth, in their idolatry of its letter. For instance, - what is the use of informing a man of a true fact, but to induce a

true opinion in him? But if by clinging to the exact letter of the fact, you create a false opinion in his mind, as I should do in my father's case, if by telling him at once of my change, I gave him an unjust horror of Catholicism, - you do not tell him the truth.... You may speak what is true to you, — but it becomes an error when received into his mind. . . . If his mind is a refracting and polarizing medium — if the crystalline lens of his soul's eye has been changed into tourmaline or Labrador spar -the only way to give him a true image of the fact, is to present it to him already properly altered in form, and adapted to suit the obliquity of his vision; in order that the very refractive power of his faculties may, instead of distorting it, correct it, and make it straight for him; and so a verbal wrong in fact may possess him with a right opinion....

"You see the whole question turns on your Protestant deification of the intellect. ... If you really believed, as you all say you do, that the nature of man, and therefore his intellect among the rest, was utterly corrupt, you would not be so superstitiously careful to tell the truth. ... as you call it; because you would know that man's heart, if not his head, would needs turn the truth into a lie by its own corruption. ... The proper use of reasoning is to produce opinion, — and if the subject in which you wish to produce the opinion is diseased, you must adapt the medicine accordingly."

To all which Lancelot, with several strong curses, scrawled the following answer: ---

"And this is my Cousin Luke! — Well, I shall believe henceforward that there is, after all, a thousand

times greater moral gulf fixed between Popery and Tractarianism, than between Tractarianism and the extremest Protestantism. My dear fellow, - I won't bother you by cutting up your charming ambiguous middle-terms, which make reason and reasoning identical, or your theory that the office of reasoning is to induce opinions - (the devil take opinions, right or wrong - I want facts, faith in real facts!) - or about deifying the intellect — as if all sound intellect was not in itself divine light - a revelation to man of absolute laws independent of him, as the very heathens hold. But this I will do - thank you most sincerely for the compliment you pay us Cismontane heretics. We do retain some dim belief in a God - even I am beginning to believe in believing in Him. And therefore, as I begin to suppose, it is, that we reverence facts, as the work of God, His acted words and will, which we dare not falsify; which we believe will tell their own story better than we can tell it for them. If our eyes are dimmed, we think if safer to clear them, which do belong to us, than to bedevil, by the light of those very already dimmed eyes, the objects round, which do not belong to us. Whether we are consistent or not about the corruptness of man, we are about the incorruptness of God; and therefore about that of the facts by which God teaches men; and believe, and will continue to believe, that blackest of all sins, the deepest of all Atheisms, that which, above all things, proves no faith in God's government of the universe, no sense of His presence, no understanding of His character, is - a lie.

"One word more — unless you tell your father within twenty-four hours after receiving this letter, I will. And I, being a Protestant, (if cursing Popery means Protestantism,) mean what I say."

As Lancelot walked up to the Priory that morning, the Reverend Panurgus O'Blareaway dashed out of a cottage by the roadside, and seized him unceremoniously by the shoulders. He was a specimen of humanity which Lancelot could not help at once liking and despising; a quaint mixture of conceit and earnestness, uniting the shrewdness of a stock-jobber with the frolic of a schoolboy broke loose. He was rector of a place in the west of Ireland, containing some ten Protestants and some thousand Papists. Being, unfortunately for himself, a red-hot Orangeman, he had thought fit to quarrel with the priest; in consequence of which he found himself deprived both of tithes and congregation, and after receiving three or four Rockite letters, and a charge of slugs through his hat (of which he always talked as if being shot at was the most pleasant and amusing feature of Irish life), he repaired to England, and there, after trying to set up as popular preacher in London, declaiming at Exeter Hall, and writing for all the third-rate magazines, found himself incumbent of Lower Whitford. He worked there, as he said himself, "like a horse;" spent his mornings in the schools, his afternoons in the cottages; preached four or five extempore sermons every week to overflowing congregations; took the lead, by virtue of "the gift of the gab," at all "religious" meetings for ten miles round; and really did a great deal of good in his way. He had an unblushing candour about his own worldly ambi-tion; with a tremendous brogue; and prided himself on exaggerating deliberately both of these excellences.

"The top of the morning to ye, Mr. Smith. Ye haven't such a thing as a cegar about ye? I've been preaching to school-children till me throat's as dry as the slave of a lime-burner's coat."

"I am very sorry, but, really, I have left my case at home."

"Oh! ah! faix, and I forgot. Ye mustn't be smokin' the nasty things going up to the castle. Och, Mr. Smith, but you're the lucky man!"

"I am much obliged to you for the compliment," said Lancelot, gruffly; "but really I don't see how I deserve it."

"Desarve it! Sure luck's all, and that's your luck, and not your deserts at all. To have the handsomest girl in the county dying for love of ye" — (Panurgus had a happy knack of blurting out truths — when they were pleasant ones). "And she just the beautifulest creature that ever spilte shoe-leather, barring Lady Philandria Mountflunkey, of Castle Mountflunkey, Quane's County, that shall be nameless."

"Upon my word, O'Blareaway, you seem to be better acquainted with my matters than I am. Don't you think, on the whole, it might be better to mind your own business?"

"Me own business! Poker o'Moses! and ain't it me own business? Haven't ye spilte my tenderest hopes? And good luck to ye in that same, for ye're as pretty a rider as ever kicked coping-stones out of a wall; and poor Paddy loves a sportsman by nature. Och! but ye've got a hand of trumps this time. Didn't I mate the vicar the other day, and spake my mind to him?" "What do you mean?" asked Lancelot, with a strong expletive.

"Faix, I told him he might as well Faugh a ballagh — make a rid road, and get out of that, with his bowings and his crossings, and his Popery made asy for small minds, for there was a gun a-field that would wipe his eye, — maning yourself, ye Prathestant."

"All I can say is, that you had really better mind your own business, and I'll mind my own."

"Och," said the good-natured Irishman, "and it's you must mind my business, and I'll mind yours; and that's all fair and aqual. Ye've cut me out entirely at the Priory, ye Tory, and so ye're bound to give me a lift somehow. Couldn't ye look me out a fine fat widow, with an illigant little fortune? For what's England made for, except to find poor Paddy a wife and money? Ah, ye may laugh, but I'd buy me a chapel at the West-end: me talents are thrown away here intirely, wasting me swateness on the desert air, as Tom Moore says (Panurgus used to attribute all quotations whatsoever to Irish geniuses); and I flatter meself I'm the boy to shute the Gospel to the aristocracy."

Lancelot burst into a roar of laughter, and escaped over the next gate: but the Irishman's coarse hints stuck by him, as they were intended to do. "Dying for the love of me!" He knew it was an impudent exaggeration, but, somehow, it gave him confidence: "there is no smoke," he thought, "without fire." And his heart beat high with new hopes, for which he laughed at himself all the while. It was just the cordial which he needed. That conversation determined the history of his life.

He met Argemone that morning in the library, as usual; but he soon found that she was not thinking of Homer. She was moody and abstracted; and he could not help at last saying, —

"I am afraid I and my classics are de trop this morning, Miss Lavington."

"Oh, no, no. Never that." She turned away her head. He fancied that it was to hide a tear.

Suddenly she rose, and turned to him with a clear, calm, gentle gaze.

"Listen to me, Mr. Smith. We must part to-day, and for ever. This intimacy has gone on too long too long, I am afraid, for your happines. And now, like all pleasant things in this miserable world, it must cease. I cannot tell you why; but you will trust me. I thank you for it - I thank God for it. I have learnt things from it which I shall never forget. I have learnt, at least, from it, to esteem and honour you. You have vast powers. Nothing, nothing, I believe, is too high for you to attempt, and succeed. But we must part; and now, God be with you. Oh, that you would but believe that these glorious talents are His loan! That you would but be a true and loyal knight to Him who said, - 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls!' - Ay," she went on, more and more passionately, for she felt that not she, but One mightier than herself was speaking through her, "then you might be great indeed. Then I might watch your name from afar, rising higher and higher daily in the ranks of God's own heroes. I see it - and

you have taught me to see it — that you are meant for a faith nobler and deeper than all doctrines and systems can give. You must become the philosopher, who can discover new truths — the artist, who can embody them in new forms, while poor I — And that is another reason why we should part. — Hush! hear me out. I must not be a clog, to drag you down in your course. Take this, and farewell; and remember that you once had a friend called Argemone."

She put into his hands a little Bible. He took it, and laid it down on the table.

For a minute he stood silent, and rooted to the spot. Disappointment, shame, rage, hatred, all boiled up madly within him. 'The bitterest insults rose to his lips, — "Flirt, cold-hearted pedant, fanatic!" but they sank again unspoken, as he looked into the celestial azure of those eyes, calm and pure as a soft evening sky. A mighty struggle between good and evil shook his heart to the roots; and, for the first time in his life, his soul breathed out one real prayer, that God would help him, now or never, to play the man. And in a moment the darkness passed; a new spirit called out all the latent strength within him; and gently and proudly he answered her, —

"Yes, I will go. I have had mad dreams, conceited and insolent; and have met with my deserts. Brute and fool as I am, I have aspired even to you! And I have gained in the sunshine of your condescension, strength and purity. — Is not that enough for me? And now, I will show you that I love you — by obeying you. You tell me to depart — I go for ever." He turned away. Why did she almost spring after him?

"Lancelot! one word! Do not misunderstand me, as I know you will. You will think me so cold, heartless, fickle. — Oh, you do not know — you never can know — how much I, too, have felt!"

He stopped, spell-bound. In an instant his conversation with the Irishman flashed up before him with new force and meaning. A thousand petty incidents, which he had driven contemptuously from his mind, returned as triumphant evidences; and, with an impetuous determination, he cried out, —

"I see — I see it all, Argemone! We love each other! You are mine, never to be parted!"

What was her womanhood, that it could stand against the energy of his manly will? The almost coarse simplicity of his words silenced her with a delicious violence. She could only bury her face in her hands and sob out, —

"Oh, Lancelot, Lancelot! whither are you forcing me?"

"I am forcing you no-whither. God, the Father of spirits, is leading you! You, who believe in Him, how dare you fight against Him?"

"Lancelot, I cannot — I cannot listen to you read that!" And she handed him the vicar's letter. He read it, tossed it on the carpet, and crushed it with his heel.

"Wretched pedant! Can your intellect be deluded by such barefaced sophistries? 'God's will,' forsooth! And if your mother's opposition is not a sign that God's will — if it mean anything except your own will, or that — that man's, — is against this mad project, and not for it, what sign would you have? So 'celibacy is the highest state!' And why? Because 'it is the safest and the easiest road to heaven!' A pretty reason, Vicar! I should have thought that that was a sign of a lower state, and not a higher. Noble spirits show their nobleness by daring the most difficult paths. And even if marriage was but one weed-field of temptations, as these miserable pedants say, who have either never tried it, or misused it to their own shame, it would be a greater deed to conquer its temptations than to flee from them in cowardly longings after ease and safety!"

She did not answer him, but kept her face buried in her hands.

"Again, I say, Argemone, will you fight against Fate — Providence — God — call it what you will? Who made us meet at the chapel? Who made me, by my accident, a guest in your father's house? Who put it into your heart to care for my poor soul? Who gave us this strange attraction towards each other, in spite of our unlikeness? Wonderful, that the very chain of circumstances which you seem to fancy the offspring of chance or the devil, should have first taught me to believe that there is a God who guides us! Argemone! speak, tell me, if you will, to go for ever; but tell me first the truth — You love me!"

A strong shudder ran through her frame — the ice of artificial years cracked, and the clear stream of her woman's nature welled up to the light, as pure as when she first lay on her mother's bosom: she lifted up her eyes, and with one long look of passionate tenderness she faltered out, —

"I love you!"

# 174 "MURDER WILL OUT," AND LOVE TOO.

He did not stir, but watched her with clasped hands, like one who in dreams finds himself in some fairy palace, and fears that a movement may break the spell.

"Now, go," she said; "go, and let me collect my thoughts. All this has been too much for me. Do not look sad — you may come again to-morrow."

She smiled, and held out her hand. He caught it, covered it with kisses, and pressed it to his heart. She half drew it back, frightened. The sensation was new to her. Again the delicious feeling of being utterly in his power came over her, and she left her hand upon his heart, and blushed as she felt its passionate throbbings.

He turned to go — not as before. She followed with greedy eyes her new-found treasure; and as the door closed behind him, she felt as if Lancelot was the whole world, and there was nothing beside him, and wondered how a moment had made him all in all to her; and then she sunk upon her knees, and folded her hands upon her bosom, and her prayers for him were like the prayers of a little child.

# CHAPTER XI.

Thunderstorm the first.

But what had become of "the bit of writing," which Harry Verney, by the instigation of his evil genius, had put into the squire's fly-book? Tregarva had waited in terrible suspense for many weeks, expecting the explosion which he knew must follow its discovery. He had confided to Lancelot the contents of the paper, and Lancelot had tried many stratagems to get possession of it, but all in vain. Tregarva took this as calmly as he did everything else. Only once, on the morning of the éclaircissement between Lancelot and Argemone, he talked to Lancelot of leaving his place, and going out to seek his fortune; but some spell, which he did not explain, seemed to chain him to the Priory. Lancelot thought it was the want of money, and offered to lend him ten pounds whenever he liked; but Tregarva shook his head.

"You have treated me, Sir, as no one else has done — like a man and a friend; but I am not going to make a market of your generosity. I will owe no man anything, save to love one another."

"But how do you intend to live?" asked Lancelot, as they stood together in the cloisters.

"There's enough of me, Sir, to make a good navigator if all trades fail."

"Nonsense! you must not throw yourself away so."

"Oh, Sir, there's good to be done, believe me, among those poor fellows. They wander up and down the land like hogs and heathens, and no one tells them that they have a soul to be saved. Not one parson in a thousand gives a thought to them. They can manage old folks and little children, Sir, but, somehow, they never can get hold of the young men — just those who want them most. There's a talk about ragged schools, now. Why don't they try ragged churches, Sir, and a ragged service?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, Sir, the parsons are ready enough to save souls, but it must be only according to rule and regulation. Before the Gospel can be preached there must be three thousand pounds got together for a church, and a thousand for an endowment, not to mention the thousand pounds that the clergyman's education costs: I don't think of his own keep, Sir; that's little enough, often; and those that work hardest get least pay, it seems to me. But after all that expense, when they've built the church, it's the tradesmen, and the gentry, and the old folk that fill it, and the working-men never come near it from one year's end to another."

"What's the cause, do you think?" asked Lancelot, who had himself remarked the same thing more than once.

"Half of the reason, Sir, I do believe, is that same Prayer-book. Not that the Prayer-book ain't a fine book enough, and a true one; but, don't you see, Sir, to understand the virtue of it, the poor fellows ought to be already just what you want to make them."

"You mean that they ought to be thorough Christians already, to appreciate the spirituality of the liturgy."

"You've hit it, Sir. And see what comes of the present plan; how a navvy drops into a church by accident, and there he has to sit like a fish out of water, through that hour's service, staring or sleeping, before he can hear a word that he understands; and, Sir, when the sermon does come at last, it's not many of them can make much out of those fine book-words and long sentences. Why don't they have a short simple service, now and then, that might catch the ears of the roughs and the blowens, without tiring out the poor thoughtless creatures' patience, as they do now?"

"Because," said Lancelot, — "because — I really don't know why. — But I think there is a simpler plan than even a ragged service."

"What then, Sir?"

"Field-preaching. If the mountain wont come to Mahomet, let Mahomet go to the mountain."

"Right, Sir; right you are. 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in.' And why are they to speak to them only one by one? Why not by the dozen and the hundred? We Wesleyans know, Sir, — for the matter of that, every soldier knows, — what virtue there is in getting a lot of men together; how good and evil spread like wildfire through a crowd; and one man, if you can stir him up, will become leaven to leaven the whole lump. Oh why, Sir, are they so afraid of field-preaching? Was not their Master and mine the prince of all field-preachers? Think, if the apostles had waited to collect subscriptions for a church before they spoke to the poor heathens, where should we have been now?"

Lancelot could not but agree. But at that moment a footman came up, and, with a face half laughing, half terrified, said, —

"Tregarva, master wants you in the study. And Yeast. 12 please, Sir, I think you had better go in too; master knows you're here, and you might speak a word for good, for he's raging like a mad bull."

"I knew it would come at last," said Tregarva, quietly, as he followed Lancelot into the house. It had come at last. The squire was sitting in his

It had come at last. The squire was sitting in his study, purple with rage, while his daughters were trying vainly to pacify him. All the men servants, grooms, and helpers, were drawn up in line along the wall, and greeted Tregarva, whom they all heartily liked, with sly and sorrowful looks of warning.

"Here, you Sir; you —, look at this. Is this the way you repay me? I, who have kept you out of the workhouse, treated you like my own child? And then to go and write filthy, rascally, Radical ballads on me and mine! This comes of your Methodism, you canting, sneaking hypocrite! — you viper — you adder — you snake — you —!" And the squire, whose vocabulary was not large, at a loss for another synonyme, rounded off his oration by a torrent of oaths; at which Argemone, taking Honoria's hand, walked proudly out of the room, with one glance at Lancelot of mingled shame and love. "This is your handwriting, you villain! you know it" (and the squire tossed the fatal paper across the table); "though I suppose you'll lie about it. How can you depend on fellows who speak evil of their betters? But all the servants are ready to swear it's your handwriting."

"Beg your pardon, Sir," interposed the old butler, "we didn't quite say that; but we'll all swear it isn't ours."

"The paper is mine," said Tregarva.

"Confound your coolness! He's no more ashamed

of it than — Read it out, Smith, read it out every word; and let them all hear how this pauper, this ballad-singing vagabond, whom I have bred up to insult me, dares to abuse his own master."

"I have not abused you, Sir," answered Tregarva. "I will be heard, Sir!" he went on in a voice which made the old man start from his seat and clench his first; but he sat down again. "Not a word in it is meant for you. You have been a kind and a good master to me. Ask where you will if I was ever heard to say a word against you. I would have cut off my right hand sooner than write about you or yours. But what I had to say about others lies there, and I am not ashamed of it."

"Not against me? Read it out, Smith, and see if every word of it don't hit at me, and at my daughters, too, by —, worst of all! Read it out, I say!"

Lancelot hesitated; but the squire, who was utterly beside himself, began to swear at him also, as masters of hounds are privileged to do; and Lancelot, to whom the whole scene was becoming every moment more and more intensely ludicrous, thought it best to take up the paper and begin:

# A ROUGH RHYME ON A ROUGH MATTER.

The merry brown hares came leaping Over the crest of the hill, Where the clover and corn lay sleeping Under the moonlight still.

Leaping late and early, Till under their bite and their tread The swedes, and the wheat, and the barley, Lay cankered, and trampled and dead.

### THUNDERSTORM THE FIRST.

A poacher's widow sat sighing On the side of the white chalk bank, Where under the gloomy fir-woods One spot in the ley throve rank.

She watched a long tuft of clover, Where rabbit or hare never ran; For its black sour haulm covered over The blood of a murdered man.

She thought of the dark plantation, And the hares, and her husband's blood, And the voice of her indignation Rose up to the throne of God.

"I am long past wailing and whining — I have wept too much in my life: I've had twenty years of pining As an English labourer's wife.

A labourer in Christian England, Where they cant of a Saviour's name, And yet waste men's lives like the vermin's For a few more brace of game.

There's blood on your new foreign shrubs, squire; There's blood on your pointers' feet; There's blood on the game you sell, squire, And there's blood on the game you eat!

"You villain!" interposed the squire, "when did I ever sell a head of game?"

> You have sold the labouring man, squire, Body and soul to shame,

To pay for your seat in the House, squire, And to pay for the feed of your game.

You made him a poacher yourself, squire, When you'd give neither work nor meat; And your barley-fed hares robbed the garden

At our starving children's feet;

When packed in one reeking chamber, Man, maid, mother, and little ones lay:
While the rain pattered in on the rotting bride-bed, And the walls let in the day;

When we lay in the burning fever On the mud of the cold clay floor,

Till you parted us all for three months, squire, At the cursed workhouse-door.

#### THUNDERSTORM THE FIRST.

We quarrelled like brutes, and who wonders? What self-respect could we keep, Worse housed than your hacks and your pointers, Worse fed than your hogs and your sheep?

"And yet he has the impudence to say he don't mean me!" grumbled the old man. Tregarva winced a good deal — as if he knew what was coming next; and then looked up relieved when he found Lancelot had omitted a stanza — which I shall not omit.

> Our daughters with base-born babies Have wandered away in their shame;

If your misses had slept, squire, where they did, Your misses might do the same.

Can your lady patch hearts that are breaking With handfuls of coals and rice,

Or by dealing out flannel and sheeting A little below cost price?

You may tire of the gaol and the workhouse, And take to allotments and schools, But you've run up a debt that will never Be repaid us by penny-club rules.

In the season of shame and sadness, In the dark and dreary day, When scrofula, gout, and madness, Are eating your race away;

When to kennels and liveried varlets You have cast your daughters' bread, And, worn out with liquor and harlots, Your heir at your feet lies dead;

When your youngest, the mealy-mouthed rector, Lets your soul rot asleep to the grave, You will find in your God the protector

Of the freeman you fancied your slave."

She looked at the tuft of clover, And wept till her heart grew light; And at last, when her passion was over, Went wandering into the night.

But the merry brown hares came leaping Over the uplands still,

Where the clover and corn lay sleeping On the side of the white chalk hill. "Surely, Sir," said Lancelot, "you cannot suppose that this latter part applies to you or your family?"

"If it don't, it applies to half the gentlemen in the vale, and that's just as bad. What right has the fellow to speak evil of dignities?" continued he, quoting the only text in the Bible which he was inclined to make a "rule absolute." "What does such an insolent dog deserve? What don't he deserve, I say?"

"I think," quoth Lancelot, ambiguously, "that a man who can write such ballads is not fit to be your gamekeeper, and I think he feels so himself," and Lancelot stole an encouraging look at Tregarva.

"And I say, Sir," the keeper answered, with an effort, "that I leave Mr. Lavington's service here on the spot, once and for all."

"And that you do, my fine fellow!" roared the squire. "Pay the rascal his wages, steward, and then duck him soundly in the weir-pool. He had better have stayed there when he fell in last."

"So I had, indeed, I think. But I'll take none of your money. The day Harry Verney was buried, I vowed that I'd touch no more of the wages of blood. I'm going, Sir; I never harmed you, or meant a hard word of all this for you, or dreamt that you or any living soul would ever see it. But what I've seen myself, in spite of myself, I've set down here, and am not ashamed of it. And woe," he went on, with an almost prophetic solemnity in his tone and gesture, — "woe to those who do these things! and woe to those also who, though they dare not do them themselves, yet excuse and defend those who dare, just because the world calls them gentlemen, and not tyrants and oppressors!" He turned to go. The squire, bursting with passion, sprung up with a terrible oath, turned deadly pale, staggered, and dropped senseless on the floor.

They all rushed to lift him up. Tregarva was the first to take him in his arms and place him tenderly in his chair, where he lay back with glassy eyes, snoring heavily in a fit of apoplexy.

"Go; for God's sake, go," whispered Lancelot to the keeper, "and wait for me at Lower Whitford. I must see you before you stir."

The keeper slipped away sadly. The ladies rushed in — a groom galloped off for the doctor — met him luckily in the village, and, in a few minutes, the squire was bled and put to bed, and showed hopeful signs of returning consciousness. And as Argemone and Lancelot leant together over his pillow, her hair touched her lover's, and her fragrant breath was warm upon his cheek; and her bright eyes met his and drank light from them, like glittering planets gazing at their sun.

The obnoxious ballad produced the most opposite effects on Argemone and on Honoria. Argemone, whose reverence for the formalities and the respectabilities of society, never very great, had, of late, utterly vanished before Lancelot's bad counsel, could think of it only as a work of art, and conceived the most romantic longing to raise Tregarva into some station where his talents might have free play. To Honoria, on the other hand, it appeared only as a very fierce, coarse, and impertinent satire, which had nearly killed her father. True, there was not a thought in it which had not at some time or other crossed her own mind; but that made her dislike all the more to see those thoughts put into plain English. That very intense

tenderness and excitability which made her toil herself among the poor, and had called out both her admiration of Tregarva and her extravagant passion at his danger, made her also shrink with disgust from anything which thrust on her a painful reality, which she could not remedy. She was a stanch believer, too, in that peculiar creed which allows every one to feel for the poor, except themselves, and considers that to plead the cause of working-men is, in a gentleman, the perfection of virtue, but in a working-man himself, sheer high treason. And so beside her father's sick-bed she thought of the keeper only as a scorpion whom she had helped to warm into life; and sighing assent to her mother, when she said, "That wretch! and he seemed so pious and so obliging! who would have dreamt that he was such a horrid Radical?" she let him vanish from her mind and out of Whitford Priors, little knowing the sore weight of manly love he bore with him.

As soon as Lancelot could leave the Priory, he hastened home to find Tregarva. The keeper had packed up all his small possessions and brought them down to Lower Whitford, through which the London coach passed. He was determined to go to London and seek his fortune. He talked of turning coalheaver, Methodist preacher, anything that came to hand, provided that he could but keep independence and a clear conscience. And all the while the man seemed to be struggling with some great purpose, — to feel that he had a work to do, though what it was, and how it was to be done, he did not see.

"I am a tall man," he said, "like Saul the son of Kish; and I am going forth, like him, Sir, to find my father's asses. I doubt I shan't have to look far for some of them."

"And perhaps," said Lancelot, laughing, "to find a kingdom."

"May be so, Sir. I have found one already, by God's grace, and I'm much mistaken if I don't begin to see my way towards another."

"And what is that?"

"The kingdom of God on earth, Sir, as well as in heaven. Come it must, Sir, and come it will some day."

Lancelot shook his head.

Tregarva lifted up his eyes and said, --

"Are we not taught to pray for the coming of His kingdom, Sir? And do you fancy that He who gave the lesson would have set all mankind to pray for what he never meant should come to pass?"

Lancelot was silent. The words gained a new and blessed meaning in his eyes.

"Well," he said, "the time, at least, of their fulfilment is far enough off. Union-workhouses and childmurder don't look much like it. Talking of that, Tregarva, what is to become of your promise to take me to a village wake, and show me what the poor are like?"

"I can keep it this night, Sir. There is a revel at Bonesake, about five miles up the river. Will you go with a discharged gamekeeper?"

"I will go with Paul Tregarva, whom I honour and esteem as one of God's own noblemen; who has taught me what a man can be, and what I am not," — and Lancelot grasped the keeper's hand warmly. Tregarva brushed his hand across his eyes, and answered, — "I said in my haste, All men are liars;' and God has just given me the lie back in my own teeth. Well, Sir, we will go to-night. You are not ashamed of putting on a smock-frock? For if you go as a gentleman, you will hear no more of them than a hawk does of a covey of partridges."

So the expedition was agreed on, and Lancelot and the keeper parted until the evening.

But why had the vicar been rumbling on all that morning through pouring rain, on the top of the London coach? And why was he so anxious in his inquiries as to the certainty of catching the up-train? Because he had had considerable experience in that wisdom of the serpent, whose combination with the innocence of the dove, in somewhat ultramontane proportions, is recommended by certain late leaders of his school. He had made up his mind, after his conversation with the Irishman, that he must either oust Lancelot at once, or submit to be ousted by him, and he was now on his way to Lancelot's uncle and trustee, the London banker.

He knew that the banker had some influence with his nephew, whose whole property was invested in the bank, and who had besides a deep respect for the kindly and upright practical mind of the veteran Mammonite. And the vicar knew, too, that he himself had some influence with the banker, whose son Luke had been his pupil at college. And when the young man lay sick of a dangerous illness, brought on by debauchery, into which weakness rather than vice had tempted him, the vicar had watched and prayed by his bed, nursed him as tenderly as a mother, and so won over his better heart that he

#### THUNDERSTORM THE SECOND.

became completely reclaimed, and took holy orders with the most earnest intention to play the man therein, as repentant rakes will often do, half from a mere revulsion to asceticism, half from real gratitude for their deliverance. This good deed had placed the banker in the vicar's debt, and he loved and reverenced him in spite of his dread of "Popish novelties." And now the good priest was going to open to him just as much of his heart as should seem fit; and by saying a great deal about Lancelot's evil doings, opinions, and companions, and nothing at all about the heiress of Whitford, persuade the banker to use all his influence in drawing Lancelot up to London, and leaving a clear stage for his plans on Argemone. He caught the up-train, he arrived safe and sound in town, but what he did there must be told in another chapter.

### CHAPTER XII.

#### Thunderstorm the second.

WEARY with many thoughts, the vicar came to the door of the bank. There were several carriages there, and a crowd of people swarming in and out, like bees round a hive-door, entering with anxious faces, and returning with cheerful ones, to stop and talk earnestly in groups round the door. Every moment the mass thickened — there was a run on the bank.

An old friend accosted him on the steps, --

"What! have you, too, money here, then?"

"Neither here nor anywhere else, thank Heaven!" said the vicar. "But is anything wrong?" "Have not you heard? The house has sustained a frightful blow this week — railway speculations, so they say — and is hardly expected to survive the day. So we are all getting our money out as fast as possible."

"By way of binding up the bruised reed, eh?"

"Oh! every man for himself. A man is under no obligation to his banker that I know of." And the good man bustled off, with his pockets full of gold.

The vicar entered. All was hurry and anxiety. The clerks seemed trying to brazen out their own terror, and shovelled the rapidly lessening gold and notes across the counter with an air of indignant nonchalance. The vicar asked to see the principal.

"If you want your money, Sir ---" answered the official, with a disdainful look.

"I want no money. I must see Mr. Smith on private business, and instantly."

"He is particularly engaged."

"I know it, and, therefore, I must see him. Take in my card, and he will not refuse me." A new vista had opened itself before him.

He was ushered into a private room; and, as he waited for the banker, he breathed a prayer. For what? That his own will might be done — a very common style of petition.

Mr. Smith entered, hurried and troubled. He caught the vicar eagerly by the hand, as if glad to see a face which did not glare on him with the cold selfish stamp of "business," and then drew back again, afraid to commit himself by any sign of emotion.

The vicar had settled his plan of attack, and deter-

mined boldly to show his knowledge of the banker's distress.

"I am very sorry to trouble you at such an unfortunate moment, Sir, and I will be brief; but, as your nephew's spiritual pastor —" (He knew the banker was a stout Churchman.)

"What of my nephew, Sir? No fresh misfortunes, I hope?"

"Not so much misfortune, Sir, as misconduct — I might say, frailty — but frailty which may become ruinous."

"How? how? Some *mésalliance*?" interrupted Mr. Smith, in a peevish, excited tone. "I thought there was some heiress on the *tapis* — at least, so I heard from my unfortunate son, who has just gone over to Rome. There's another misfortune. — Nothing but misfortunes; and your teaching, Sir, by-the-bye, I am afraid, has helped me to that one."

"Gone over to Rome?" asked the vicar, slowly.

"Yes, Sir, gone to Rome — to the pope, Sir! — to the devil, Sir! I should have thought you likely to know of it before I did!"

The vicar stared fixedly at him a moment, and burst into honest tears. The banker was moved.

"Pon my honour, Sir, I beg your pardon. I did not mean to be rude, but — but — To be plain with a clergyman, Sir, so many things coming together have quite unmanned me. Pooh, pooh," and he shook himself as if to throw off a weight; and, with a face once more quiet and business-like, asked, "And now, my dear Sir, what of my nephew?"

"As for that young lady, Sir, of whom you spoke, I can assure you, once for all, as her clergyman, and, therefore, more or less her — her confidant, that your nephew has not the slightest chance or hope in that quarter."

"How, Sir? You will not throw obstacles in the way?"

"Heaven, Sir, I think, has interposed far more insuperable obstacles — in the young lady's own heart — than I could ever have done. Your nephew's character and opinions, I am sorry to say, are not such as are likely to command the respect and affection of a pure and pious Churchwoman."

"Opinions, Sir? What, is he turning Papist too?"

"I am afraid, Sir, and more than afraid, for he makes no secret of it himself, that his views tend rather in the opposite direction; to an infidelity so subversive of the commonest principles of morality, that I expect, weekly, to hear of some unblushing and disgraceful outrage against decency, committed by him under its fancied sanction. And you know, as well as myself, the double danger of some profligate outbreak, which always attends the miseries of a disappointed earthly passion."

"True, very true. We must get the boy out of the way, Sir. I must have him under my eye."

"Exactly so, Sir," said the subtle vicar, who had been driving at this very point. "How much better for him to be here, using his great talents to the advantage of his family in an honourable profession, than to remain where he is, debauching body and mind by hopeless dreams, godless studies, and frivolous excesses."

"When do you return, Sir?"

"An hour hence, if I can be of service to you."

The banker paused a moment.

"You are a gentleman," (with an emphasis on the word), "and, as such, I can trust you."

"Say, rather, as a clergyman."

"Pardon me, but I have found your cloth give little additional cause for confidence. I have been as much bitten by clergymen — I have seen as sharp practice among them, in money matters as well as in religious squabbles, as I have in any class. Whether it is that their book education leaves them very often ignorant of the plain rules of honour which bind men of the world, or whether their zeal makes them think that the end justifies the means, I cannot tell; but —"

"But," said the vicar, half smiling, half severely, "you must not disparage the priesthood before a priest."

"I know it, I know it; and I beg your pardon: but if you knew the cause I have to complain. The slipperiness, Sir, of one stagging parson, has set rolling this very avalanche, which gathers size every moment, and threatens to overwhelm me now, unless that idle dog Lancelot will condescend to bestir himself, and help me."

The vicar heard, but said nothing.

"Me, at least, you can trust," he answered proudly; and honestly, too — for he was a gentleman by birth and breeding, unselfish and chivalrous to a fault and yet, when he heard the banker's words, it was as if the inner voice had whispered to him. "Thou art the man!"

"When do you go down?" again asked Mr. Smith. "To tell you the truth, I was writing to Lancelot when you were announced; but the post will not reach him till to-morrow at noon, and we are all so busy here, that I have no one whom I can trust to carry down an express."

The vicar saw what was coming. Was it his good angel which prompted him to interpose?

"Why not send a parcel by rail?"

"I can trust the rail as far as D—; but I cannot trust those coaches. If you could do me so great a kindness —"

"I will. I can start by the one o'clock train, and by ten o'clock to-night I shall be in Whitford."

"Are you certain?"

"If God shall please, I am certain."

"And you will take charge of a letter? Perhaps, too, you could see him yourself; and tell him, tell him — you see I trust you with everything — that my fortune, his own fortune, depends on his being here to-morrow morning. He must start to-night, Sir — to-night, tell him, if there were twenty Miss Lavingtons in Whitford, or he is a ruined man!"

The letter was written, and put into the vicar's hands, with a hundred entreaties from the terrified banker. A cab was called, and the clergyman rattled off to the railway terminus.

"Well," said he to himself, "God has indeed blessed my erand; giving, as always, 'exceeding abundantly more than we are able to ask or think!' For some weeks, at least, this poor lamb is safe from the destroyer's clutches. I must improve to the utmost those few precious days, in strengthening her in her holy purpose. But, after all, he will return, daring

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and cunning as ever; and then, will not the fascination recommence?"

And, as he mused, a little fiend passed by, and whispered, "Unless he comes up to-night he is a ruined man."

It was Friday, and the vicar had thought it a fit preparation for so important an errand to taste no food that day. Weakness and hunger, joined to the roar and bustle of London, had made him excited, nervous, unable to control his thoughts, or fight against a stupifying headache; and his self-weakened will punished him, by yielding him up an easy prey to his own fancies.

"Ay," he thought, "if he were ruined, after all, it would be well for God's cause. The Lavingtons, at least, would find no temptation in his wealth; and Argemone — she is too proud, too luxurious, to marry a beggar. She might embrace a holy poverty for the sake of her own soul; but for the gratification of an earthly passion, never! Base and carnal delights would never tempt her so far."

Alas, poor pedant! Among all that thy books taught thee, they did not open to thee much of the depths of that human heart which thy dogmas taught thee to despise as diabolic.

Again the little fiend whispered, -

"Unless he comes up to-night, he is a ruined man."

"And what if he is?" thought the vicar. "Riches are a curse; and poverty a blessing. Is it not his wealth which is ruining his soul? Idleness and fulness of bread have made him what he is - a luxurious and self-willed dreamer, battening on his own fancies. 13

Yeast.

Were it not rather a boon to him to take from him the root of all evil?"

Most true, vicar. And yet the devil was at that moment transforming himself into an angel of light for thee.

But the vicar was yet honest. If he had thought that by cutting off his right hand he could have saved Lancelot's soul (by canonical methods, of course; for who would wish to save souls in any other?) he would have done it without hesitation.

Again the little fiend whispered, --

"Unless he comes up to-night, he is a ruined man."

A terrible temptation seized him. Why should he give the letter to-night?

"You promised," whispered the inner voice.

"No, I did not promise exactly, in so many words; that is, I only said I would be at home to-night, if God pleased. And what if God should not please? — I promised for his good. What if, on second thoughts, it should be better for him not to keep my promise?"

A moment afterwards, he tossed the temptation from him indignantly: but back it came. At every gaudy shop, at every smoke-grimed manufactory, at the face of every anxious victim of Mammon, of every sturdy, cheerful artisan, the fiend winked and pointed, crying, "And what if he be ruined? Look at the thousands who have, and are miserable — at the millions who have not, and are no sadder than their own tyrants."

Again and again he thrust the thought from him, but more and more weakly. His whole frame shook;

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the perspiration stood on his forehead. As he took his railway ticket, his look was so haggard and painful that the clerk asked him whether he were ill. The train was just starting; he threw himself into a carriage — he would have locked himself in if he could; and felt an inexpressible relief when he found himself rushing past houses and market-gardens, whirled onward, whether he would or not, in the right path homeward.

But was it the right path? for again the temptation flitted past him. He threw himself back, and tried to ask counsel of One above; but there was no answer, nor any that regarded. His heart was silent, and dark as midnight fog. Why should there have been an answer? He had not listened to the voice within. Did he wish for a miracle to show him his duty?

"Not that I care for detection," he said to himself. "What is shame to me? Is it not a glory to be evilspoken of in the cause of God? How can the world appreciate the motives of those who are not of the world? — the divine wisdom of the serpent — at once the saint's peculiar weapon, and a part of his peculiar cross, when men call him a deceiver, because they confound, forsooth, his spiritual subtlety with their earthly cunning. Have I not been called 'liar,' 'hypocrite,' 'Jesuit,' often enough already, to harden me towards bearing that name once again?"

That led him into sad thoughts of his last few years' career, — of the friends and pupils whose secession to Rome had been attributed to his hypocrisy, his 'disguised Romanism;' and then the remembrance of poor Luke Smith flashed across him for the first time since he left the bank.

"I must see him," he said to himself; "I must argue with him face to face. Who knows but that it may be given even to my unworthiness to snatch him from this accursed slough?"

And then he remembered that his way home lay through the city in which the new convert's parish was — that the coach stopped there to change horses; and again the temptation leapt up again, stronger than ever, under the garb of an imperative call of duty.

He made no determination for or against it. He was too weak in body and mind to resist; and in a half-sleep, broken with an aching, terrified sense of something wanting, which he could not find, he was swept down the line, got on the coach, and mechanically, almost without knowing it, found himself set down at the city of A -, and the coach rattling away down the street.

He sprung from his stupor, and called madly after it — ran a few steps —

"You might as well try to catch the clouds, Sir," said the ostler. "Gemmen should make up their minds afore they gets down."

Alas! so thought the vicar. But it was too late; and, with a heavy heart, he asked the way to the late curate's house.

Thither he went. Mr. Luke Smith was just at dinner, but the vicar was, nevertheless, shown into the bachelor's little dining-room. But what was his disgust and disappointment at finding his late pupil *tête-à-tête* over a comfortable fish-dinner, opposite a burly, vulgar, cunning-eyed man, with a narrow rim of muslin turned down over his stiff cravat, of whose profession there could be no doubt.

"My dearest Sir," said the new convert, springing up with an air of extreme *empressement*, "what an unexpected pleasure! Allow me to introduce you to my excellent friend, Padre Bugiardo!"

The padre rose, bowed obsequiously, "was overwhelmed with delight at being at last introduced to one of whom he had heard so much," sat down again, and poured himself out a bumper of sherry; while the vicar commenced making the best of a bad matter by joining in the now necessary business of eating.

He had not a word to say for himself. Poor Luke was particularly jovial and flippant, and startlingly unlike his former self. The padre went on staring out of the window, and talking in a loud forced tone about the astonishing miracles of the "Ecstatica" and "Addolorata;" and the poor vicar, finding the purpose for which he had sacrificed his own word of honour utterly frustrated by the priest's presence, sat silent and crest-fallen the whole evening.

The priest had no intention of stirring. The late father-confessor tried to outstay his new rival, but in vain; the padre deliberately announced his intention of taking a bed, and the vicar, with a heavy heart, rose to go to his inn.

As he went out at the door, he caught an opportunity of saying one word to the convert.

"My poor Luke! and are you happy? Tell me honestly, in God's sight, tell me!"

"Happier than ever I was in my life! No more self-torture, physical or mental, now. These good priests thoroughly understand poor human nature, Ican assure you."

The vicar sighed, for the speech was evidently meant as a gentle rebuke to himself. But the young man ran on, half-laughing, —

"You know how you and the rest used to tell us what a sad thing it was that we were all cursed with consciences, — what a fearful, miserable burden moral responsibility was; but that we must submit to it as an inevitable evil. Now that burden is gone, thank God! We of the True Church have some one to keep our consciences for us. The padre settles all about what is right or wrong, and we slip on as easily as —"

"A hog or a butterfly!" said the vicar, bitterly.

"Exactly," answered Luke. "And, on your own showing, are clear gainers of a happy life here, not to mention heaven hereafter. God bless you! We shall soon see you one of us."

"Never, so help me God!" said the vicar; all the more fiercely because he was almost at that moment of the young man's opinion.

The vicar stepped out into the night. The rain, which had given place during the afternoon to a bright sun, and clear chilly evening, had returned with double fury. The wind was sweeping and howling down the lonely streets, and lashed the rain into his face, while grey clouds were rushing past the moon like terrified ghosts across the awful void of the black heaven. Above him gaunt poplars groaned and bent, like giants cowering from the wrath of Heaven, yet rooted by grim necessity to their place of torture. The roar and tumult without him harmonized strangely with the discord within. He staggered and strode along the plashy pavement, muttering to himself, at intervals, —

"Rest for the soul? peace of mind? I have been promising them all my life to others — have I found them myself? And here is this poor boy saying that he has gained them — in the very barbarian superstition which I have been anathematising to him! What is true, at this rate? What is false? Is anything right or wrong, except in as far as men feel it to be right or wrong? Else whence does this poor fellow's peace come, or the peace of many a convert more? They have all, one by one, told me the same story. And is not a religion to be known by its fruits? Are they not right in going where they can get peace of mind?"

Certainly, vicar. If peace of mind be the summum bonum, and religion is merely the science of selfsatisfaction, they are right; and your wisest plan will be to follow them at once, or, failing that, to apply to the next best substitute that can be discovered — alcohol and opium.

As he went on, talking wildly to himself, he passed the Union Workhouse. Opposite the gate, under the lee of a wall, some twenty men, women, and children, were huddled together on the bare ground. They had been refused lodging in the workhouse, and were going to pass the night in that situation. As he came up to them, coarse jests, and snatches of low drinking-songs, ghastly as the laughter of lost spirits in the pit, mingled with the feeble wailings of some child of shame. The vicar recollected how he had seen the same sight at the door of Kensington Workhouse, walking home one night in company with Luke Smith; and how, too, he had commented to him on that fearful sign of the times, and had somewhat unfairly drawn a contrast between the niggard cruelty of "popular Protestantism," and the fancied "liberality of the middle age." What wonder if his pupil had taken him at his word?

Delighted to escape from his own thoughts by anything like action, he pulled out his purse to give an alms. There was no silver in it, but only some fifteen or twenty sovereigns, which he had that day received as payment for some bitter reviews in a leading religious periodical. Everything that night seemed to shame and confound him more. As he touched the money, there sprung up in his mind in an instant the thought of the articles which had procured it; by one of those terrible, searching inspirations, in which the light which lighteth every man, awakes as a lightning-flash of judgment, - he saw them, and his own heart, for one moment, as they were; - their blind prejudice; their reckless imputations of motives; their wilful concealment of any pal-liating clauses; their party nicknames, given without a shudder at the terrible accusations which they conveyed. And then the indignation, the shame, the reciprocal bitterness, which those articles would excite, tearing still wider the bleeding wounds of that Church which they professed to defend! And then in this case, too, the thought rushed across him, "What if I should have been wrong and my adversary right? What if I have made the heart of the righteous sad whom God has not made sad? I! to have been dealing out Heaven's thunders, as if I were infallible!

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I, who am certain at this moment of no fact in heaven or earth except my own untruth! God! who am I that I should judge another?" And 'the coins seemed to him like the price of blood — He fancied that he felt them red-hot to his hand, and, in his eagerness to get rid of the accursed thing, he dealt it away fiercely to the astonished group, amid whining and flattery, wrangling and ribaldry; and then, not daring to wait and see the use to which his money would be put, hurried off to the inn, and tried in uneasy slumbers to forget the time, until the mail passed through at daybreak on its way to Whitford.

# CHAPTER XIII.

### The Village Revel.

AT dusk that same evening the two had started for the village fair. A velveteen shooting-jacket, a pair of corduroy trousers, and a waistcoat, furnished by Tregarva, covered with flowers of every imagi nable hue, tolerably disguised Lancelot, who was recommended by his conductor to keep his hands in his pockets as much as possible, lest their delicacy, which was, as it happened, not very remarkable, might betray him. As they walked together along the plashy turnpike road, overtaking, now and then, groups of two or three who were out on the same errand as themselves, Lancelot could not help remarking to the keeper how superior was the look of comfort in the boys and young men, with their ruddy cheeks and smart dresses, to the worn and haggard appearance of the elder men.

"Let them alone, poor fellows," said Tregarva;

"it won't last long. When they've got two or three children at their heels, they'll look as thin and shabby as their own fathers."

"They must spend a great deal of money on their clothes."

"And on their stomachs, too, Sir. They never lay by a farthing; and I don't see how they can, when their club-money's paid, and their insides are well filled."

"Do you mean to say that they actually have not as much to eat after they marry?"

"Indeed and I do, Sir. They get no more wages afterwards round here, and have four or five to clothe and feed off the same money that used to keep one; and that sum won't take long to work out, I think."

"But do they not, in some places, pay the married men higher wages than the unmarried?"

"That's a worse trick still, Sir; for it tempts the poor thoughtless boys to go and marry the first girl they can get hold of; and it don't want much persuasion to make them do that at any time."

"But why don't the clergymen teach them to put into the savings' banks?"

"One here and there, Sir, says what he can, though it's of very little use. Besides, every one is afraid of savings' banks now; not a year but one reads of some breaking and the lawyers going off with the earnings of the poor. And if they didn't, youth's a foolish time at best; and the carnal man will be hankering after amusement, Sir — amusement."

"And no wonder," said Lancelot; "at all events, I should not think they got much of it. But it does seem strange that no higher amusement can be found for them than the beer-shop. Can't they read? Can't they practice light and interesting handicrafts at home, as the German peasantry do?"

"Who'll teach'em, Sir? From the plough-tail to the reaping-hook, and back again, is all they know. Besides, Sir, they are not like us Cornish; they are a stupid pig-headed generation at the best, these south countrymen. They're grown-up babies, who want the parson and the squire to be leading them, and preaching to them, and spurring them on, and coaxing them up, every moment. And as for scholarship, Sir, a boy leaves school at nine or ten to follow the horses; and between that time and his wedding-day he forgets every word he ever learnt, and becomes, for the most part, as thorough a heathen savage at heart as those wild Indians in the Brazils used to be."

"And then we call them civilised Englishmen!" said Lancelot. "We can see that your Indian is a savage, because he wears skins and feathers; but your Irish cotter or your English labourer, because he happens to wear a coat and trousers, is to be considered a civilised man."

"It's the way of the world, Sir," said Tregarva, "judging carnal judgment, according to the sight of its own eyes; always looking at the outsides of things and men, Sir, and never much deeper. But as for reading, Sir, it's all very well for me, who have been a keeper and dawdled about like a gentleman with a gun over my arm; but did you ever do a good day's farm-work in your life? If you had, man or boy, you wouldn't have been game for much reading when you got home; you'd do just what these poor fellows do, — tumble into bed at eight o'clock, hardly waiting to take your clothes off, knowing that you must turn up again at five o'clock the next morning to get a breakfast of bread, and, perhaps, a dab of the squire's dripping, and then back to work again; and so on, day after day, Sir, week after week, year after year, without a hope or a chance of being anything but what you are, and only too thankful if you can get work to break your back, and catch the rheumatism over."

"But do you mean to say that their labour is so severe and incessant?"

"It's only God's blessing if it is incessant, Sir; for if it stops, they starve, or go to the house to be worse fed than the thieves in gaol. And as for its being severe, there's many a boy, as their mothers will tell you, comes home, night after night, too tired to eat their suppers, and tumble, fasting, to bed in the same foul shirt which they've been working in all the day, never changing their rag of calico from week's end to week's end, or washing the skin that's under it once in seven years."

"No wonder," said Lancelot, "that such a life of drudgery makes them brutal and reckless."

"No wonder, indeed, Sir; they've no time to think; they're born to be machines, and machines they must be; and I think, Sir," he added, bitterly, "it's God's mercy that they daren't think. It's God's mercy that they don't feel. Men that write books and talk at elections call this a free country, and say that the poorest and meanest has a free opening to rise and become prime minister, if he can. But you see, Sir, the misfortune is, that in practice he can't; for one who gets into a gentleman's family, or into a little

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shop, and so saves a few pounds, fifty know that they've no chance before them, but day-labourer born, day-labourer live, from hand to mouth, scraping and pinching to get not meat and beer even, but bread and potatoes; and then, at the end of it all, for a worthy reward, half-a-crown a-week of parish pay or the workhouse. That's a lively hopeful prospect for a Christian man!"

"But," said Lancelot, "I thought this New Poorlaw was to stir them up to independence?"

"Oh, Sir, the old law has bit too deep: it made them slaves and beggars at heart. It taught them not to be ashamed of parish pay — to demand it as a right."

"And so it is their right," said Lancelot. "In God's name, if a country is so ill-constituted that it cannot find its own citizens in work, it is bound to find them in food."

"Maybe, Sir, maybe. God knows I don't grudge it them. It's a poor pittance at best, when they have got it. But don't you see, sir, how all poor-laws, old or new either, suck the independent spirit out of a man; how they make the poor wretch reckless; how they tempt him to spend every extra farthing in amusement?"

"How then?"

"Why, he is always tempted to say to himself, 'Whatever happens to me, the parish must keep me. If I am sick, it must doctor me; if I am worn out, it must feed me; if I die, it must bury me; if I leave my children paupers, the parish must look after them, and they'll be as well off with the parish as they were with me. Now they've only got just enough to keep body and soul together, and the parish can't give them less than that. What's the use of cutting myself off from sixpenny-worth of pleasure here, and sixpenny-worth there? I'm not saving money for my children, *I'm only saving the farmers' rates.' There* it is, Sir," said Tregarva; "that's the bottom of it, Sir. — 'I'm only saving the farmers' rates.' 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!'"

"I don't see my way out of it," said Lancelot.

"So says everybody, Sir. But I should have thought those members of parliament, and statesmen, and university scholars, have been set up in the high places, out of the wood where we are all struggling and scrambling, just that they might see their way out of it; and if they don't, Sir, and that soon, as sure as God is in heaven, these poor fellows will cut their way out of it."

"And, blindfold and ignorant as they are," said Lancelot, "they will be certain to cut their way out just in the wrong direction."

"I'm not so sure of that, Sir," said Tregarva, lowering his voice. "What is written? That there is One who hears the desire of the poor. 'Lord, Thou preparest their heart, and Thine ear hearkeneth thereto, to help the fatherless and poor unto their right, that the man of the earth be no more exalted against them."

"Why you are talking like any Chartist, Tregarva!"

"Am I, Sir? I haven't heard much Scripture quoted among them myself, poor fellows; but to tell you the truth, Sir, I don't know what I am becoming. I'm getting half mad with all I see going on and

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not going on; and you will agree, Sir, that what's happened this day can't have done much to cool my temper or brighten my hopes; though God's my witness, there's no spite in me for my own sake. But what makes me maddest of all, Sir, is to see that everybody sees these evils except just the men who can cure them — the squires and the clergy." "Why surely, Tregarva, there are hundreds, if not

"Why surely, Tregarva, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of clergymen and landlords working heart and soul at this moment, to better the condition of the labouring classes!"

"Ah, Sir, they see the evils, and yet they don't see them. They do not see what is the matter with the poor man; and the proof of it is, Sir, that the poor have no confidence in them. They'll take their alms, but they'll hardly take their schooling, and their advice they won't take at all. And why is it, Sir? Because the poor have got in their heads in these days a strange confused fancy, maybe, but still a deep and a fierce one, that they haven't got what they call their rights. If you were to raise the wages of every man in this country from nine to twelve shillings a-week to-morrow, you wouldn't satisfy them; at least, the only ones whom you would satisfy would be the mere hogs among them, who, as long as they can get a full stomach, care for nothing else."

"What, in Heaven's name, do they want?" asked Lancelot.

"They hardly know yet, Sir; but they know well what they don't want. The question with them, Sir, believe me, is not so much, How shall we get better fed and better housed, but whom shall we depend upon for our food and for our house? Why should we depend on the will and fancy of any man for our rights? They are asking ugly questions among themselves, Sir, about what those two words, rent and taxes, mean, and about what that same strange word, freedom, means. Right or wrong, they've got the thought into their heads, and it's growing there, and they will find an answer for it. Depend upon it, Sir, I tell you a truth, and they expect a change. You will hear them talk of it to-night, Sir, if you've luck."

"We all expect a change, for that matter," said Lancelot. "That feeling is common to all classes and parties just now."

Tregarva took off his hat.

"For the word of the Lord hath spoken it.' Do you know, Sir, I long at times that I did agree with those Chartists. If I did, I'd turn lecturer to-morrow. How a man could speak out then! If he saw any door of hope, any way of salvation for these poor fellows, even if it was nothing better than salvation by act of parliament!"

"But why don't you trust the truly worthy among the clergy and the gentry to leaven their own ranks, and bring all right in time?"

"Because, Sir, they seem to be going the way only to make things worse. The people have been so dependent on them heretofore, that they have become thorough beggars. You can have no knowledge, Sir, of the whining, canting, deceit, and lies which those poor miserable labourers' wives palm on charitable adies. If they weren't angels, some of them, they 'd lock up their purses and never give away another

farthing. And, Sir, these free-schools, and these pennyclubs, and clothing-clubs, and these heaps of money which are given away, all make the matter worse and worse. They make the labourer fancy that he is not to depend upon God and his own right hand, but on what his wife can worm out of the good nature of the rich. Why, Sir, they growl as insolently now at the parson or the squire's wife if they don't get as much money as their neighbours, as they used to at the parish vestrymen under the old law. Look at that Lord Vieuxbois, Sir, as sweet a gentleman as ever God made. It used to do me good to walk behind him when he came over here shooting, just to hear the gentle, kind-hearted way in which he used to speak to every old soul he met. He spends his whole life and time about the poor, I hear. But, Sir, as sure as you live, he's making his people slaves and humbugs. He doesn't see, Sir, that they want to be raised bodily out of this miserable hand-to-mouth state, to be brought nearer up to him, and set on a footing where they can shift for themselves. Without meaning it, Sir, all his boundless charities are keeping the people down, and telling them they must stay down, and not help themselves, but wait for what he gives them. He fats prizelabourers, Sir, just as Lord Minchampstead fats prize-oxen and pigs."

Lancelot could not help thinking of that amusingly inconsistent, however well-meant, scene in *Comingsby*, in which Mr. Lyle is represented as trying to restore "the independent order of peasantry," by making them the receivers of public alms at his own gate, as if they had been middle-age serfs or vagabonds, and not citizens of modern England.

Yeast.

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"It may suit the Mr. Lyles of this age," thought Lancelot, "to make the people constantly and visibly comprehend that property is their protector and their friend, but I question whether it will suit the people themselves, unless they can make property understand that it owes them something more definite than protection."

Saddened by this conversation, which had helped to give another shake to the easy-going complacency with which Lancelot had been used to contemplate the world below him, and look on its evils as necessaries, ancient and fixed as the universe, he entered the village fair, and was a little disappointed at his first glimpse of the village-green. Certainly his expectations had not been very exalted; but there had run through them a hope of something melodramatic, dreams of May-pole dancing and athletic games, somewhat of village-belle rivalry, of the Corin and Sylvia school; or failing that, a few Touchstones and Audreys, some genial earnest buffo humour, here and there. But there did not seem much likelihood of it. Two or three apple and gingerbread-stalls, from which draggled children were turning slowly and wistfully away to go home; a booth full of trumpery fairings, in front of which dawdry girls were coaxing maudlin youths, with faded southernwood in their button-holes; another long low booth, from every crevice of which reeked odours of stale beer, and smoke, by courtesy denominated tobacco, to the treble accompaniment of a jigging fiddle and a tambourine, and the bass one of grumbled oaths and curses within - these were the means of relaxation which the piety, freedom, and civilisation .of fourteen centuries, from Hengist to

Queen Victoria, had devised and made possible for the English peasant!

"There seems very little here to see," said Lancelot, half peevishly.

"I think, Sir," quoth Tregarva, "that very thing is what's most worth seeing."

Lancelot could not help, even at the risk of detection, investing capital enough in sugar-plums and ginger-bread, to furnish the urchins around with the material for a whole carnival of stomach-aches; and he felt a great inclination the clear the fairing-stall in a like manner, on behalf of the poor bedizened sicklylooking girls round, but he was afraid of the jealousy of some beer-bemuddled swain. The ill-looks of the young girls surprised him much. Here and there smiled a plump rosy face enough; but the majority seemed under-sized, under-fed, utterly wanting in grace, vigour, and what the penny-a-liners call "rude health." He remarked it to Tregarva. The keeper smiled mournfully.

"You see those little creatures dragging home babies in arms nearly as big as themselves, Sir. That and bad foot, want of milk especially, accounts for their growing up no bigger than they do; and as for their sad countenances, Sir, most of them must carry a lighter conscience before they carry a brighter face."

"What do you mean?" asked Lancelot.

"The clergyman who enters the weddings and the baptisms knows well enough what I mean, Sir. But we'll go into that booth, if you want to see the thick of it, Sir; that's to say, if you're not ashamed."

"I hope we need neither of us do anything to be

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ashamed of there; and as for seeing, I begin to agree with you, that what makes the whole thing most curious is its intense dulness."

"What upon earth is that?"

"I say, look out there!"

"Well, you look out yourself!"

This was caused by a violent blow across the shins with a thick stick, the deed of certain drunken wiseacres who were peristing in playing in the dark the never very lucrative game of three sticks a-penny, conducted by a couple of gipsies. Poor fellows! there was one excuse for them. It was the only thing there to play at, except a set of skittles; and on those they had lost their money every Saturday night for the last seven years each at his own village beershop.

So into the booth they turned; and as soon as Lancelot's eyes were accustomed to the reeking atmosphere, he saw seated at two long temporary tables of board, fifty or sixty of "My Brethren," as clergymen call them in their sermons, wrangling, stupid, beery, with sodden eyes and drooping lips interspersed with more girls and brazen-faced women, with dirty flowers in their caps, whose whole business seemed to be to cast jealous looks at each other, and defend themselves from the coarse overtures of their swains.

Lancelot had been already perfectly astonished at the foulness of language which prevailed; and the utter absence of anything like chivalrous respect, almost of common decency, towards women. But lo! the language of the elder women was quite as disgusting as that of the men, if not worse. He whispered a remark on the point to Tregarva, who shook his head.

"It's the field-work, Sir — the field-work, that does it all. They get accustomed there from their childhood to hear words whose very meanings they shouldn't know; and the elder teach the younger ones, and the married ones are worst of all. It wears them out in body, Sir, that field-work, and makes them brutes in soul and in manners."

"Why don't they give it up? Why don't the respectable ones set their faces against it?"

"They can't afford it, Sir. They must go a-field, or go hungered, most of them. And they get to like the gossip, and scandal, and coarse fun of it, while their children are left at home to play in the roads, or fall into the fire, as plenty do every year."

"Why not at school?"

"The big ones are kept at home, Sir, to play at nursing those little ones who are too young to go. Oh, Sir," he added, in a tone of deep feeling, "it is very little of a father's care, or a mother's love, that a labourer's child knows in these days!"

Lancelot looked round the booth with a hopeless feeling. There was awkward dancing going on at the upper end. He was too much sickened to go and look at it. He began examining the faces and foreheads of the company, and was astonished at the first glance by the lofty and ample development of brain in at least one half. There were intellects there — or rather capacities of intellect, capable, surely, of anything, had not the promise of the brow been almost always belied by the loose and sensual lower features. They were evidently rather a degraded than an undeveloped race. "The low forehead of the Kabyle and Koord," thought Lancelot, "is compensated by the grim sharp lip, and glittering eye, which prove that all the small capabilities of the man have been called out into clear and vigorous action: but here the very features themselves, both by what they have and what they want, testify against that society, which carelessly wastes her most precious wealth, the manhood of her masses! Tregarva! you have observed a good many things — did you ever observe whether the men with the large foreheads were better than the men with the small ones?"-

"Ay, Sir, I know what you are driving at. I've heard of that new-fangled notion of scholars, which, if you'll forgive my plain speaking, expects man's brains to do the work of God's grace."

"But what have you remarked?"

"All I ever saw was, that the stupid-looking ones were the greatest blackguards, and the clever-looking ones the greatest rogues."

Lancelot was rebuked, but not surprised. He had been for some time past suspecting, from the bitter experience of his own heart, the favourite modern theory, which revives the Neo-Platonism of Alexandria, by making intellect synonymous with virtue, and then jumbling, like poor bewildered Proclus, the "physical understanding" of the brain, with the "pure intellect" of the spirit.

"You'll see something, if you look round, Sir, a great deal easier to explain — and, I should have thought, a great deal easier to cure — than want of wits."

"And what is that?"

"How different looking the young ones are from

their fathers, and still more from their grandfathers! Look at those three or four old grammers talking together there. For all their being shrunk with age and weather, you won't see such fine grown men anywhere else in this booth."

It was too true. Lancelot recollected now having remarked it before when at church; and having wondered why almost all the youths were so much smaller, clumsier, lower brained, and weaker-jawed than their elders.

"Why is it, Tregarva?"

"Worse food, worse lodging, worse nursing — and, I'm sore afraid, worse blood. There was too much filthiness and drunkenness went on in the old wartimes, not to leave a taint behind it, for many a generation. The prosperity of fools shall destroy them !"

"Oh!" thought Lancelot, "for some young sturdy Lancashire or Lothian blood, to put new life into the old frozen South-Saxon veins! Even a drop of the warm enthusiastic Celtic would be better than none. Perhaps this Irish immigration may do some good, after all."

Perhaps it may, Lancelot. Let us hope so, since it is pretty nearly inevitable.

Sadder and sadder, Lancelot tried to listen to the conversation of the men round him. To his astonishment he hardly understood a word of it. It was half articulate, nasal, guttural, made up almost entirely of vowels, like the speech of savages. He had never before been struck with the significant contrast between the sharp, clearly-defined articulation, the vivid and varied tones of the gentleman, or even of the London street-boy, when compared with the coarse, half-formed

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growls, as of a company of seals, which he heard round him. That single fact struck him, perhaps, more deeply than any; it connected itself with many of his physiological fancies; it was the parent of many thoughts and plans of his after-life. Here and there he could distinguish a half-sentence. An old shrunken man opposite him was drawing figures in the spilt beer with his pipe-stem, and discoursing of the glorious times before the great war, "when there was more food than there were mouths, and more work than there were hands." "Poor human nature!" thought Lancelot, as he tried to follow one of those unintelligible discussions about the relative prices of the loaf and the bushel of flour, which ended, as usual, in more swearing, and more quarrelling, and more beer to make it up - "Poor human nature! always looking back, as the German sage says, to some fancied golden age, never looking forward to the real one which is coming !"

"But I say, vather," drawled out some one, "they says there's a sight more money in England now, than there was afore the war-time."

"Ees, booy," said the old man; "but it's got into too few hands."

"Well," thought Lancelot, "there's a glimpse of practical sense, at least." And a pedler who sat next him, a bold, black-whiskered bully, from the Potteries, hazarded a joke, —

"It's all along of this new sky-and-tough-it farming. They used to spread the money broadcast, but now they drills it all in one place, like bone-dust, under their fancy plants, and we poor self-sown chaps gets none."

This garland of fancies was received with great

applause; whereat the pedler, emboldened, proceeded to observe, mysteriously, that "donkeys took a beating, but horses kicked at it; and that they'd found out that in Staffordshire long ago. You want a good Chartist lecturer down here, my covies, to show you donkeys of labouring men that you have got iron on your heels, if you only know'd how to use it."

"And what's the use of rioting?" asked some one, querulously.

"Why, if you don't riot, the farmers will starve you."

"And if we do, they'd turn sodgers, — yeomanry, as they call it, though there ain't a yeoman among them in these parts; and then they takes sword and kills us. So, riot or none, they has it all their own way."

Lancelot heard many more scraps of this sort. He was very much struck with their dread of violence. It did not seem cowardice. It was not loyalty — the English labourer has fallen below the capability of so spiritual a feeling; Lancelot had found out that already. It could not be apathy, for he heard nothing but complaint upon complaint bandied from mouth to mouth the whole evening. They seemed rather sunk too low in body and mind, — too stupified and spiritless, to follow the example of the manufacturing districts; above all, they were too ill-informed. It is not mere starvation which goads the Leicester weaver to madness. It is starvation with education, — an empty stomach and a cultivated, even though miscultivated, mind.

At that instant, a huge hulking farm-boy rolled

into the booth, roaring, dolefully, the end of a song, with a punctuation of his own invention, --

He'll maak me a lady. Zo. Vine to be zyure. And, vaithfully; love me. Although; I; be-e; poor-r-r-r.

Lancelot would have laughed heartily at him anywhere else; but the whole scene was past a jest; and a gleam of pathos and tenderness seemed to shine even from that doggrel, — a vista, as it were, of true genial nature, in the far distance. But as he looked round again, "What hope," he thought, "of its realization. Arcadian dreams of pastoral innocence and graceful industry, I suppose, are to be henceforth monopolized by the stage or the boudoir? Never, so help me God!"

The ursine howls of the new comer seemed to have awakened the spirit of music in the party.

"Coom, Blackburd, gi' us zong, Blackburd, bo'!" cried a dozen voices to an impish, dark-eyed gipsy boy, of some thirteen years old.

"Put 'n on taable. Now, then, pipe up!"

"What will 'ee ha'?"

"Mary; gi' us Mary."

"I shall make a' girls cry," quoth Blackbird, with a grin.

"Do 'n good, too; they likes it: zing away."

And the boy began, in a broad country twang, which could not overpower the sad melody of the air, or the rich sweetness of his flute-like voice, —

Young Mary walked sadly down through the green clover, And sighed as she looked at the babe at her breast;

"My roses are faded, my false love a rover,

The green graves they call me, 'Come home to your rest.'"

Then by rode a soldier in gorgeous arraying,

And "Where is your bride-ring, my fair maid?" he cried; "I ne'er had a bride-ring, by false man's betraying,

Nor token of love but this babe at my side.

Tho' gold could not buy me, sweet words could deceive me; So faithful and lonely till death I must roam."

"Oh, Mary, sweet Mary, look up and forgive me, With wealth and with glory your true love comes home.

So give me my own babe, those soft arms adorning, I'll wed you and cherish you, never to stray;

For it's many a dark and a wild cloudy morning Turns out by the noon-time a sunshiny day."

"A bad moral that, Sir," whispered Tregarva. "Better than none," answered Lancelot.

"It's well if you are right, Sir, for you'll hear no other."

The keeper spoke truly; in a dozen different songs, more or less coarsely, but, in general, with a dash of pathetic sentiment, the same case of lawless love was embodied. It seemed to be their only notion of the romantic. Now and then there was a poaching song; then one of the lowest flash London school — filth and all — was roared in chorus in the presence of the women.

"I am afraid that you do not thank me for having brought you to any place so unfit for a gentleman," said Tregarva, seeing Lancelot's sad face.

"Because it is so unfit for a gentleman, therefore I do thank you. It is right to know what one's own flesh and blood are doing."

"Hark to that song, Sir! that's an old one. I didn't think they'd get on to singing that."

The Blackbird was again on the table, but seemed this time disinclined to exhibit.

"Out wi' un, boy; it wain't burn thy mouth!"

"I be afeard."

"O' who?"

"Keper there."

He pointed to Tregarva; there was a fierce growl round the room.

"I am no keeper," shouted Tregarva, starting up. "I was turned off this morning for speaking my mind about the squires, and now I'm one of you, to live and die."

This answer was received with a murmur of applause; and a fellow in a scarlet merino neckerchief, three waistcoats, and a fancy shooting-jacket, who had been eyeing Lancelot for some time, sidled up behind them, and whispered in Tregarva's ear, —

"Perhaps you'd like an engagement in our line, young man; and your friend there, he seems a sporting gent too. — We could show him very pretty shooting."

Tregarva answered by the first and last oath Lancelot ever heard from him, and turning to him, as the rascal sneaked off, —

"That's a poaching crimp from London, Sir; tempting these poor boys to sin, and deceit, and drunkenness, and theft, and the hulks."

"I fancy I saw him somewhere the night of our row — you understand?"

"So do I, Sir; but there's no use talking of it."

Blackbird was by this time prevailed on to sing, and burst out as melodious as ever, while all heads were cocked on one side in delighted attention.

> I zeed a vire o' Monday night, A vire both great and high; But I wool not tell you where, my boys, Nor wool not tell you why.

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The varmer he come screeching out, To zave 'uns new brood mare; Zays I, "You and your stock may roast, Vor aught us poor chaps care."

"Coorus, boys,coorus!" At the chorus burst out, —

> Then here's a curse on varmers all, As rob and grind the poor; To re'p the fruit of all their works In \*\*\*\* for evermoor-r-r-r. A blind owld dame come to the vire, Zo near as she could get; Zays, "Here's a luck I warn't asleep, To lose this blessed hett. They robs us of our turfing rights, Our bits of chips and sticks, Till poor folks now can't warm their hands, Except by varmer's ricks." Then, &c.

And again the boy's delicate voice rang out the ferocious chorus, with something, Lancelot fancied, of fiendish exultation, and every worn face lighted up with a coarse laugh, that indicated no malice — but also no mercy.

Lancelot was sickened, and rose to go.

As he turned, his arm was seized suddenly and firmly. He looked round, and saw a coarse, handsome, showily-dressed girl, looking intently into his face. He shook her angrily off.

"You needn't be so proud, Mr. Smith; I've had my hand on the arm of as good as you. Ah, you needn't start! I know you — know you, I say, well enough. You used to be with him. Where is he?"

"Whom do you mean?"

"He!" answered the girl, with a fierce, surprised look, as if there could be no one else in the world. "Colonel Bracebridge," whispered Tregarva.

"Ay, he it is! And now walk further off, bloodhound! and let me speak to Mr. Smith. He is in Norway," she ran on eagerly. "When will he be back? When?"

"Why do you want to know?" asked Lancelot.

"When will he be back?" — she kept on fiercely repeating the question; and then burst out, — "Curse you gentlemen all! Cowards! you are all in a league against us poor girls! You can hunt alone when you betray us, and lie fast enough then! But when we come for justice, you all herd together like a flock of rooks; and turn so delicate and honourable all of a sudden — to each other! When will he be back, I say?"

"In a month," answered Lancelot, who saw that something really important lay behind the girl's wildness.

"Too late!" she cried, wildly, clapping her hands together; "Too late! Here — tell him you saw me; tell him you saw Mary, tell him where, and in what a pretty place, too, for maid, master, or man! What are you doing here?"

"What is that to you, my good girl?"

"True. Tell him you saw me here; and tell him, when next he hears of me, it will be in a very different place."

She turned and vanished among the crowd. Lancelot almost ran out into the night, — into a triad of fights, two drunken men, two jealous wives, and a brute who struck a poor, thin, worn-out woman, for trying to coax him home. Lancelot rushed up to interfere, but a man seized his uplifted arm. "He'll only beat her all the more when he getteth home."

"She has stood that every Saturday night for the last seven years, to my knowledge," said Tregarva; "and worse, too, at times."

"Good God! is there no escape for her from her tyrant?"

"No, Sir. It's only you gentlefolks who can afford such luxuries; your poor man may be tied to a harlot, or your poor woman to a ruffian, but once done, done for ever."

"Well," thought Lancelot, "we English have a characteristic way of proving the holiness of the marriage tie. The angel of Justice and Pity cannot sever it, only the stronger demon of Money."

Their way home lay over Ashy Down, a lofty chalk promontory, round whose foot the river made a sudden bend. As they paced along over the dreary hedgeless stubbles, they both started, as a ghostly "Ha! ha! ha!" rang through the air over their heads, and was answered by a like cry, faint and distant, across the wolds.

"That's those stone-curlews, — at least, so I hope," said Tregarva. "He'll be round again in a minute."

And again, right between them and the clear, cold moon, "Ha! ha! ha!" resounded over their heads. They gazed up into the cloudless star-bespangled sky, but there was no sign of living thing.

"It's an old sign to me," quoth Tregarva; "God grant that I may remember it in this black day of mine." "How so?" asked Lancelot; "I should not have fancied you a superstitious man."

"Names go for nothing, Sir, and what my forefathers believed in I am not going to be conceited enough to disbelieve in a hurry. But if you heard my story you would think I had reason enough to remember that devil's laugh up there."

"Let me hear it then."

"Well, Sir, it may be a long story to you, but it was a short one to me, for it was the making of me, out of hand, there and then, blessed be God! But if you will have it —"

"And I will have it, friend Tregarva," quoth Lancelot, lighting his cigar.

"I was about sixteen years old, just after I came home from the Brazils --"

"What! have you been in the Brazils?"

"Indeed and I have, Sir, for three years; and one thing I learnt there, at least, that's worth going for."

"What's that?"

"What the Garden of Eden must have been like. But those Brazils, under God, were the cause of my being here; for my father, who was a mine captain, lost all his money there, by no man's fault but his own, and not his either, the world would say, and when we came back to Cornwall he could not stand the ball work, nor I neither. Out of that burning sun, Sir, to come home here, and work in the levels, up to our knees in warm water, with the thermometer at 85°, and then up a thousand feet of ladder to grass, reeking wet with heat, and find the easterly sleet driving across those open furze crofts — he couldn't stand it, Sir — few stand it long, even of those who stay in Cornwall. We miners have a short lease of life; consumption and strains break us down before we're fifty."

"But how came you here?"

"The doctor told my father, and me too, Sir, that we must give up mining, or die of decline: so he came up here, to a sister of his that was married to the squire's gardener, and here he died; and the squire, God bless him and forgive him, took a fancy to me, and made me under-keeper. And I loved the life, for it took me among the woods and the rivers, where I could think of the Brazils, and fancy myself back again. But I mustn't talk of that — where God wills is all right. And it is a fine life for reading and thinking, a gamekeeper's, for it's an idle life at best. Now that's over," he added, with a sigh, "and the Lord has fulfilled His words to me, that He spoke the first night that ever I heard a stone-plover cry."

"What on earth can you mean?" asked Lancelot, deeply interested.

"Why, Sir, it was a wild, whirling, grey night, with the air full of sleet and rain, and my father sent me over to Redruth town to bring home some trade or other. And as I came back I got blinded with the sleet, and I lost my way across the moors. You know those Cornish furze-moors, Sir?"

"No."

"Well, then, they are burrowed like a rabbitwarren with old mine-shafts. You can't go in some places ten yards without finding great, ghastly, black holes, covered in with furze, and weeds, and bits of rotting timber; and when I was a boy I couldn't keep Yeast. 15 from them. Something seemed to draw me to go and peep down, and drop pebbles in, to hear them rattle against the sides, fathoms below, till they plumped into the ugly black still water at the bottom. And I used to be always after them in my dreams, when I was young — falling down them, down, down, all night long, till I woke screaming; for I fancied they were hell's mouth, every one of them. And it stands to reason, Sir; we miners hold that the lake of fire can't be far below. For we find it grow warmer and warmer, and warmer, the further we sink a shaft; and the learned gentlemen have proved, Sir, that it's not the blasting powder, nor the men's breaths, that heat the mine."

Lancelot could but listen.

"Well, Sir, I got into a great furze-croft, full of deads (those are the earth-heaps they throw out of the shafts), where no man in his senses dare go forward or back in the dark, for fear of the shafts; and the wind and the snow were so sharp, they made me quite stupid and sleepy; and I knew if I stayed there I should be frozen to death, and if I went on, there were the shafts ready to swallow me up: and what with fear, and the howling and raging of the wind, I was like a mazed boy, Sir. And I knelt down, and tried to pray; and then, in one moment, all the evil things I'd ever done, and the bad words and thoughts that ever crossed me, rose up together as clear as one page of a print-book; and I knew that if I died that minute I should go to hell. And then I saw through the ground all the water in the shafts glaring like blood, and all the sides of the shafts fierce red-hot, as if hell was coming up. And I heard the knockers

knocking, or thought I heard them, as plain as I hear that grasshopper in the hedge now."

"What are the knockers?"

"They are the ghosts, the miners hold, of the old Jews, Sir, that crucified our Lord, and were sent for slaves by the Roman emperors, to work the mines; and we find their old smelting-houses, which we call Jews' houses, and their blocks of tin, at the bottom of the great bogs, which we call Jews' tin; and there's a town among us, too, which we call Market-Jew — but the old name was Marazion; that means, the Bitterness of Zion, they tell me. Isn't it so, Sir?"

"I believe it is," said Lancelot, utterly puzzled in this new field of romance.

"And bitter work it was for them, no doubt, poor souls! We used to break into the old shafts and adits, which they had made, and find old stags'-horn pickaxes, that crumbled to pieces when we brought them to grass; and they say, that if a man will listen, Sir, of a still night, about those old shafts, he may hear the ghosts of them at working, knocking, and picking, as clear as if there was a man at work in the next level. It may be all an old fancy. I suppose it is. But I believed it when I was a boy; and it helped the work in me that night. But I'll go on with my story."

"Go on with what you like," said Lancelot.

"Well, Sir, I was down on my knees among the furze-bushes, and I tried to pray, but I was too frightened, for I felt the beast I had been, Sir; and I expected the ground to open and let me down every

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moment; and then there came by over my head a rushing, and a cry - 'Ha! ha! ha! Paul!' it said; and it seemed as if all the devils and witches were out on the wind, a-laughing at my misery. 'Oh, I'll mend - I'll repent,' I said, 'indeed I will:' and again it came back, - 'Ha! ha! ha! Paul!' it said. I knew afterwards that it was a bird; but the Lord sent it to me for a messenger, no less, that night. And I shook like a reed in the water; and then, all at once a thought struck me. 'Why should I be a coward? Why should I be afraid of shafts, or devils, or hell, or anything else? If I am a miserable sinner, there's One died for me - I owe Him love, not fear at all. I'll not be frightened into doing right — that's a rascally reason for repentance.' And so it was, Sir, that I rose up like a man, and said to the Lord Jesus, right out into the black, dumb air, -'If you'll be on my side this night, good Lord, that died for me, I'll be on your side for ever, villain as I am, if I'm worth making any use of.' And there and then, Sir, I saw a light come over the bushes, brighter, and brighter, up to me; and there rose up a voice within me, and spoke to me, quite soft and sweet, — 'Fear not, Paul, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.' And what more happened I can't tell, for when I woke I was safe at home. My father and his folk had been out with lanterns after me; and there they found me, sure enough, in a dead faint on the ground. But this I know, Sir, that those words have never left my mind since, for a day together; and I know that they will be fulfilled in me this tide, or never."

Lancelot was silent a few minutes.

"I suppose, Tregarva, that you would call this your conversion?"

"I should call it one, Sir, because it was one."

"Tell me now, honestly, did any real, practical change in your behaviour take place after that night?"

"As much, Sir, as if you put a soul into a hog, and told him that he was a gentleman's son; and, if every time he remembered that, he got spirit enough to conquer his hoggishness, and behave like a man, till the hoggishness died out of him, and the manliness grew up and bore fruit in him, more and more each day."

Lancelot half understood him, and sighed.

A long silence followed, as they paced on past lonely farm-yards, from which the rich manure-water was draining across the road in foul black streams, festering and streaming in the chill night air. Lancelot sighed as he saw the fruitful materials of food running to waste, and thought of the "over-population" cry; and then he looked across to the miles of brown moorland on the opposite side of the valley, that lay idle and dreary under the autumn moon, except where here and there a squatter's cottage and rood of fruitful garden gave the lie to the laziness and ignorance of man, who pretends that it is not worth his while to cultivate the soil which God has given him. "Good heavens!" he thought, "had our forefathers had no more enterprise than modern landlords, where should we all have been at this moment? Everywhere waste! Waste of manure, waste of land, waste of muscle, waste of brain, waste of population - and we call ourselves the workshop of the world!" As they passed through the miserable hamlet-street

of Ashy, they saw a light burning in a window. At the door below, a haggard woman was looking anxiously down the village.

"What's the matter, Mistress Cooper?" asked Tregarva.

"Here's Mrs. Grane's poor girl lying sick of the fever — the Lord help her! and the boy died of it last week. We sent for the doctor this afternoon, and he's busy with a poor soul that's in her trouble; and now we've sent down to the squire's, and the young ladies, God bless them! sent answer they'd come themselves straightway."

"No wonder you have typhus here," said Lancelot, "with this filthy open drain running right before the door. Why can't you clean it out?"

"Why, what harm does that do?" answered the woman, peevishly. "Beside, here's my master gets up to his work by five in the morning, and not back till seven at night, and by then he an't in no humour to clean out gutters. And where's the water to come from to keep a place clean? It costs many a one of us here a shilling a-week the summer through to pay for fetching water up the hill. We've work enough to fill our kettles. The muck must just lie in the road, smell or none, till the rain carries in away."

Lancelot sighed again.

"It would be a good thing for Ashy, Tregarva, if the weir-pool did, some fine morning, run up to Ashy Down, as poor Harry Verney said on his death bed."

"There wont be much of Ashy left by that time, Sir, if the landlords go on pulling down cottages at their present rate; driving the people into the

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towns, to herd together there like hogs, and walk out to their work four or five miles every morning."

"Why," said Lancelot, "wherever one goes one sees commodious new cottages springing up."

"Wherever you go, Sir; but what of wherever you don't go? Along the road-sides, and round the gentlemen's parks, where the cottages are in sight, it's all very smart; but just go into the outlying hamlets — a whited sepulchre, Sir, is many a great estate; outwardly swept and garnished, and inwardly full of all uncleanliness, and dead men's bones."

At this moment, two cloaked and veiled figures came up to the door, followed by a servant. There was no mistaking those delicate footsteps, and the two young men drew back with fluttering hearts, and breathed out silent blessings on the ministering angels, as they entered the crazy and reeking house.

"I'm thinking, Sir," said Tregarva, as they walked slowly and reluctantly away, "that it is hard of the gentlemen to leave all God's work to the ladies, as nine-tenths of them do."

"And I am thinking, Tregarva, that both for ladies and gentlemen, prevention is better than cure."

"There's a great change come over Miss Argemone, Sir. She used not to be so ready to start out at midnight to visit dying folk. A blessed change!"

Lancelot thought so too, and he thought that he knew the cause of it.

Argemone's appearance, and their late conversation, had started a new covey of strange fancies. Lancelot followed them over hill and dale, glad to escape a moment from the mournful lessons of that evening; but even over them there was a cloud of sadness. Harry Verney's last words, and Argemone's accidental whisper about "a curse upon the Lavingtons," rose to his mind. He longed to ask Tregarva, but he was afraid — not of the man, for there was a delicacy in his truthfulness which encouraged the most utter confidence, but of the subject itself; but curiosity conquered.

What did old Harry mean about the Nun-pool?" he said, at last. "Every one seemed to understand him."

"Ah, Sir, he oughtn't to have talked of it! But dying men, at times, see over the dark water into deep things, — deeper than they think themselves. Perhaps there's one speaks through them. But I thought every one knew the story."

"I do not, at least."

"Perhaps it's so much the better, Sir."

"Why? I must insist on knowing. It is necessary — proper, that is — that I should hear everything that concerns —"

"I understand, Sir, so it is; and I'll tell you. The story goes, that in the old Popish times, when the nuns held Whitford Priors, the first Mr. Lavington that ever was came from the king with a warrant to turn them all out, poor souls, and take the lands for his own. And they say the head lady of them prioress, or abbess, as they called her — withstood him, and cursed him, in the name of the Lord, for a hypocrite who robbed harmless women under the cloak of punishing them for sins they'd never committed (for they say, Sir, he went up to court, and slandered the nuns there for drunkards and worse). And she told

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him, 'That the curse of the nuns of Whitford should be on him and his, till they helped the poor in the spirit of the nuns of Whitford, and the Nun-pool ran up to Ashy Down.'"

"That time is not come yet," said Lancelot.

"But the worst is to come, Sir. For he or his, Sir, that night, said or did something to the lady, that was more than woman's heart could bear; and the next morning she was found dead and cold, drowned in that weir-pool. And there the gentleman's eldest son was drowned, and more than one Lavington beside. Miss Argemone's only brother, that was the heir, was drowned there, too, when he was a little one."

"I never heard that she had a brother."

"No, Sir, no one talks of it. There are many things happen in the great house that you must go to the little house to hear of. But the country-folk believe, Sir, that the nun's curse holds true; and they say, that Whitford folks have been getting poorer and wickeder, ever since that time, and will, till the Nunpool runs up to Ashy, and the Lavingtons' name goes out of Whitford Priors."

Lancelot said nothing. A presentiment of evil hung over him. He was utterly down-hearted about Tregarva, about Argemone, about the poor. The truth was, he could not shake off the impression of the scene he had left, utterly disappointed and disgusted with the "revel." He had expected, as I said before, at least to hear something of pastoral sentiment, and of genial frolicsome humour; to see some innocent, simple enjoyment: but instead, what had he seen but vanity, jealousy, hoggish sensuality, dull vacuity?

drudges struggling for one night to forget their drudgery. And yet withal, those songs, and the effect which they produced, showed that in these poor creatures, too, lay the genius of pathos, taste, melody, soft and noble affections. "What right have we," thought he, "to hinder their development? Art, poetry, music, science, - ay, even those athletic and graceful exercises on which we all pride ourselves, which we consider necessary to soften and refine ourselves, what God has given us a monopoly of them? - what is good for the rich man is good for the poor. Overeducation? And what of that? What if the poor be raised above "their station"? What right have we to keep them down? How long have they been our born thralls in soul, as well as in body? What right have we to say that they shall know no higher recreation than the hogs, because, forsooth, if we raised them, they might refuse to work - for us? Are we to fix how far their minds may be developed? Has not God fixed it for us, when He gave them the same passions, talents, tastes, as our own?"

Tregarva's meditations must have been running in a very different channel, for he suddenly burst out, after long silence, —

"It's a pity these fairs can't be put down. They do a lot of harm: ruin all the young girls round, the Dissenters' children especially, for they run utterly wild; their parents have no hold on them at all."

"They tell them that they are children of the devil," said Lancelot. "What wonder if the children take them at their word, and act accordingly?"

"The parson here, Sir, who is a God-fearing man

enough, tried hard to put down this one, but the innkeepers were too strong for him."

"To take away their only amusement, in short. He had much better have set to work to amuse them himself."

"His business is to save souls, Sir, and not to amuse them. I don't see, Sir, what Christian people want with such vanities."

Lancelot did not argue the point, for he knew the prejudices of Dissenters on the subject; but it did strike him that if Tregarva's brain had been a little less preponderant, he, too, might have found the need of some recreation besides books and thought.

By this time they were at Lancelot's door. He bid the keeper a hearty good night, made him promise to see him next day, and went to bed and slept till nearly noon.

When he walked into his breakfast-room, he found a note on the table in his uncle's hand-writing. The vicar's servant had left it an hour before. He opened it listlessly, rang the bell furiously, ordered out his best horse, and, huddling on his clothes, galloped to the nearest station, caught the train, and arrived at his uncle's bank — it had stopped payment two hours before.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## What's to be done?

YES! the bank had stopped. The ancient firm of Smith, Brown, Jones, Robinson, and Co., which had been for some years past expanding from a solid golden organism into a cobweb-tissue and huge balloon

of threadbare paper, had at last worn through and collapsed, dropping its car and human contents miserably into the Thames mud. Why detail the pitiable post mortem examination resulting? Lancelot sickened over it for many a long day; not, indeed, mourning at his private losses, but at the thorough hollowness of the system which it exposed, about which he spoke his mind pretty freely to his uncle, who bore it goodhumouredly enough. Indeed, the discussions to which it gave rise rather comforted the good man, by turning his thoughts from his own losses to general principles. "I have ruined you, my poor boy," he used to say; "so you may as well take your money's worth out of me in bullying." Nothing, indeed, could surpass his honest and manly sorrow for having been the cause of Lancelot's beggary; but as for persuading him that his system was wrong, it was quite impossible. Not that Lancelot was hard upon him; on the contrary, he assured him, repeatedly, of his conviction, that the precepts of the Bible had nothing to do with the laws of commerce; that though the Jews were forbidden to take interest of Jews, Christians had a perfect right to be as hard as they liked on "brother" Christians; that there could not be the least harm in share-jobbing, for though it did, to be sure, add nothing to the wealth of the community -- only conjure money out of your neighbour's pocket into your own - yet was not that all fair in trade? If a man did not know the real value of the shares he sold you, you were not bound to tell him. Again, Lancelot quite agreed with his uncle, that though covetousness might be idolatry, yet money-making could not be called covetousness; and that on the whole, though making haste to be rich

was denounced as a dangerous and ruinous temptation in St. Paul's times, that was not the slightest reason why it should be so now. All these concessions were made with a freedom which caused the good banker to suspect at times that his shrewd nephew was laughing at him in his sleeve, but he could not but subscribe to them for the sake of consistency; though, as a stanch Protestant, it puzzled him a little at times to find it necessary to justify himself by getting his "infidel" nephew to explain away so much of the Bible for him. But men are accustomed to do that nowadays, and so was he.

Once only did Lancelot break out with his real sentiments when the banker was planning how to reestablish his credit; to set to work, in fact, to blow over again the same bubble which had already burst under him.

"If I were a Christian," said Lancelot, "like you, I would call this credit system of yours the devil's selfish counterfeit of God's order of mutual love and trust; the child of that miserable dream, which, as Dr. Chalmers well said, expects universal selfishness to do the work of universal love. Look at your credit system, how — not in its abuse, but in its very essence — it carries the seeds of self-destruction. In the first place, a man's credit depends, not upon his real worth and property, but upon his reputation for property; daily and hourly he is tempted, he is forced, to puff himself, to pretend to be richer than he is."

The banker sighed and shrugged his shoulders. "We all do it, my dear boy."

"I know it. You must do it, or be more than human. There is lie the first, and look at lie the second. This credit system is founded on the universal faith and honour of men towards men. But do you think faith and honour can be the children of selfishness? Men must be chivalrous and disinterested to be honourable. And you expect them all to join in universal faith — each for his own selfish interest! You forget that if that is the prime motive, men will be honourable only as long as it suits that same self-interest."

The banker shrugged his shoulders again.

"Yes, my dear uncle," said Lancelot, "you all forget it, though you suffer for it daily and hourly; though the honourable men among you complain of the stain which has fallen on the old chivalrous good faith of English commerce, and say that now, abroad as well as at home, an Englishman's word is no longer worth other men's bonds. You see the evil, and you deplore it in disgust. Ask yourself honestly, how can you battle against it, while you allow in practice, and in theory too, except in church on Sundays, the very falsehood from which it all springs? - that a man is bound to get wealth, not for his country, but for himself; that, in short, not patriotism, but selfishness, is the bond of all society. Selfishness can collect, not unite, a herd of cowardly wild cattle, that they may feed together, breed together, keep off the wolf and bear together. But when one of your wild cattle falls sick, what becomes of the corporate feelings of the herd then? For one man of your class who is nobly helped by his fellows, are not the thousand left behind to perish? Your Bible talks of society, not as a herd, but as a living tree, an organic individual body, a holy brotherhood, and kingdom of God. And here is an idol which you have set up instead of it!"

But the banker was deaf to all arguments. No doubt he had plenty, for he was himself a just and generous, ay, and a God-fearing man in his way, only he regarded Lancelot's young fancies as too visionary to deserve an answer; which they most probably are; else, having been proached as often as they have been, they would surely, ere now, have provoked the complete refutation which can, no doubt, be given to them by hundreds of learned votaries of so-called commerce. And here I beg my readers to recollect, that I am in no way answerable for the speculations either of Lancelot or any of his acquaintances; and that these papers have been, from beginning to end, as in name so in nature, Yeast — an honest sample of the questions which, good or bad, are fermenting in the minds of the young of this day, and are rapidly leavening the minds of the rising generation. No doubt they are all as full of fallacies as possible, but as long as the saying of the German sage stands true, that "the destiny of any nation, at any given moment, depends on the opinions of its young men under five-andtwenty," so long it must be worth while for those who wish to preserve the present order of society to justify its acknowledged evils somewhat, not only to the few young men who are interested in preserving them, but also to the many who are not.

Though, therefore, I am neither Plymouth Brother nor Communist, and as thoroughly convinced as the newspapers can make me that to assert the duties of property is only to plot its destruction, and that a community of goods must needs imply a community of wives (as every one knows was the case with the apostolic Christians), I shall take the liberty of narrating Lancelot's fanatical conduct, without execratory comment, certain that he will still receive his just reward of condemnation; and that, if I find facts, a sensible public will find abhorence for them. His behaviour was, indeed, most singular; he absolutely refused a good commercial situation which his uncle procured him. He did not believe in being "cured by a hair of the dog that bit him;" and he refused, also, the really generous offers of the creditors, to allow him a sufficient maintenance.

"No," he said, "no more pay without work for me. I will earn my bread or starve. It seems God's will to teach me what poverty is — I will see that His intention is not left half-fulfilled. I have sinned, and only in the stern delight of a just penance can I gain self-respect."

"But, my dear madman," said his uncle "you are just the innocent one among us all. You, at least, were only a sleeping partner."

"And therein lies my sin; I took money which I never earned, and cared as little how it was gained as how I spent it. Henceforth I shall touch no farthing which is the fruit of a system which I cannot approve. I accuse no one. Actions may vary in rightfulness, according to the age and the person. But what may be right for you, because you think it right, is surely wrong for me, because I think it wrong."

So, with grim determination, he sent to the hammer every article he possessed, till he had literally nothing left but the clothes in which he stood. "He could not rest," he said, "till he had pulled out all his borrowed peacock's feathers. When they were gone he should be able to see, at last, whether he was jackdaw or eagle." And wonder not, reader, at this same strength of will. The very genius, which too often makes its possessor self-indulgent in common matters, from the intense capability of enjoyment which it brings, may also, when once his whole being is stirred into motion by some great object, transform him into a hero.

And he carried a letter, too, in his bosom, night and day, which routed all coward fears and sad forebodings as soon as they arose, and converted the lonely and squalid lodging to which he had retired, into a fairy palace peopled with bright phantoms of future bliss. I need not say from whom it came.

"Beloved!" (it ran) "Darling! you need not pain yourself to tell me anything. I know all, and I know too, (do not ask me how,) your noble determination to drink the wholesome cup of poverty to the very dregs.

"Oh that I were with you! Oh that I could give you my fortune! but that is not yet, alas! in my own power. No! rather would I share that poverty with you, and strengthen you in your purpose. And yet, I cannot bear the thought of you, lonely — perhaps miserable. But, courage! though you have lost all, you have found me; and now you are knitting me to you for ever — justifying my own love to me by your nobleness; and am I not worth all the world to you? I dare say this to you; you will not think me conceited. Can we misunderstand each other's hearts? And all this while you are alone! Oh! I have mourned for you! Since I heard of your misfortune I have not tasted pleasure. The light of heaven has been black to me, and I have lived only upon love. I will not taste comfort while you are wretched. Would that I could be poor like you! Every night upon the bare floor I lie down to sleep, and fancy you in your little chamber, and nestle to you, and cover that dear face with kisses. Strange! that I should dare to speak thus to you, whom a few months ago I had never heard of! Wonderful simplicity of love! How all that is prudish and artificial flees before it! I seem to have begun a new life. If I could play now, it would be only with little children. Farewell, be great — a glorious future is before you, and me in you!"

Lancelot's answer must remain untold; perhaps the veil has been already too far lifted which hides the sanctuary of such love. But, alas! to his letter no second had been returned; and he felt -- though he dared not confess it to himself - a gloomy presentiment of evil flit across him, as he thought of his fallen fortunes, and the altered light in which his suit would be regarded by Argemone's parents. Once he blamed himself bitterly for not having gone to Mr. Lavington the moment he discovered Argemone's affection, and insuring — as he then might have done — his consent. But again he felt that not sloth had kept him back, but adoring reverence for his God-given treasure, and humble astonishment at his own happiness; and he fled from the thought into renewed examination into the state of the masses, the effect of which was only to deepen his own determination to share their lot.

But at the same time, it seemed to him but fair to live, as long as it would last, on that part of his capital which his creditors would have given nothing for namely, his information; and he set to work to write. But, alas! he had but a "small literary connexion;"

and the entrée of the initiated ring is not obtained in a day. . . . . Besides, he would not write trash. - He was in far too grim a humour for that; and if he wrote on important subjects, able editors always were in the habit of entrusting them to old contributors, - men, in short, in whose judgment they had confidence not to say anything which would commit the magazine to anything but its own little party-theory. And behold! poor Lancelot found himself of no party whatsoever. He was in a minority of one against the whole world, on all points, right or wrong. He had the unhappiest knack (as all geniuses have) of seeing connexions, humorous or awful, between the most seemingly antipodal things; of illustrating every subject from three or four different spheres which it is anathema to mention in the same page. If he wrote a physical-science article, able editors asked him what the deuce a scrap of high-churchism did in the middle of it? If he took the same article to a high-church magazine, the editor could not commit himself to any theory which made the earth more than six thousand years old, and was afraid that the public taste would not approve of the allusions to free-masonry and Soyer's soup. . . . And worse than that, one and all - Jew, Turk, infidel, and heretic, as well as the orthodox -joined in pious horror at his irreverence; - the shocking way he had of jumbling religion and politics - the human and the divine - the theories of the pulpit with the facts of the exchange. . . . The very atheists, who laughed at him for believing in a God, agreed that that, at least, was inconsistent with the dignity of the God - who did not exist . . . . It was Syncretism . . . . Pantheism. . . .

16\*

"Very well, friends," quoth Lancelot to himself, in bitter rage, one day, "if you choose to be without God in the world, and to honour Him by denying Him .... do so! You shall have your way; and go to the place whither it seems leading you just now, at railroad pace. But I must live.... Well, at least, there is some old college nonsense of mine, written three years ago, when I believed, like you, that all heaven and earth was put together out of separate bits, like a child's puzzle, and that each topic ought to have its private little pigeon-hole all to itself in a man's brain, like drugs in a chemist's shop. Perhaps it will suit you, friends; perhaps it will be system frozen, and narrow, and dogmatic, and cowardly, and godless enough for you."....

So he went forth with them to market; and behold! they were bought forthwith. There was verily a demand for such; .... and in spite of the ten thousand ink-fountains which were daily pouring out similar Stygian liquors, the public thirst remained unslaked. "Well," thought Lancelot, "the negro race is not the only one which is afflicted with manias for eating dirt. .... By-the-bye, where is poor Luke?"

Ah! — where was poor Luke? Lancelot had received from him one short and hurried note, blotted with tears, which told how he had informed his father; and how his father had refused to see him, and had forbid him the house; and how he had offered him an allowance of fifty pounds a year (it should have been five hundred, he said, if he had possessed it), which Luke's director, sensibly enough, had compelled him to accept . . . . And there the letter ended, abruptly, leaving the writer evidently in lower depths than he had either experienced already, or expected at all.

Lancelot had often pleaded for him with his father; but in vain. Not that the good man was hard-hearted: he would cry like a child about it all to Lancelot when they sat together after dinner. But he was utterly beside himself, what with grief, shame, terror, and astonishment. On the whole, the sorrow was a real comfort to him: it gave him something beside his bankruptcy to think of; and, distracted between the two different griefs, he could brood over neither. But of the two, certainly his son's conversion was the worst in his eyes. The bankruptcy was intelligible — measureable; — it was something known and classified — part of the ills which flesh (or, at least, commercial flesh) is heir to. But going to Rome! —

"I can't understand it. I won't believe it. It's so foolish, you see, Lancelot — so foolish — like an ass that eats thistles!.... There must be some reason; — there must be — something we don't know, Sir! Do you think they could have promised to make him a cardinal?"

Lancelot quite agreed that there were reasons for it, that they — or, at least, the banker — did not know....

"Depend upon it, they promised him something some prince-bishopric, perhaps. Else why on earth could a man go over? It's out of the course of nature!"

Lancelot tried in vain to make him understand that a man might sacrifice everything to conscience, and actually give up all worldly weal for what he thought right. The banker turned on him with angry resignation — "Very well — I suppose he's done right, then! I suppose you'll go next! Take up a false religion, and give up everything for it! Why then, he must be honest; and if he's honest, he's in the right; and I suppose I'd better go, too!"

Lancelot argued; but in vain. The idea of disinterested sacrifice was so utterly foreign to the good man's own creed and practice, that he could but see one pair of alternatives.

"Either he is a good man, or he's a hypocrite. Either he's right, or he's gone over for some vile selfish end; and what can that be but money?"

Lancelot gently hinted that there might be other selfish ends besides pecuniary ones — saving one's soul, for instance.

"Why, if he wants to save his soul, he's right. What ought we all to do, but try to save our souls? I tell you there's some sinister reason. They've told him that they expect to convert England — I should like to see them do it! — and that he'll be made a bishop. Don't argue with me, or you'll drive me mad. I know those Jesuits!"

And as soon as he began upon the Jesuits, Lancelot prudently held his tongue. The good man had worked himself up into a perfect frenzy of terror and suspicion about them. He suspected concealed Jesuits among his footmen, and his housemaids; Jesuits in his countinghouse, Jesuits in his duns . . .

"Hang it, Sir! how do I know that there ain't a Jesuit listening to us now behind the curtain?"

"I'll go and look," quoth Lancelot, and suited the action to the word.

"Well, if there ain't, there might be. They're

everywhere, I tell you. That vicar of Whitford was a Jesuit. I was sure of it all along; but the man seemed so pious; and certainly he did my poor dear boy a deal of good. But he ruined you, you know. And I'm convinced — no, don't contradict me, I tell you, I won't stand it — I'm convinced that this whole mess of mine is a plot of those rascals; — I'm as certain of it as if they'd told me!"

"For what end?"

"How the deuce can I tell? Am I a Jesuit, to understand their sneaking, underhand — pah! I'm sick of life! Nothing but rogues, wherever one turns!"

And then Lancelot used to try to persuade him to take poor Luke back again. But vague terror had steeled his heart.

"What? Why, he'd convert us all! He'd convert his sisters! He'd bring his priests in here, or his nuns disguised as lady's-maids, and we should all go over, every one of us, like a set of ninepins!"

"You seem to think Protestantism a rather shaky cause, if it is so easy to be upset."

"Sir! Protestantism is the cause of England and Christianity, and civilization, and freedom, and common sense, Sir! and that's the very reason why it's so easy to pervert men from it; and the very reason why it's a lost cause, and popery, and Antichrist, and the gates of hell, are coming in like a flood to prevail against it!"

"Well," thought Lancelot, "that is the very strangest reason for its being a lost cause! Perhaps if my poor uncle believed it really to be the cause of God Himself, he would not be in such extreme fear for it,

or fancy it required such a hot-bed and green-house culture. . . . Really, if his sisters were little girls of ten years old, who looked up to him as an oracle, there would be some reason in it. . . . But those tall, ball-going, flirting, self-satisfied cousins of mine --- who would have been glad enough, either of them, two months ago, to snap up me, infidelity, bad character, and all, as a charming rich young roué - if they have not learnt enough Protestantism in the last five-and-twenty years to take care of themselves, Protestantism must have very few allurements, or else be very badly carried out in practice by those who talk loudest in favour of it. . . . . I heard them praising O'Blareaway's 'ministry,' by-the-bye, the other day. So he is up in town, at last — at the summit of his ambition. Well, he may suit them. I wonder how many young creatures like Argemone and Luke he would keep from Popery!"

But there was no use arguing with a man in such a state of mind; and gradually Lancelot gave it up, in hopes that time would bring the good man to his sane wits again, and that a father's feelings would prove themselves stronger, because more divine, than a so-called Protestant's fears, though that would have been, in the banker's eyes, and in the Jesuit's also so do extremes meet — the very reason for expecting them to be the weaker; for it is the rule with all bigots, that the right cause is always a lost cause, and therefore requires — God's weapons of love, truth, and reason being well known to be too weak — to be defended, if it is to be saved, with the devil's weapons of bad logic, spite, and calumny.

At last, in despair of obtaining tidings of his cousin

by any other method, Lancelot made up his mind to apply to a certain remarkable man, whose "conversion" had preceded Luke's about a year, and had, indeed, mainly caused it.

He went, . . . . and was not disappointed. With the most winning courtesy and sweetness, his story and his request were patiently listened to.

"The outcome of your speech, then, my dear Sir, as I apprehend it, is a request to me to send back the fugitive lamb into the jaws of the well-meaning, but still lupine wolf?"

This was spoken with so sweet and arch a smile that it was impossible to be angry.

"On my honour, I have no wish to convert him. All I want is to have human speech of him — to hear from his own lips that he is content. Whither should I convert him? Not to my own platform — for I am nowhere. Not to that which he has left, . . . . for if he could have found standing ground there, he would not have gone elsewhere for rest."

"Therefore they went out from you, because they were not of you," said the "Father," half aside.

"Most true, Sir. I have felt long that argument was bootless with those whose root-ideas of Deity, man, earth, and heaven, were as utterly different from my own, as if we had been created by two different beings."

"Do you include in that catalogue those ideas of truth, love, and justice, which are Deity itself? Have you no common ground in them?"

"You are an elder and a better man than I.... It would be insolent in me to answer that question, except in one way, .... and" — "In that you cannot answer it. Be it so. . . . You shall see your cousin. You may make what efforts you will for his re-conversion. The Catholic Church," continued he, with one of his arch, deep-meaning smiles, "is not, like popular Protestantism, driven into shrieking terror at the approach of a foe. She has too much faith in herself, and in Him who gives to her the power of truth, to expect every gay meadow to allure away her lambs from the fold."

"I assure you that your gallant permission is unnecessary. I am beginning, at least, to believe that there is a Father in Heaven, who educates his children; and I have no wish to interfere with his methods. Let my cousin go his way .... he will learn something which he wanted, I doubt not, on his present path. even as I shall on mine. 'Se tu segui la tua stella' is my motto. ... Let it be his too, wherever the star may guide him. If it be a will-o'-the-wisp, and lead to the morass, he will only learn how to avoid morasses better for the future."

"Ave Mariæ stella! It is the star of Bethlehem which he follows .... the star of Mary, immaculate, all-loving!" .... And he bowed his head reverently. "Would that you, too, would submit yourself so that guidance! .... You, too, would seem to want some loving heart whereon to rest." ....

Lancelot sighed. "I am not a child, but a man; I want not a mother to pet, but a man to rule me."

Slowly his companion raised his thin hand, and pointed to the crucifix, which stood at the other end of the apartment.

"Behold him!" and he bowed his head once more .... and Lancelot, he knew not why, did the same ....

## WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

and yet in an instant he threw his head up proudly, and answered with George Fox's old reply to the Puritans, —

"I want a live Christ, not a dead one. . . . That is noble . . . beautiful . . . . it may be true. . . . But it has no message for me."

"He died for you."

"I care for the world, and not myself."

"He died for the world."

"And has deserted it, as folks say now, and become — an absentee, performing his work by deputies. ... Do not start; the blasphemy is not mine, but those who preach it. No wonder that the owners of the soil think it no shame to desert their estates, when preachers tell them that He to whom they say, all power is given in heaven and earth, has deserted his."

"What would you have, my dear Sir?" asked the father.

"What the Jews had. A king of my nation, and of the hearts of my nation, who would teach soldiers, artists, craftsmen, statesmen, poets, priests, — if priests there must be. I want a human lord, who understands me and the millions round me, pities us, teaches us, orders our history, civilization, development for us. I come to you, full of manhood, and you send me to — a woman. I go to the Protestants, full of desires to right the world — and they begin to talk of the next life, and give up this as lost!"

A quiet smile lighted up the thin, wan face, full of unfathomable thoughts; and he replied, again half to himself,

"Am I God, to kill or to make alive, that thou

sendest to me to recover a man of his leprosy? Farewell. You shall see your cousin here at noon to-morrow. You will not refuse my blessing, or my prayers, even though they be offered to a mother?"

"I will refuse nothing in the form of human love." And the father blessed him fervently, and he went out....

"What a man!" said he to himself, "or rather the wreck of what a man! Oh, for such a heart, with the thews and sinews of a truly English brain!"

Next day, he met Luke in that room. Their talk was short and sad. Luke was on the point of entering an order devoted especially to the worship of the Blessed Virgin.

"My father has cast me out . . . I must go to her feet. She will have mercy, though man has none."

"But why enter the order? Why take an irrevocable step?"

"Because it is irrevocable; because I shall enter an utterly new life, in which old things shall pass away, and all things become new, and I shall forget the very names of Parent, Englishman, Citizen, — the very existence of that strange Babel of man's building, whose roar and moan oppresses me every time I walk the street. Oh, for solitude, meditation, penance! Oh, to make up by bitter self-punishment my ingratitude to her who has been leading me unseen for years, home to her bosom! — The all-prevailing mother, daughter of Gabriel, spouse of Deity, flower of the earth, whom I have so long despised! Oh, to follow the example of the blessed Mary of Oignies, who every day inflicted on her most holy person eleven hundred stripes in honour of that all-perfect maiden!"

"Such an honour, I could have thought, would have pleased better Kali, the murder-goddess of the Thugs," thought Lancelot to himself; but he had not the heart to say it, and he only replied,

"So torture propitiates the Virgin? That explains the strange story I read lately, of her having appeared in the Cevennes, and informed the peasantry that she had sent the potato disease on account of their neglecting her shrines; that unless they repented, she would next year destroy their cattle; and the third year, themselves."

"Why not?" asked poor Luke.

"Why not, indeed? If God is to be capricious, proud, revengeful, why not the Son of God? And if the Son of God, why not his mother?"

"You judge spiritual feelings by the carnal test of the understanding; your Protestant horror of asceticism lies at the root of all you say. How can you comprehend the self-satisfaction, the absolute delight, of self-punishment?"

"So far from it, I have always had an infinite respect for asceticism, as a noble and manful thing the only manful thing to my eyes left in popery; and fast dying out of that, under Jesuit influence. You recollect the quarrel between the Tablet and the Jesuits, over Faber's unlucky honesty about St. Rose of Lima?.... But, really, as long as you honour asceticism as a means of appeasing the angry deities, I shall prefer to St. Dominic's cuirass or St. Hedwiga's chilblains, John Mytton's two hours' crawl on the ice in his shirt, after a flock of wild ducks. They both endured like heroes; but the former for a selfish, if not a blasphemous end; the latter as a man should, to test and strengthen his own powers of endurance. .... There, I will say no more. Go your way, in God's name. There must be lessons to be learnt in all strong and self-restraining action..... So you will learn something from the scourge and the hairshirt. We must all take the bitter medicine of suffering, I suppose."

"And, therefore, I am the wiser, in forcing the draught on myself."

"Provided it be the right draught, and do not require another and still bitterer one to expel the effects of the poison. I have no faith in people's doctoring themselves, either physically or spiritually."

"I am not my own physician; I follow the rules of an infallible Church, and the examples of her canonized saints."

"Well . . . . perhaps they may have known what was best for themselves. . . . But as for you and me here, in the year 1849 . . . However, we shall argue on for ever. Forgive me if I have offended you."

"I am not offended. The Catholic Church has always been a persecuted one."

"Then walk with me a little way, and I will persecute you no more."

"Where are you going?"

"To . . . To" — Lancelot had not the heart to say whither.

"To my father's! Ah! what a son I would have been to him now, in his extreme need! .... And he will not let me! Lancelot, is it impossible to move him? I do not want to go home again .... to live there .... I could not face that, though I longed but this moment to do it. I cannot face the self-satisfied, pitying looks .... the everlasting suspicion that they suspect me to be speaking untruths, or proselytizing in secret. .... Cruel and unjust!"....

Lancelot thought of a certain letter of Luke's .... but who was he, to break the bruised reed?

"No; I will not see him. Better thus; better vanish, and be known only according to the spirit, by the spirits of saints and confessors, and their successors upon earth. No! I will die, and give no sign."

"I must see somewhat more of you, indeed."

"I will meet you here, then, two hours hence. Near that house — even along the way which leads to it — I cannot go. It would be too painful: too painful to think that you were walking towards it, — the old house where I was born and bred . . . . and I shut out, — even though it be for the sake of the kingdom of heaven!"

"Or for the sake of your own share therein, my poor cousin!" thought Lancelot to himself, "which is a very different matter."

"Whither, after you have been -?" Luke could not get out the word home.

"To Claude Mellot's."

"I will walk part of the way thither with you. But he is a very bad companion for you."

"I can't help that. I cannot live; and I am going to turn painter. It is not the road in which to find a fortune; but still, the very sign-painters live somehow, I suppose. I am going this very afternoon to Claude Mellot, and enlist. I sold the last of my treasured

### DEUS E MACHINA.

MSS. to a fifth-rate magazine this morning, for what it would fetch. It has been like eating one's own children — but, at least, they have fed me. So now 'to fresh fields and pastures new.'"

## CHAPTER XV.

## Deus e machinâ.

WHEN Lancelot reached the banker's a letter was put into his hand; it bore the Whitford post-mark, and Mrs. Lavington's handwriting. He tore it open; it contained a letter from Argemone, which, it is needless to say, he read before her mother's: —

"My beloved! my husband! - Yes - though you may fancy me fickle and proud - I will call you so to the last; for, were I fickle, I could have saved myself the agony of writing this; and as for pride, oh! how that darling vice has been crushed out of me! I have rolled at my mother's feet with bitter tears, and vain entreaties — and been refused; and yet I have obeyed her after all. We must write to each other no more. This one last letter must explain the forced silence which has been driving me mad with fears that you would suspect me. And now you may call me weak; but it is your love which has made me strong to do this - which has taught me to see with new intensity my duty, not only to you, but to every human being — to my parents. By this self-sacrifice alone can I atone to them for all my past undutifulness. Let me, then, thus be worthy of you. Hope that by this submission we may win even her to change. How calmly I write! but it is only my hand that is calm. As for my heart, read Tennyson's Fatima, and then know how I feel towards you! Yes, I

love you — madly, the world would say. I seem to understand now how women have died of love. Ay, that, indeed, would be blessed; for then my spirit would seek out yours, and hover over it for ever! Farewell, beloved! and let me hear of you through your deeds. A feeling at my heart, which should not be, although it is, a sad one, tells me that we shall meet soon — soon."

Stupified and sickened, Lancelot turned carelessly to Mrs. Lavington's cover, whose blameless respectability thus uttered itself: —

"I cannot deceive you or myself by saying I regret that providential circumstances should have been permitted to break off a connexion which I always felt to be most unsuitable; and I rejoice that the intercourse my dear child has had with you has not so far undermined her principles as to prevent her yielding the most filial obedience to my wishes on the point of her future correspondence with you. Hoping that all that has occurred will be truly blessed to you, and lead your thoughts to another world, and to a true concern for the safety of your immortal soul,

"I remain, yours truly,

"C. LAVINGTON."

"Another world!" said Lancelot to himself. "It is most merciful of you, certainly, my dear Madam, to put one in mind of the existence of another world, while such as you have their own way in this one!" and, thrusting the latter epistle into the fire, he tried to collect his thoughts.

What had he lost? The oftener he asked himself, Yeast. 17 the less he found to unman him. Argemone's letters were so new a want, that the craving for them was not yet established. His intense imagination, resting, on the delicious certainty of her faith, seemed ready to fill the silence with bright hopes and noble purposes. She herself had said that he would see her soon. But yet — but yet — why did that allusion to death strike chilly through him? They were but words, — a melancholy fancy, such as women love at times to play with. He would toss it from him. At least here was another reason for bestirring himself at once to win fame in the noble profession he had chosen. And yet his brain reeled as he went up stairs to his uncle's private room.

There, however, he found a person closeted with the banker, whose remarkable appearance drove everything else out of his mind. He was a huge, shaggy, toil-worn man, the deep melancholy earnestness of whose rugged features reminded him almost ludicrously of one of Landseer's bloodhounds. But withal, there was a tenderness, — a genial, though covert humour, playing about his massive features, which awakened in Lancelot at first sight a fantastic longing to open his whole heart to him. He was dressed like a foreigner, but spoke English with perfect fluency. The banker sat listening, quite crest-fallen, beneath his intense and melancholy gaze, in which, nevertheless, there twinkled some rays of kindly sympathy.

"It was all those foreign railways," said Mr. Smith, pensively.

"And it serves you quite right," answered the stranger. "Did not I warn you of the folly and sin of sinking capital in foreign countries while English land was crying out for tillage, and English poor for employment?"

"My dear friend" (in a deprecatory tone), "it was the best possible investment I could make."

"And pray, who told you that you were sent into the world to make investments?"

"But -"

"But me no buts, or I won't stir a finger towards helping you. What are you going to do with this money if I procure it for you?"

"Work till I can pay back that poor fellow's fortune," said the banker, earnestly pointing to Lancelot. "And if I could clear my conscience of that, I would not care if I starved myself, hardly if my own children did."

"Spoken like a man!" answered the stranger; "work for that, and I'll help you. Be a new man, once and for all, my friend. Don't even make this younker your first object. Say to yourself, not 'I will invest this money where it shall pay me most, but I will invest it where it shall give most employment to English hands, and produce most manufactures for English bodies.' In short, seek first the kingdom of God and His justice with this money of yours, and see if all other things, profits and such-like included, are not added unto you."

"And you are certain you can obtain the money?"

"My good friend the Begum of the Cannibal Islands has more than she knows what to do with; and she owes me a good turn, you know."

"What are you jesting about now?"

"Did I never tell you? The new king of the

Cannibal Islands, just like your European ones, ran away, and would neither govern himself nor let any one else govern; so one morning his ministers, getting impatient, ate him, and then asked my advice. I recommended them to put his mother on the throne, who, being old and tough, would run less danger; and since then, everything has gone on as smoothly as anywhere else."

"Are you mad?" thought Lancelot to himself, as he stared at the speaker's matter-of-fact face.

"No, I am not mad, my young friend," quoth he, facing right round upon him, as if he had divined his thoughts.

"I — I beg your pardon, I did not speak," stammered Lancelot, abashed at a pair of eyes which could have looked down the boldest mesmerist in three seconds.

"I am perfectly well aware that you did not. I must have some talk with you: I've heard a good deal about you. You wrote those articles in the — Review about George Sand, did you not?"

"I did."

"Well, there was a great deal of noble feeling in them, and a great deal of abominable nonsense. You seem to be very anxious to reform society?"

"I am."

"Don't you think you had better begin by reforming yourself?"

"Really, Sir," answered Lancelot, "I am too old for that worn-out quibble. The root of all my sins has been selfishness and sloth. Am I to cure them by becoming still more selfish and slothful? What part of myself can I reform except my actions? and the very sin of my actions has been, as I take it, that I've been doing nothing to reform others; never fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil, as your prayer-book has it."

"My prayer-book?" asked the stranger, with a quaint smile.

"Upon my word, Lancelot," interposed the banker, with a frightened look, "you must not get into an argument: you must be more respectful: you don't know to whom you are speaking."

"And I don't much care," answered he. "Life is really too grim earnest in these days to stand on ceremony. I am sick of blind leaders of the blind, of respectable preachers to the respectable, who drawl out second-hand trivialities, which they neither practise nor wish to see practised. I've had enough all my life of Scribes and Pharisees in white cravats, laying on man heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and then not touching them themselves with one of their fingers."

"Silence, Sir!" roared the banker, while the stranger threw himself into a chair, and burst into a storm of laughter.

"Upon my word, friend Mammon, here's another of Hans Andersen's ugly ducks!"

"I really do not mean to be rude," said Lancelot, recollecting himself, "but I am nearly desperate. If your heart is in the right place, you will understand me; if not, the less we talk to each other the better."

"Most true," answered the stranger; "and I do understand you; and if, as I hope, we see more of each other henceforth, we will see if we cannot solve one or two of these problems between us." At this moment Lancelot was summoned down stairs, and found, to his great pleasure, Tregarva waiting for him. That worthy personage bowed to Lancelot reverently and distantly.

"I am quite ashamed to intrude myself upon you, Sir, but I could not rest without coming to ask whether you have had any news." — He broke down at this point in the sentence, but Lancelot understood him.

"I have no news," he said. "But what do you mean by standing off in that way, as if we were not old and fast friends? Remember, I am as poor as you are now; you may look me in the face and call me your equal, if you will, or your inferior, I shall not deny it."

"Pardon me, Sir," answered Tregarva; "but I never felt what a real substantial thing rank is, as I have since this sad misfortune of yours."

"And I have never till now found out its worthlessness."

"You're wrong, Sir, you are wrong; look at the difference between yourself and me. When you've lost all you have, and seven times more, you're still a gentleman. No man can take that from you. You may look the proudest duchess in the land in the face, and claim her as your equal; while I, Sir, — I don't mean though to talk of myself — but suppose that you had loved a pious and a beautiful lady, and among all your worship of her, and your awe of her, had felt that you were worthy of her, that you could become her comforter, and her pride, and her joy, if it wasn't for that accursed gulf that men had put between you, that you were no gentleman; that you didn't know

how to walk, and how to pronounce, and when to speak and when to be silent, not even how to handle your own knife and fork without disgusting her, or how to keep your own body clean and sweet - Ah, Sir, I see it now as I never did before, what a wall all these little defects build up round a poor man; how he longs and struggles to show himself as he is at heart, and cannot, till he feels sometimes as if he was enchanted, pent up, like folks in fairy tales, in the body of some dumb beast. But, Sir," he went on, with a concentrated bitterness which Lancelot had never seen in him before, "just because this gulf which rank makes is such a deep one, therefore it looks to me all the more devilish: not that I want to pull down any man to my level: I despise my own level too much; I want to rise; I want those like me to rise with me. Let the rich be as rich as they will. - I, and those like me, covet not money, but manners. Why should not the workman be a gentleman, and a workman still? Why are they to be shut out from all that is beautiful, and delicate, and winning, and stately?"

"Now, perhaps," said Lancelot, "you begin to understand what I was driving at on that night of the revel?"

"It has come home to me lately, Sir, bitterly enough. If you knew what had gone on in me this last fortnight, you would know that I had cause to curse the state of things which brings a man up a savage against his will, and cuts him off, as if he were an ape or a monster, from those for whom the same Lord died, and on whom the same Spirit rests. Is that God's will, Sir? No, it is the devil's will. 'Those whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder.'"

Lancelot coloured, for he remembered with how much less reason he had been lately invoking in his own cause those very words. He was at a loss for an answer; but seeing, to his relief, that Tregarva had returned to his usual impassive calm, he forced him to sit down, and began questioning him as to his own prospects and employment.

About them Tregarva seemed hopeful enough. He had found out a Wesleyan minister in town who knew him, and had, by his means, after assisting for a week or two in the London City Mission, got some similar appointment in a large manufacturing town. Of the state of things he spoke more sadly than ever. "The rich cannot guess, Sir, how high ill-feeling is rising in these days. It's not only those who are outwardly poorest who long for change; the middling people, Sir, the small town shopkeepers especially are nearly past all patience. One of the City Mission assured me that he has been watching them these several years past, and that nothing could beat their fortitude and industry, and their determination to stand peaceably by law and order; but yet, this last year or two, things are growing too bad to bear. Do what they will, they cannot get their bread; and when a man cannot get that, Sir -"

"But what do you think is the reason of it?"

"How should I tell, Sir? But if I had to say, I should say this — just what they say themselves that there are too many of them. Go where you will, in town or country, you'll find half-a-dozen shops struggling for a custom that would only keep up one; and so they're forced to undersell one another. And when they've got down prices all they can, by fair means, they're forced to get them down lower by foul — to sand the sugar, and sloe-leave the tea, and put — Satan only that prompts 'em knows what — into the bread; and then they don't thrive — they can't thrive; God's curse must be on them. They begin by trying to oust each other, and eat each other up; and while they're eating up their neighbours, their neighbours eat up them; and so they all come to ruin together."

"Why, you talk like Mr. Mill himself, Tregarva; you ought to have been a political economist, and not a City missionary. By the bye, I don't like that profession for you."

"It's the Lord's work, Sir. It's the very sending to the gentiles that the Lord promised me."

"I don't doubt it, Paul: but you are meant for other things, if not better. There are plenty of smaller men than you to do that work. Do you think that God would have given you that strength, that brain, to waste on a work which could be done without them? Those limbs would certainly be good capital for you, if you turned a live model at the Academy. Perhaps you'd better be mine; but you can't even be that if you go to Manchester."

The giant looked hopelessly down at his huge limbs.

"Well; God only knows what use they are of just now. But as for the brains, Sir — in much learning is much sorrow. One had much better work than read, I find. If I read much more about what men might be, and are not, and what English soil might be, and is not, I shall go mad. And that puts me in mind of one thing I came here for, though, like a poor rude country fellow as I am, I clean forgot it a thinking of —. Look here, Sir; you've given me a sight of books in my time, and God bless you for it. But now I hear that — that you are determined to be a poor man like us; and that you shan't be, while Paul Tregarva has aught of yours. So I've just brought all the books back, and there they lie in the hall; and may God reward you for the loan of them to his poor child! And so, Sir, farewell;" and he rose to go.

"No, Paul; the books and you shall never part."

"And I say, Sir, the books and you shall never part."

"Then we two can never part" — and a sudden impulse flashed over him — "and we will not part, Paul! The only man whom I utterly love, and trust, and respect on the face of God's earth, is you; and I cannot lose sight of you. If we are to earn our bread, let us earn it together; if we are to endure poverty, and sorrow, and struggle to find out the way of bettering these wretched millions round us, let us learn our lesson together, and help each other to spell it out."

"Do you mean what you say?" asked Paul, slowly. "I do."

"Then I say what you say: Where thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Come what will, I will be your servant, for good luck or bad, for ever."

"My equal, Paul, not my servant."

"I know my place, Sir. When I am as learned

and as well-bred as you, I shall not refuse to call myself your equal; and the sooner that day comes, the better I shall be pleased. Till then I am your friend and your brother; but I am your scholar, too, and I shall not set up myself against my master."

"I have learnt more of you, Paul, than ever you have learnt of me. But be it as you will; only whatever you may call yourself, we must eat at the same table, live in the same room, and share alike all this world's good things — or we shall have no right to share together this world's bad things. If that is your bargain, there is my hand on it."

"Amen!" quoth Tregarva; and the two young men joined hands in that sacred bond — now growing rarer and rarer year by year — the utter friendship of two equal manful hearts.

"And now, Sir, I have promised — and you would have me keep my promise — to go and work for the City Mission in Manchester — at least, for the next month, till a young man's place, who has just left, is filled up. Will you let me go for that time? and then, if you hold your present mind, we will join home and fortunes thenceforth, and go wherever the Lord shall send us. There's work enough of His waiting to be done. I don't doubt but if we are willing and able, He will set us about the thing we're meant for."

As Lancelot opened the door for him, he lingered on the steps, and grasping his hand said, in a low, earnest voice: "The Lord be with you, Sir. Be sure that he has mighty things in store for you, or he would not have brought you so low in the days of your youth."

"And so," as John Bunyan has it, "He went on

his way;" and Lancelot saw him no more till — but I must not outrun the order of time.

After all, this visit came to Lancelot timely. It had roused him to hope, and turned off his feelings from the startling news he had just heard. He stepped along arm in arm with Luke, cheerful, and fate-defiant, and as he thought of Tregarva's complaints, —

"The beautiful?" he said to himself, "they shall have it! At least they shall be awakened to feel their need of it, their right to it. What a high destiny, to be the artist of the people! — to devote one's powers of painting, not to mimicking obsolete legends, Pagan or Popish, but to representing to the working men of England the triumphs of the Past and the yet greater triumphs of the Future!"

Luke began at once questioning him about his father.

"And is he contrite and humbled? Does he see that he has sinned?"

"In what?"

"It is not for us to judge; but surely it must have been some sin or other of his which has drawn down such a sore judgment on him."

Lancelot smiled; but Luke went on, not perceiving him.

"Ah! we cannot find out for him. Nor has he, alas! as a Protestant, much likelihood of finding out for himself. In our holy church he would have been compelled to discriminate his faults by methodic selfexamination, and lay them one by one before his priest for advice and pardon, and so start a new and free man once more."

"Do you think," asked Lancelot, with a smile,

"that he who will not confess his faults either to God or to himself, would confess it to man? And would his priest honestly tell him what he really wants to know? which sin of his has called down this so-called judgment? It would be imputed, I suppose, to some vague generality, to inattention to religious duties, to idolatry of the world, and so forth. But a Romish priest would be the last person, I should think, who could tell him fairly, in the present case, the cause of his affliction; and I question whether he would give a patient hearing to any one who told it him."

"How so? Though, indeed, I have remarked that people are perfectly willing to be told they are miserable sinners, and to confess themselves such, in a general way, but if the preacher once begins to specify, to fix on any particular act or habit, he is accused of personality or uncharitableness; his hearers are ready to confess guilty to any sin but the very one with which he charges them. But, surely, this is just what I am urging against you Protestants — just what the Catholic use of confession obviates."

"Attempts to do so, you mean!" answered Lancelot. "But what if your religion preaches formally that which only remains in our religion as a fast-dying superstition? — That those judgments of God, as you call them, are not judgments at all in any fair use of the word, but capricious acts of punishment on the part of Heaven, which have no more reference to the fault which provokes them, than if you cut off a man's finger because he made a bad use of his tongue. That is part, but only a part, of what I meant just now, by saying that people represent God as capricious, proud, revengeful." "But do not Protestants themselves confess that our sins provoke God's anger?"

"Your common creed, when it talks rightly of God as one 'who has no passions,' ought to make you speak more reverently of the possibility of any act of ours disturbing the everlasting equanimity of the absolute Love. Why will men so often impute to God the miseries which they bring upon themselves?"

"Because, I suppose, their pride makes them more willing to confess themselves sinners than fools."

"Right, my friend; they will not remember that it is of 'their pleasant vices that God makes whips to scourge them.' Oh, I at least have felt the deep wisdom of that saying of Wilhelm Meister's harper, that it is

## Voices from the depth of Nature borne Which woe upon the guilty head proclaim.

Of Nature — of those eternal laws of hers which we daily break. Yes! it is not because God's temper changes, but because God's universe is unchangeable, that such as I, such as your poor father, having sown the wind must reap the whirlwind. I have fed my self-esteem with luxuries and not with virtue, and, losing them, have nothing left. He has sold himself to a system which is its own punishment. And yet the last place in which he will look for the cause of his misery is in that very money-mongering to which he now clings as frantically as ever. But so it is throughout the world. Only look down over that bridge-parapet, at that huge black-mouthed sewer, vomiting its pestilential riches across the mud. There it runs, and will run, hurrying to the sea vast stores

### DEUS E MACHINA.

of wealth, elaborated by Nature's chemistry into the ready materials of food; which proclaim, too, by their own foul smell, God's will that they should be buried out of sight in the fruitful all-regenerating grave of earth: there it runs, turning them all into the seeds of pestilence, filth, and drunkenness. — And then, when it obeys the laws which we despise, and the pestilence is come at last, men will pray against it, and confess it be 'a judgment for their sins;' but if you ask *what* sin, people will talk about 'les voiles d'airain,' as Fourier says, and tell you that it is presumptuous to pry into God's secret counsels, unless, perhaps, some fanatic should inform you that the cholera has been drawn down on the poor by the endowment of Maynooth by the rich."

"It is most fearful, indeed, to think that these diseases should be confined to the poor — that a man should be exposed to cholera, typhus, and a host of attendant diseases, simply because he is born into the world an artisan; while the rich, by the mere fact of money, are exempt from such curses, except when they come in contact with those whom they call on Sunday 'their brethren,' and on week days 'the masses.'"

"Thank Heaven that you do see that, — that in a country calling itself civilized and Christian, pestilence should be the peculiar heritage of the poor! It is past all comment."

"And yet are not these pestilences a judgment, even on them, for their dirt and profligacy?"

"And how should they be clean without water? And how can you wonder if their appetites, sickened with filth and self-disgust, crave after the gin-shop for temporary strength, and then for temporary forgetfulness? Every London doctor knows that I speak the truth; would that every London preacher would tell that truth from his pulpit!"

"Then would you too say, that God punishes one class for the sins of another?"

"Some would say," answered Lancelot, half aside, "that He may be punishing them for not demanding their right to live like human beings, to all those social circumstances which shall not make their children's life one long disease. But are not these pestilences a judgment on the rich, too, in the truest sense of the word? Are they not the broad, unmistakeable seal to God's opinion of a state of society which confesses its economic relations to be so utterly rotten and confused, that it actually cannot afford to save yearly millions of pounds' worth of the materials of food, not to mention thousands of human lives? Is not every man who allows such things hastening the ruin of the society in which he lives, by helping to foster the indignation and fury of its victims? Look at that group of stunted, haggard artisans, who are passing us. What if one day they should call to account the landlords whose covetousness and ignorance make their dwellings hells on earth?"

By this time they had reached the artist's house.

Luke refused to enter. . . . "He had done with this world, and the painters of this world." . . . And with a tearful last farewell, he turned away up the street, leaving Lancelot to gaze at his slow, painful steps, and abject, earth-fixed mien.

"Ah!" thought Lancelot, "here is the end of your anthropology! At first, your ideal man is an angel. But your angel is merely an unsexed woman; and so you are forced to go back to the humanity after all but to a woman, not a man! And this, in the nineteenth century, when men are telling us that the poetic and enthusiastic have become impossible, and that the only possible state of the world henceforward will be a universal good-humoured hive, of the Franklin-Benthamite religion . . . . a vast prosaic Cockaigne of steam mills for grinding sausages - for those who can get at them. And all the while, in spite of all Manchester schools, and high and dry orthodox schools, here are the strangest phantasms, new and old, sane and insane, starting up suddenly into live practical power, to give their prosaic theories the lie -- Popish conversions, Mormonisms, Mesmerisms, Californias, Continental revolutions, Paris days of June. . . . Ye hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky, and yet ye cannot discern the signs of this time!"

He was ushered up stairs to the door of his studio, at which he knocked, and was answered by a loud "Come in." Lancelot heard a rustle as he entered, and caught sight of a most charming little white foot retreating hastily through the folding-doors into the inner room.

The artist, who was seated at his easel, held up his brush as a signal of silence, and did not even raise his eyes till he had finished the touches on which he was engaged.

"And now — What do I see? — the last man I should have expected! I thought you were far down in the country. And what brings you to me with such serious and business-like looks?"

"I am a penniless youth —"

"What?"

"Ruined to my last shilling, and I want to turn artist."

"Oh, ye gracious powers! Come to my arms, brother at last with me in the holy order of those who must work or starve. Long have I wept in secret over the pernicious fulness of your purse!"

"Dry your tears then now," said Lancelot, "for I neither have ten pounds in the world, nor intend to have till I can earn them."

"Artist!" ran on Mellot; "ah! you shall be an artist, indeed! You shall stay with me and become the English Michael Angelo; or, if you are fool enough, go to Rome, and utterly eclipse Overbeck, and throw Schadow for ever into the shade."

"I fine you a supper," said Lancelot, "for that execrable attempt at a pun."

"Agreed! Here, Sabina, send to Covent Garden for huge nosegays, and get out the best bottle of Burgundy. We will pass an evening worthy of Horace, and with garlands and libations honour the muse of painting."

"Luxurious dog!" said Lancelot, "with all your cant about poverty."

As he spoke the folding-doors opened, and an exquisite little brunette danced in from the inner room, in which, by-the-bye, had been going on all the while a suspicious rustling, as of garments hastily arranged. She was dressed gracefully in a loose French morning gown, down which Lancelot's eye glanced towards the little foot, which, however, was now hidden in a tiny velvet slipper. The artist's wife was a real beauty, though without a single perfect feature, except a most delicious little mouth, a skin like velvet, and clear brown eyes, from which beamed earnest simplicity and arch good humour. She darted forward to her husband's friend, while her rippling brown hair, fantastically arranged, fluttered about her neck, and seizing Lancelot's hands successively in both of hers, broke out in an accent prettily tinged with French, —

"Charming! — delightful! And so you are really going to turn painter! And I have longed so to be introduced to you! Claude has been raving about you these two years; you already seem to me the oldest friend in the world. You must not go to Rome. We shall keep you; Mr. Lancelot; positively you must come and live with us — we shall be the happiest trio in London. I will make you so comfortable: you must let me cater for you — cook for you."

"And be my study sometimes?" said Lancelot, smiling.

"Ah," she said, blushing and shaking her pretty little fist at Claude, "that madcap! how he has betrayed me! When he is at his easel, he is so in the seventh heaven, that he sees nothing, thinks of nothing, but his own dreams."

At this moment a heavy step sounded on the stairs, the door opened, and there entered, to Lancelot's astonishment, the stranger who had just puzzled him so much at his uncle's.

Claude rose reverentially, and came forward, but Sabina was beforehand with him, and running up to her visitor, kissed his hand again and again, almost kneeling to him.

"The dear master!" she cried; "what a delightful

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surprise! we have not seen you this fortnight past, and gave you up for lost."

"Where do you come from, my dear master?" asked Claude.

"From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it," answered he, smiling, and laying his finger on his lips, "my dear pupils. And you are both well and happy?"

"Perfectly, and doubly delighted at your presence to-day, for your advice will come in a providential moment for my friend here."

"Ah!" said the strange man, "well met once more! So you are going to turn painter?"

He bent a severe and searching look on Lancelot.

"You have a painter's face, young man," he said; "go on and prosper. What branch of art do you intend to study?"

"The Ancient Italian painters, as my first step."

"Ancient? it is not four hundred years since Perugino died. But I should suppose you do not intend to ignore classic art?"

"You have divined rightly. I wish, in the study of the antique, to arrive at the primeval laws of unfallen human beauty."

"Were Phidias and Praxiteles, then, so primeval? the world had lasted many a thousand year before their turn came. If you intend to begin at the beginning, why not go back at once to the Garden of Eden, and there study the true antique?"

"If there were but any relics of it," said Lancelot, puzzled, and laughing.

"You would find it very near you, young man, if you had but eyes to see it." Claude Mellot laughed significantly, and Sabina clapped her little hands.

"Yet till you take him with you, master, and show it to him, he must needs be content with the Royal Academy and the Elgin marbles."

"But to what branch of painting, pray," said the master to Lancelot, "will you apply your knowledge of the antique? Will you, like this foolish fellow here" (with a kindly glance at Claude), "fritter yourself away on Nymphs and Venuses, in which neither he nor any one else believes?"

"Historic art, as the highest," answered Lancelot, "is my ambition."

"It is well to aim at the highest, but only when it is possible for us. And how can such a school exist in England now? You English must learn to understand your own history before you paint it. Rather follow in the steps of your Turners, and Landseers, and Stanfields, and Creswicks, and add your contribution to the present noble school of naturalist painters. That is the niche in the temple which God has set you English to fill up just now. These men's patient, reverent faith in Nature as they see her, their knowledge that the ideal is neither to be invented nor abstracted, but found and left where God has put it, and where alone it can be represented, in actual and individual phenomena; - in these lies an honest development of the true idea of Protestantism, which is paving the way to the mesothetic art of the future."

"Glorious?" said Sabina: "not a single word that we poor creatures can understand!"

But our hero, who always took a virtuous delight

in hearing what he could not comprehend, went on to question the orator.

"What, then, is the true idea of Protestantism?" said he.

"The universal symbolism and dignity of matter, whether in man or nature."

"But the Puritans?"

"Were inconsistent with themselves and with Protestantism, and therefore God would not allow them to succeed. Yet their repudiation of all art was better than the Judas-kiss which Romanism bestows on it, in the meagre eclecticism of the ancient religious schools, and of your modern Overbecks and Pugins. The only really wholesome designer of great power, whom I have seen in Germany, is Kaulbach; and perhaps every one would not agree with my reasons for admiring him, in this whitewashed age. But you, young Sir, were meant for better things than art. Many young geniuses have an early hankering, as Goethe had, to turn painters. It seems the shortest and easiest method of embodying their conceptions in visible form; but they get wiser afterwards, when they find in themselves thoughts that cannot be laid upon the canvass. Come with me, I like striking while the iron is hot; walk with me towards my lodgings, and we will discuss this weighty matter."

And with a gay farewell to the adoring little Sabina he passed an iron arm through Lancelot's, and marched him down into the street.

Lancelot was surprised and almost nettled at the sudden influence which he found this quaint personage was exerting over him. But he had, of late, tasted the high delight of feeling himself under the guidance of a superior mind, and longed to enjoy it once more. Perhaps they were reminiscences of this kind which stirred in him the strange fancy of a connexion, almost of a likeness, between his new acquaintance and Argemone. He asked, humbly enough, why Art was to be a forbidden path to him?

"Because you are an Englishman, and a man of uncommon talent, unless your physiognomy belies you; and one, too, for whom God has strange things in store, or He would not have so suddenly and strangely overthrown you."

Lancelot started. He remembered that Tregarva had said just the same thing to him that very morning, and the (to him) strange coincidence sank deep into his heart.

"You must be a politician," the stranger went on. "You are bound to it as your birthright. It has been England's privilege hitherto to solve all political questions as they arise for the rest of the world; it is her duty now. Here, or nowhere, must the solution be attempted of those social problems which are convulsing more and more all Christendom. She cannot afford to waste brains like yours, while in thousands of reeking alleys, such as that one opposite us, heathens and savages are demanding the rights of citizenship. Whether they be right or wrong, is what you, and such as you, have to find out at this day."

Silent and thoughtful, Lancelot walked on by his side.

"What is become of your friend Tregarva? I met him this morning after he parted from you, and had some talk with him. I was sorely minded to enlist him. Perhaps I shall; in the meantime, I shall busy myself with you."

"In what way," asked Lancelot, "most strange Sir, of whose name, much less of whose occupation, I can gain no tidings?"

"My name for the time being is Barnakill. And as for business, as it is your English fashion to call new things obstinately by old names, careless whether they apply or not, you may consider me as a recruitingsergeant; which trade, indeed, I follow, though I am no more like the popular red-coated ones than your present 'glorious constitution' is like William the Third's, or Overbeck's high art like Fra Angelico's. Farewell! When I want you, which will be most likely when you want me, I shall find you again."

The evening was passed, as Claude had promised, in a truly Horatian manner. Sabina was most piquante, and Claude interspersed his genial and enthusiastic eloquence with various wise saws of "the prophet."

"But why on earth," quoth Lancelot, at last, "do you call him a prophet?"

"Because he is one; it's his business, his calling. He gets his living thereby, as the showman did by his elephant."

"But what does he foretell?"

"Oh, son of the earth! And you went to Cambridge — are reported to have gone in for the thing, or phantom, called the tripos, and taken a first-class!... Did you ever look out the word 'prophetes' in Liddell and Scott?"

"Why, what do you know about Liddell and Scott?"

"Nothing, thank goodness; I never had time to waste over the crooked letters. But I have heard say that prophetes means, not a foreteller, but an out-teller — one who declares the will of a deity, and interprets his oracles. Is it not so?"

"Undeniably."

"And that he became a foreteller among heathens at least — as I consider, among all peoples whatsoever — because knowing the real bearing of what had happened, and what was happening, he could discern the signs of the times, and so had what the world calls a shrewd guess — what I, like a Pantheist as I am denominated, should call a divine and inspired foresight — of what was going to happen."

"A new notion, and a pleasant one, for it looks something like a law."

"I am no scollard, as they would say in Whitford, you know; but it has often struck me, that if folks would but believe that the Apostles talked not such very bad Greek, and had some slight notion of the received meaning of the words they used, and of the absurdity of using the same term to express nineteen different things, the New Testament would be found to be a much simpler and more severely philosophic book than 'Theologians' ('Anthroposophists' I call them) fancy."

"Where on earth did you get all this wisdom, or foolishness?"

"From the prophet, a fortnight ago."

"Who is this prophet? I will know."

"Then you will know more than I do. Sabina light my meerschaum, there's a darling; it will taste the sweeter after your lips." And Claude laid his delicate woman-like limbs upon the sofa, and looked the very picture of luxurious nonchalance. "What is he, you pitiless wretch?"

"Fairest Hebe, fill our Prometheus Vinctus another glass of Burgundy, and find your guitar, to silence him."

"It was the ocean nymphs who came to comfort Prometheus — and unsandalled, too, if I recollect right," said Lancelot, smiling at Sabina. "Come, now, if he will not tell me, perhaps you will?"

Sabina only blushed, and laughed mysteriously.

"You surely are intimate with him, Claude? When and where did you meet him first?"

"Seventeen years ago, on the barricades of the three days, in the charming little pandemonium called Paris, he picked me out of a gutter, a boy of fifteen, with a musket-ball through my body; mended me, and sent me to a painter's studio. . . . The next sejour I had with him began in sight of the Demawend. Sabina, perhaps you might like to relate to Mr. Smith that interview, and the circumstances under which you made your first sketch of that magnificent and littleknown volcano?"

Sabina blushed again — this time scarlet; and, to Lancelot's astonishment, pulled off her slipper, and brandishing it daintily, uttered some unintelligible threat, in an Oriental language, at the laughing Claude.

"Why, you must have been in the East?"

"Why not? Do you think that figure and that walk were picked up in stay-ridden, toe-pinching England? .... Ay, in the East; and why not elsewhere? Do you think I got my knowledge of the human figure from the live-model room in the Royal Academy?"

"I certainly have always had my doubts of it. You

are the only man I know who can paint muscle in motion."

"Because I am almost the only man in England who has ever seen it. Artists should go to the Cannibal Islands for that. . . . J'ai fait le grand tour. I should not wonder if the prophet made you take it."

"That would be very much as I chose."

"Or otherwise."

"What do you mean?"

"That if he wills you to go, I defy you to stay. Eh, Sabina?"

"Well, you are a very mysterious pair, — and a very charming one."

"So we think ourselves — as to the charmingness .... and as for the mystery .... 'Omnia execut in mysterium,' says somebody, somewhere, — or if he don't, ought to, seeing that it is so. You will be a mystery some day, and a myth; and a thousand years hence, pious old ladies will be pulling caps as to whether you were a saint or a devil, and whether you did really work miracles or not, as corroborations of your ex-supra-lunar illumination on social questions. .....Yes.....you will have to submit, and see Bogy, and enter the Eleusinian mysteries. Eh, Sabina?"

"My dear Claude, what between the Burgundy and your usual foolishness, you seem very much inclined to divulge the Eleusinian mysteries."

"I can't well do that, my beauty, seeing that if you recollect, we were both furned back at the vestibule, for a pair of naughty children as we are."

"Do be quiet! and let me enjoy, for once, my woman's right to the last word!" And in this hopeful state of mystification, Lancelot went home, and dreamt of Argemone.

His uncle would, and, indeed, as it seemed, could, give him very little information on the question which had so excited his curiosity. He had met the man in India many years before, had received there from him most important kindnesses, and considered him, from experience, of oracular wisdom. He seemed to have an unlimited command of money, though most frugal in his private habits; visited England for a short time every few years, and always under a different appellation; but as for his real name, habitation, or business, here or at home, the good banker knew nothing, except that whenever questioned on them, he wandered off into Pantagruelist jokes, and ended in Cloudland. So that Lancelot was fain to give up his questions, and content himself with longing for the re-appearance of this inexplicable sage.

# CHAPTER XVI.

#### Once in a Way.

A FEW mornings afterwards, Lancelot, as he glanced his eye over the columns of The Times, stopped short at the beloved name of Whitford. To his disgust and disappointment, it only occurred in one of those miserable cases, now of weekly occurrence, of concealing the birth of a child. He was turning from it, when he saw Bracebridge's name. Another look sufficed to show him that he ought to go at once to the colonel, who had returned the day before from Norway.

A few minutes brought him to his friend's lodging, but The Times had arrived there before him. Bracebridge was sitting over his untasted breakfast, his face buried in his hands.

"Do not speak to me," he said, without looking up. "It was right of you to come — kind of you; but it is too late."

He started, and looked wildly round him, as if listening for some sound which he expected, and then laid his head down on the table. Lancelot turned to go.

"No — do not leave me! Not alone, for God's sake, not alone!"

Lancelot sat down. There was a fearful alteration in Bracebridge. His old keen self-confident look had vanished. He was haggard, life-weary, shame-stricken, almost abject. His limbs looked quite shrunk and powerless, as he rested his head on the table before him, and murmured incoherently from time to time —

"My own child! And I never shall have another! No second chance for those who — Oh Mary! Mary! you might have waited — you might have trusted me! And why should you? — ay, why, indeed? And such a pretty baby, too! — just like his father!"

Lancelot laid his hand kindly on his shoulder.

"My dearest Bracebridge, the evidence proves that the child was born dead."

"They lie!" he said, fiercely, starting up. "It cried twice after it was born!"

Lancelot stood horror-struck.

"I heard it last night, and the night before that, and the night before that again, under my pillow, shrieking — stifling — two little squeaks, like a caught hare; and I tore the pillows off it — I did; and once I saw it, and it had beautiful black eyes, just like its father — just like a little miniature that used to lie on my mother's table, when I knelt at her knee, before they sent me out 'to see life,' and Eton, and the army, and Crockford's, and Newmarket, and fine gentlemen, and fine ladies, and luxury, and flattery, brought me to this! Oh, father! father! was that the only way to make a gentleman of your son? — There it is again? Don't you hear it? — under the sofa-cushions! Tear them off! Curse you! Save it!"

And, with a fearful oath, the wretched man sent Lancelot staggering across the room, and madly tore up the cushions.

A long postman's knock at the door. He suddenly rose up, quite collected.

"The letter! I knew it would come. She need not have written it: I know what is in it."

The servant's step came up the stairs. Poor Bracebridge turned to Lancelot with something of his old stately determination.

"I must be alone when I receive this letter. Stay here." And with compressed lips and fixed eyes, he stalked out at the door, and shut it.

Lancelot heard him stop, then the servant's footsteps down the stairs; then the colonel's treading slowly and heavily, went step by step up to the room above. He shut that door too. A dead silence followed. Lancelot stood in fearful suspense, and held his breath to listen. Perhaps he had fainted? No, for then he would have heard a fall. Perhaps he had fallen on the bed? He would go and see. No, he would wait a little longer. Perhaps he was praying? He had told Lancelot to pray once — he dared not interrupt him now. A slight stir — a noise as of an opening box. Thank God, he was, at least, alive! Nonsense! Why should he not be alive? What could happen to him? And yet he knew that something was going to happen. The silence was ominous — unbearable; the air of the room felt heavy and stifling, as if a thunder-storm were about to burst. He longed to hear the man raging and stamping. And yet he could not connect the thought of one so gay and full of gallant life, with the terrible dread that was creeping over him, — with the terrible scene which he had just witnessed. It must be all a temporary excitement — a mistake — a hideous dream, which the next post would sweep away. He would go and tell him so. No, he could not stir. His limbs seemed leaden, his feet felt rooted to the ground, as in long nightmare. And still the intolerable silence brooded overhead.

What broke it? A dull, stifled report, as of a pistol fired against the ground; a heavy fall; and again the silence of death.

He rushed up stairs. A corpse lay on its face upon the floor, and from among its hair a crimson thread crept slowly across the carpet. It was all over. He bent over the head, but one look was sufficient. He did not try to lift it up.

On the table lay the fatal letter. Lancelot knew that he had a right to read it. It was scrawled, misspelt — but there were no tear-blots on the paper: —

"Sir, — I am in prison — and where are you? Cruel man! Where were you all those miserable weeks, while I was coming nearer and nearer to my shame? Murdering dumb beasts in foreign lands. You have murdered more than them. How I loved you once! How I hate you now! But I have my revenge. Your baby cried twice after it was born!"

Lancelot tore the letter into a hundred pieces, and swallowed them, for every foot in the house was on the stairs.

So there was terror, and confusion, and running in and out: but there were no wet eyes there except those of Bracebridge's groom, who threw himself on the body, and would not stir. And then there was a coroner's inquest; and it came out in the evidence how "the deceased had been for several days very much depressed, and had talked of voices and apparitions;" whereat the jury — as twelve honest good-natured Christians were bound to do — returned a verdict of temporary insanity; and in a week more the penny-aliners grew tired; and the world, too, who never expects anything, not even French revolutions, grew tired also of repeating, — "Dear me! who would have expected it?" and having filled up the colonel's place, swaggered on as usual, arm-in-arm with the flesh and the devil.

Bracebridge's death had, of course, a great effect on Lancelot's spirit. Not in the way of warning, though — such events seldom act in that way, on the highest as well as on the lowest minds. After all, your "Rakes' Progresses," and "Atheists' Deathbeds," do no more good than noble George Cruikshank's "Bottle" will, because every one knows that they are the exception, and not the rule; that the Atheist generally dies with a conscience as comfortably callous as a rhinoceros' hide; and the rake, when old age stops his power of sinning, becomes generally rather more respectable than his neighbours. The New Testament deals very little in appeals *ad terrorem*; and it would be well if

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some, who fancy that they follow it, would do the same, and by abstaining from making "hell-fire" the chief incentive to virtue, cease from tempting many a poor fellow to enlist on the devil's side the only manly feeling he has left — personal courage.

But yet Lancelot was affected. And when, on the night of the colonel's funeral, he opened, at hazard, Argemone's Bible, and his eyes fell on the passage which tells how "one shall be taken and another left," great honest tears of gratitude dropped upon the page; and he fell on his knees, and in bitter self-reproach thanked the new found Upper Powers, who, as he began to hope, were leading him not in vain, — that he had yet a life before him wherein to play the man.

And now he felt that the last link was broken between him and all his late frivolous companions. All had deserted him in his ruin but this one — and he was silent in the grave. And now, from the world and all its toys and revelry, he was parted once and for ever; and he stood alone in the desert, like the last Arab of a plague-stricken tribe, looking over the wreck of ancient cities, across barren sands, where far rivers gleamed in the distance, that seemed to beckon him away into other climes, other hopes, other duties. Old things had passed away — when would all things become new?

Not yet, Lancelot. Thou hast still one selfish hope, one dream of bliss, however impossible, yet still cherished. Thou art a changed man — but for whose sake? For Argemone's. Is she to be thy god, then? Art thou to live for her, or for the sake of One greater than she? All thine idols are broken — swiftly the desert sands are drifting over them, and covering them

Yeast.

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in. - All but one - must that, too, be taken from thee?

One morning a letter was put into Lancelot's hands, bearing the Whitford postmark. Tremblingly he tore it open. It contained a few passionate words from Honoria. Argemone was dying of typhus-fever, and entreating to see him once again; and Honoria had, with some difficulty, as she hinted, obtained leave from her parents to send for him. His last bank-note carried him down to Whitford; and, calm and determined, as one who feels that he has nothing more to lose on earth, and whose "torment must henceforth become his element," he entered the Priory that evening.

He hardly spoke or looked at a soul; he felt that he was there on an errand which none understood; that he was moving towards Argemone through a spiritual world, in which he and she were alone; that, in his utter poverty and hopelessness, he stood above all the luxury, even above all the sorrow, around him; that she belonged to him, and to him alone; and the broken-hearted beggar followed the weeping Honoria towards his lady's chamber, with the step and bearing of a lord. He was wrong; there were pride and fierceness enough in his heart, mingled with that sense of nothingness of rank, money, chance and change, yea, death itself, of all but Love; - mingled even with that intense belief that this sorrows were but his just deserts, which now possessed all his soul. And in after years he knew that he was wrong; but so he felt at the time; and even then the strength was not all of earth which bore him manlike through that hour.

He entered the room; the darkness, the silence,

the cool scent of vinegar, struck a shudder through him. The squire was sitting, half idiotic and helpless, in his arm-chair. His face lighted up as Lancelot entered, and he tried to hold out his palsied hand. Lancelot did not see him. Mrs. Lavington moved proudly and primly back from the bed, with a face that seemed to say through its tears, "I at least am responsible for nothing that occurs from this interview." Lancelot did not see her either; he walked straight up towards the bed as if he were treading on his own ground. His heart was between his lips, and yet his whole soul felt as dry and hard as some burnt-out volcano crater.

A faint voice — oh, how faint, how changed! — called him from within the closed curtains.

"He is there! I know it is he! Lancelot! my Lancelot!"

Silently still he drew aside the curtain; the light fell full upon her face. What a sight! Her beautiful hair cut close, a ghastly white handkerchief round her head, those bright eyes sunk and lustreless, those ripe lips baked, and black and drawn; her thin hand fingering uneasily the coverlid — It was too much for him. He shuddered, and turned his face away. Quicksighted that love is, even to the last! slight as the gesture was, she saw it in an instant.

"You are not afraid of infection?" she said, faintly. "I was not."

Lancelot laughed aloud, as men will at strangest moments, sprung towards her with open arms, and threw himself on his knees beside the bed. With sudden strength she rose upright, and clasped him in her arms. "Once more!" she sighed, in a whisper to herself. "Once more on earth!" And the room, and the spectators, and disease itself, faded from around them like vain dreams, as she nestled closer and closer to him, and gazed into his eyes, and passed her shrunken hand over his cheeks, and toyed with his hair, and seemed to drink in magnetic life from his embrace.

No one spoke or stirred. They felt that an awful and blessed spirit overshadowed the lovers, and were hushed, as if in the sanctuary of God.

Suddenly again she raised her head from his bosom, and in a tone, in which her old queenliness mingled strangely with the saddest tenderness, —

"All of you go away; I must talk to my husband alone."

They went, leading out the squire, who cast puzzled glances toward the pair, and murmured to himself that "she was sure to get well now Smith was come: everything went right when he was in the way."

So they were left alone.

"I do not look so very ugly, my darling, do I? Not so very ugly? though they have cut off all my poor hair, and I told them so often not! But I kept a lock for you;" and feebly she drew from under the pillow a long auburn tress, and tried to wreathe it round his neck, but could not, and sunk back.

Poor fellow! he could bear no more. He hid his face in his hands, and burst into a long low weeping.

"I am very thirsty, darling; reach me - No, I will drink no more, except from your dear lips."

He lifted up his head, and breathed his whole soul upon her lips; his tears fell on her closed eyelids.

"Weeping? No. - You must not cry. See how

comfortable I am. They are all so kind — soft bed, cool room, fresh air, sweet drinks, sweet scents. Oh, so different from *that* room!"

"What room? - my own!"

"Listen, and I will tell you. Sit down — put your arm under my head — So. When I am on your bosom I feel so strong. God! let me last to tell him all. It was for that I sent for him."

And then, in broken words, she told him how she had gone up to the fever patient at Ashy, on the fatal night on which Lancelot had last seen her. Shuddering, she hinted at the horrible filth and misery she had seen, at the foul scents which had sickened her. A madness of remorse, she said, had seized her. She had gone, in spite of her disgust, to several houses which she found open. There were worse cottages there than even her father's; some tradesman in a neighbouring town had been allowed to run up a set of rack-rent hovels. - Another shudder seized her when she spoke of them; and from that point in her story all was fitful, broken, like the images of a hideous dream. "Every instant those foul memories were defiling her nostrils. A horrible loathing had taken possession of her, recurring from time to time, till it ended in delirium and fever. A scent-fiend was haunting her night and day," she said. "And now the Curse of the Lavingtons had truly come upon her -To perish by the people whom they made. Their neglect, cupidity, oppression, are avenged on me! Why not? Have I not wantoned in down and perfumes, while they, by whose labour my luxuries were bought, were pining among scents and sounds, -- one day of which would have driven me mad! And then they

wonder why men turn Chartists! There are those horrible scents again! Save me from them! Lancelot — darling! Take me to the fresh air! I choke! I am festering away! The Nunpool! Take all the water, every drop, and wash Ashy clean again! Make a great fountain in it — beautiful marble — to bubble, and gurgle, and trickle, and foam, for ever and ever, and wash away the sins of the Lavingtons, that the little rosy children may play round it, and the poor toil-bent women may wash — and wash — and drink — Water! water! I am dying of thirst!"

He gave her water, and then she lay back and babbled about the Nunpool sweeping "all the houses of Ashy into one beautiful palace, among great flowergardens, where the school children will sit and sing such merry hymns, and never struggle with great pails of water up the hill of Ashy any more."

"You will do it, darling! Strong, wise, noblehearted, that you are! Why do you look at me? You will be rich some day. You will own land, for you are worthy to own it. Oh that I could give you Whitford! No! It was mine too long — therefore I die! because I — Lord Jesus! have I not repented of my sin?"

Then she grew calm once more. A soft smile crept over her face, as it grew sharper and paler every moment. Faintly she sank back on the pillows, and faintly whispered to him to kneel and pray. He obeyed her mechanically. . . . "No — not for me, for them — for them, and for yourself — that you may save them whom I never dreamt that I was bound to save!" And he knelt, and prayed . . . what, he alone and those who heard his prayer, can tell. . . .

When he lifted up his head at last, he saw that Argemone lay motionless. For a moment he thought she was dead, and frantically sprang to the bell. The family rushed in with the physician. She gave some faint token of life, but none of consciousness. The doctor sighed, and said that her end was near. Lancelot had known that all along.

"I think, Sir, you had better leave the room," said Mrs. Lavington; and followed him into the passages.

What she was about to say remained unspoken; for Lancelot seized her hand in spite of her, with frantic thanks for having allowed him this one interview, and entreaties that he might see her again if but for one moment.

Mrs. Lavington, somewhat more softly than usual, said, — "That the result of this visit had not been such as to make a second desirable — that she had no wish to disturb her daughter's mind at such a moment with earthly regrets."

"Earthly regrets!" How little she knew what had passed there! But if she had known, would she have been one whit softened? For, indeed, Argemone's spirituality was not in her mother's language. And yet the good woman had prayed, and prayed, and wept bitter tears, by her daughter's bedside, day after day; but she had never heard her pronounce the talismanic formula of words, necessary in her eyes to ensure salvation; and so she was almost without hope for her. Oh Bigotry! Devil, who turnest God's love into man's curse! are not human hearts hard and blind enough of themselves, without thy cursed help?

For one moment a storm of unutterable pride and rage convulsed Lancelot — the next instant love conquered; and the strong proud man threw himself on his knees at the feet of the woman he despised, and with wild sobs intreated for one moment more — one only!

At that instant a shriek from Honoria resounded from the sick chamber. Lancelot knew what it meant, and sprang up, as men do when shot through the heart. — In a moment he was himself again. A new life had begun for him — alone.

"You will not need to grant my prayer, Madam," he said, calmly: "Argemone is dead."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### The Valley of the Shadow of Death.

LET us pass over the period of dull, stupified misery that followed, when Lancelot had returned to his lonely lodging, and the excitement of his feelings had died away. It is impossible to describe that which could not be separated into parts, in which there was no foreground, no distance, but only one dead, black, colourless present. After a time, however, he began to find that fancies, almost ridiculously trivial, arrested and absorbed his attention; even as when our eyes have become accustomed to darkness, every light-coloured mote shows luminous against the void blackness of night. So we are tempted to unseemly frivolity in churches, and at

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funerals, and all most solemn moments; and so Lancelot found his imagination fluttering back, half amused, to every smallest circumstance of the last few weeks, as objects of mere curiosity; and found with astonishment that they had lost their power of paining him. Just as victims on the rack have fallen it is said; by length of torture, into insensibility, and even calm repose, his brain had been wrought until all feeling was benumbed. He began to think what an interesting autobiography his life might make; and the events of the last few years began to arrange themselves in a most attractive dramatic form. He began even to work out a scene or two, and where "motives" seemed wanting, to invent them here and there. He sat thus for hours silent over his fire, playing with his old self, as though it were a thing which did not belong to him - a suit of clothes which he had put off, and which,

> "For that it was too rich to hang by the wall, It must be ripped,"

and then pieced, and dizened out afresh as a toy. And then again he started away from his own thoughts, at finding himself on the edge of that very gulf which, as Mellot had lately told him, Barnakill denounced as the true hell of genius, where Art is regarded as an end and not a means, and objects are interesting, not in as far as they form our spirits, but in proportion as they can be shaped into effective parts of some beautiful whole. But whether it was a temptation or none, the desire recurred to him again and again. He even attempted to write, but sickened at the sight of the first words. He turned

to his pencil, and tried to represent with it one scene at least; and, with the horrible calmness of some self-torturing ascetic, he sat down to sketch a drawing of himself and Argemone on her dying day, with her head upon his bosom for the last time and then tossed it angrily into the fire, partly because he felt just as he had in his attempts to write, that there was something more in all these events than he could utter by pen or pencil, than he could even understand; principally because he could not arrange the attitudes gracefully enough. And now, in front of the stern realities of sorrow and death, he began to see a meaning in another mysterious saying of Barnakill's which Mellot was continually quoting, that "Art was never Art till it was more than Art: that the Finite only existed as the body of the Infinite; and that the man of genius must first know the Infinite, unless he wished to become not a poet, but a maker of idols." Still he felt in himself a capability, nay, an infinite longing to speak; though what he should utter, or how - whether as poet, social theorist, preacher, he could not yet decide. Barnakill had forbidden him painting, and, though he hardly knew why, he dared not disobey him. But Argemone's dying words lay on him as a divine command to labour. All his doubts, his social observations, his dreams of the beautiful and the blissful, his intense perception of social evils, his new-born hope faith it could not yet be called - in a ruler and deliverer of the world, all urged him on to labour: but at what? He felt as if he were the demon in the legend, condemned to twine endless ropes of sand. The world, outside which he now stood for good and

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evil, seemed to him like some frantic whirling waltz; some serried struggling crowd, which rushed past him in aimless confusion, without allowing him time or opening to take his place among their ranks; and as for wings to rise above, and to look down upon the uproar, where were they? His melancholy paralysed him more and more. He was too listless even to cater for his daily bread by writing his articles for the magazines. Why should he? He had nothing to say. Why should he pour out words and empty sound, and add one more futility to the herd of "pro-phets that had become wind, and had no truth in them?" Those who could write without a conscience, without an object except that of seeing their own fine words, and filling their own pockets - let them do it: for his part he would have none of it. But his purse was empty, and so was his stomach; and as for asking assistance of his uncle, it was returning like the dog to his vomit. So one day he settled all bills with his last shillings, tied up his remaining clothes in a bundle, and stoutly stepped forth into the street to find a job — to hold a horse, if nothing better offered; when, behold! on the threshold he met Barnakill himself.

"Whither away?" said that strange personage. "I was just going to call on you."

"To eat my bread by the labour of my hands. So our fathers all began."

"And so their sons must all end. Do you want work?"

"Yes, if you have any."

"Follow me, and carry a trunk home from a shop to my lodgings." He strode off, with Lancelot after him; entered a mathematical instrument maker's shop in the neighbouring street, and pointed out a heavy corded case to Lancelot, who, with the assistance of the shopman, got in on his shoulders; and trudging forth through the streets after his employer, who walked before him silent and unregarding, felt himself for the first time in his life in the same situation as nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of Adam's descendants, and discovered somewhat to his satisfaction that when he could once rid his mind of its old superstition that every one was looking at him, it mattered very little whether the burden carried were a deal trunk or a Downing Street despatch-box.

His employer's lodgings were in St. Paul's Churchyard. Lancelot set the trunk down inside the door.

"What do you charge?"

"Sixpence."

Barnakill looked him steadily in the face, gave him the sixpence, went in and shut the door.

Lancelot wandered down the street, half amused at the simple test which had just been applied to him, and yet sickened with disappointment; for he had cherished a mysterious fancy that with this strange being all his hopes of future activity were bound up. Tregarva's month was nearly over, and yet no tidings of him had come. Mellot had left London on some mysterious errand of the prophet's, and for the first time in his life he seemed to stand utterly alone. He was at one pole, and the whole universe at the other. It was in vain to tell himself that his own act had placed him there; that he had friends to whom he might appeal. He would not, he dare not accept out-

ward help, even outward friendship, however hearty and sincere, at that crisis of his existence. It seemed a desecration of its awfulness to find comfort in anything but the highest and the deepest. And the glimpse of that which he had attained seemed to have passed away from him again, - seemed to be something which, as it had arisen with Argemone, was lost with her also, - one speck of the far blue sky which the rolling clouds had covered in again. As he passed under the shadow of the huge soot-blackened cathedral, and looked at its grim spiked railings and closed doors, it seemed to him a symbol of the spiritual world clouded and barred from him. He stopped and looked up, and tried to think. The rays of the setting sun lighted up in clear radiance the huge cross on the summit. Was it an omen? Lancelot thought so; but at that instant he felt a hand on his shoulder, and looked round. It was that strange man again.

"So far well," said he. "You are making a better day's work than you fancy, and earning more wages. For instance, here is a packet for you."

Lancelot seized it, trembling, and tore it open. It was directed in Honoria's handwriting.

"Whence had you this?" said he.

"Through Mellot, through whom I can return your answer, if one be needed."

The letter was significant of Honoria's character. It busied itself entirely about facts, and showed the depth of her sorrow by making no allusion to it. "Argemone, as Lancelot was probably aware, had bequeathed to him the whole of her own fortune at Mrs. Lavington's death, and had directed that various precious things of hers should be delivered over to him immediately. Her mother, however, kept her chamber under lock and key, and refused to allow an article to be removed from its accustomed place. It was natural in the first burst of her sorrow, and Lancelot would pardon." All his drawings and letters had been, by Argemone's desire, placed with her in her coffin. Honoria had been only able to obey her in sending a favourite ring of hers, and with it the last stanzas which she had composed before her death: —

> Twin stars, aloft in ether clear, Around each other roll alway, Within one common atmosphere Of their own mutual light and day.

And myriad happy eyes are bent Upon their changeless love alway;
As, strengthened by their one intent, They pour the flood of life and day.

So we, through this world's waning night, Shall, hand in hand, pursue our way; Shed round us order, love, and light, And shine unto the perfect day.

The precious relic, with all its shattered hopes, came at the right moment to soften his hard-worn heart. The sight, the touch of it, shot like an electric spark through the black stifling thunder-cloud of his soul, and dissolved it in refreshing showers of tears.

Barnakill led him gently within the area of the railings, where he might conceal his emotion, and it was but a few seconds before Lancelot had recovered his self-possession and followed him up the steps through the wicket-door.

They entered. The afternoon service was proceeding. The organ droned sadly in its iron cage to

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a few musical amateurs. Some nursery-maids and foreign sailors stared about within the spiked felons' dock which shut off the body of the cathedral, and tried in vain to hear what was going on inside the choir. As a wise author - a Protestant, too - has lately said, "the scanty service rattled in the vast building, like a dried kernel too small for its shell." The place breathed imbecility, and unreality, and sleepy life-in-death, while the whole nineteenth century went roaring on its way outside. And as Lancelot thought, though only as a dilettante, of old St. Paul's, the morning star and focal beacon of England through centuries and dynasties, from old Augustine and Mellitus, up to those Paul's Cross sermons whose thunders shook thrones, and to noble Wren's masterpiece of art, he asked, "Whither all this? Coleridge's dictum, that a cathedral is a petrified religion, may be taken to bear more meanings than one. When will life return to this cathedral system?"

"When was it ever a living system?" answered the other. "When was it ever anything but a transitionary makeshift, since the dissolution of the monasteries?"

"Why, then, not away with it at once?"

"You English have not done with it yet. At all events it is keeping your cathedrals rain-proof for you, till you can put them to some better use than now."

"And in the meantime?"

"In the meantime there is life enough in them; life that will wake the dead some day. Do you hear what those choristers are chanting now?" "Not I," said Lancelot; "nor any one round us, I should think."

"That is our own fault, after all; for we were not good churchmen enough to come in time for vespers."

"Are you a churchman, then?"

"Yes, thank God. There may be other churches than those of Europe or Syria, and right Catholic ones, too. But shall I tell you what they are singing? 'He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.' Is there no life, think you, in those words, spoken here every afternoon in the name of God?"

"By hirelings, who neither care nor understand ---"

"Hush. Be not hasty with imputations of evil, within walls dedicated to and preserved by the Allgood. Even should the speakers forget the meaning of their own words, to my sense, perhaps, that may just now leave the words more entirely God's. At all events, confess that whatever accidental husks may have clustered round it, here is a germ of Eternal Truth. No, I dare not despair of you English, as long as I hear your priesthood forced by Providence, even in spite of themselves, thus to speak God's words about an age in which the condition of the poor, and the rights and duties of man, are becoming the rallying-point for all thought and all organization."

"But does it not make the case more hopeless that such words have been spoken for centuries, and no man regards them?"

"You have to blame for that the people, rather

than the priest. As they are, so will he be, in every age and country. He is but the index which the changes of their spiritual state move up and down the scale; and as they will become in England in the next half century, so will he become also."

"And can these dry bones live?" asked Lancelot, scornfully.

"Who are you to ask? What were you three months ago? for I know well your story. But do you remember what the prophet saw in the Valley of Vision? How first that those same dry bones shook and clashed together, as if uneasy because they were disorganised; and how they then found flesh and stood upright: and yet there was no life in them, till at last the Spirit came down and entered into them? Surely there is shaking enough among the bones now! It is happening to the body of your England as it did to Adam's after he was made. It lay on earth, the rabbis say, forty days before the breath of life was put into it, and the devil came and kicked it; and it sounded hollow, as England is doing now; but that did not prevent the breath of life coming in good time, nor will it in England's case."

Lancelot looked at him with a puzzled face.

"You must not speak in such deep parables to so young a learner."

"Is my parable so hard, then? Look around you and see what is the characteristic of your country and of your generation at this moment. What a yearning, what an expectation, amid infinite falsehoods and confusions, of some nobler, more chivalrous, more god-like state! Your very costermonger trolls out his belief that 'there's a good time coming,' and the Yeast. 20 hearts of gamins, as well as millenarians, answer, 'True!' Is not that a clashing among the dry bones? And as for flesh, what new materials are springing up among you every month, spiritual and physical for a state such as 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard!' -railroads, electric telegraphs, associate-lodging-houses, club-houses, sanitary reforms, experimental schools, chemical agriculture, a matchless school of inductive science, an equally matchless school of naturalist painters, — and all this in the very workshop of the world! Look, again, at the healthy craving after religious art and ceremonial, - the strong desire to preserve that which has stood the test of time; and, on the other hand, at the manful resolution of your middle classes to stand or fall by the Bible alone, to admit no innovations in worship which are empty of instinctive meaning. Look at the enormous amount of practical benevolence which now struggles in vain against evil, only because it is as yet private, desultory, divided. How dare you, young man, despair of your own nation, while its nobles can produce a Carlisle, an Ellesmere, an Ashley, a Robert Grosvenor, - while its middle classes can beget a Faraday, a Stevenson, a Brooke, an Elizabeth Fry? See, I say, what a chaos of noble materials is here, — all confused, it is true, polarised, jarring, and chaotic, - here bigotry, there self-will, superstition, sheer Atheism often, but only waiting for the one inspiring Spirit to organize, and unite, and consecrate this chaos into the noblest polity the world ever saw realized! What a destiny may be that of your land, if you have but the faith to see your own honour! Were I not of my own country, I would be an Englishman this day."

"And what is your country?" asked Lancelot. "It should be a noble one which breeds such men as you."

The stranger smiled.

"Will you go thither with me?"

"Why not? I long for travel, and truly I am sick of my own country. When the Spirit of which you speak," he went on, bitterly, "shall descend, I may return; till then England is no place for the penniless."

"How know you that the Spirit is not even now poured out? Must your English Pharisees and Sadducees, too, have signs and wonders ere they believe? Will man never know that 'the kingdom of God comes not by observation?' that now, as ever, His promise stands true, — 'Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world?' How many inspired hearts even now may be cherishing in secret the idea which shall reform the age, and fulfil at once the longings of every sect and rank?"

"Name it to me, then!"

"Who can name it? Who can even see it, but those who are like Him from whom it comes? Them a long and stern discipline awaits. Would you be of them, you must, like the Highest who ever trod this earth, go fasting into the wilderness, and, among the wild beasts, stand alone face to face with the powers of Nature."

"I will go where you shall bid me. I will turn shepherd among the Scottish mountains — live as an anchorite in the solitudes of Dartmoor. But to what purpose? I have listened long to Nature's voice, but even the whispers of a spiritual presence which haunted my childhood have died away, and I hear nothing in her but the grinding of the iron wheels of mechanical necessity."

"Which is the will of God. Henceforth you shall study, not Nature, but Him. Yet as for place - I do not like your English primitive formations, where Earth, worn out with struggling, has fallen wearily asleep. No, you shall rather come to Asia, the oldest and yet the youngest continent, - to our volcanic mountain ranges, where her bosom still heaves with the creative energy of youth, around the primeval cradle of the most ancient race of men. Then, when you have learnt the wondrous harmony between man and his dwelling place, I will lead you to a land where you shall see the highest spiritual cultivation in triumphant contact with the fiercest energies of matter; where men have learnt to tame and use alike the volcano and the human heart, where the body and the spirit, the beautiful and the useful, the human and the divine, are no longer separate, and men have embodied to themselves on earth an image of the 'city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.""

"Where is this land?" said Lancelot, eagerly.

"Poor human nature must have its name for everything. You have heard of the country of Prester John, that mysterious Christian empire, rarely visited by European eye?"

"There are legends of two such," said Lancelot, "an Ethiopian and an Asiatic one; and the Ethiopian, if we are to believe Colonel Harris's journey to Shoa, is a sufficiently miserable failure."

"True; the day of the Chamitic race is past; you will not say the same of our Caucasian empire. To

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our race the present belongs, — to England, France, Germany, America, — to us. Will you see what we have done, and, perhaps, bring home, after long wanderings, a message for your country which may help to unravel the tangled web of this strange time?"

"I will," said Lancelot, "now this moment. And yet, no. There is one with whom I have promised to share all future weal and woe. Without him I can take no step."

"Tregarva?"

"Yes — he. What made you guess that I spoke of him?"

"Mellot told me of him, and of you, too, six weeks ago. He is now gone to fetch him from Manchester. I cannot trust him here in England yet. The country made him sad; London has made him mad; Manchester may make him bad. It is too fearful a trial even for his faith. I must take him with us."

"What interest in him? — not to say, what authority over him, have you?"

"The same which I have over you. You will come with me; so will he. It is my business, as my name signifies, to save the children alive whom European society leaves carelessly and ignorantly to die. And as for my power, I come," said he, with a smile, "from a country which sends no one on its errands without first thoroughly statisfying itself as to his power of fulfilling them."

"If he goes, I go with you."

"And he will go. And yet, think what you do. It is a fearful journey. They who travel it, even as they came naked out of their mother's womb — even as they return thither, and carry nothing with them of all which they have gotten in this life, so must those who travel to my land."

"What? Tregarva? Is he, too, to give up all? I had thought that I saw in him a precious possession, one for which I would barter all my scholarship, my talents, — ay — my life itself."

"A possession worth your life? What then?"

"Faith in an unseen God."

"Ask him whether he would call that a possession — his own in any sense?"

"He would call it a revelation to him."

"That is, a taking off the veil from something which was behind the veil already."

"Yes."

"And which may therefore just as really be behind the veil in other cases without its presence being suspected."

"Certainly."

"In what sense, now, is that a possession? Do you possess the sun because you see it? Did Herschel create Uranus by discovering it; or even increase, by an atom, its attraction on one particle of his own body?"

"Whither is all this tending?"

"Hither. Tregarva does not possess his Father and his Lord; he is possessed by them."

"But he would say — and I should believe him that he has seen and known them, not with his bodily eyes, but with his soul, heart, imagination — call it what you will. All I know is, that between him and me there is a great gulf fixed."

"What! seen and known them utterly? compre-

hended them? Are they not infinite, incomprehensible? Can the less comprehend the greater?"

"He knows, at least, enough of them to make him what I am not."

"That is, He knows something of them. And may not you know something of them also? — Enough to make you what he is not?"

Lancelot shook his head in silence.

"Suppose that you had met and spoken with your father, and loved him when you saw him, and yet were not aware of the relation in which you stood to him, still you would know him?"

"Not the most important thing of all — that he was my father."

Is that the most important thing? Is it not more important that he should know that you were his son? that he should support, guide, educate you, even though unseen? Do you not know that some one has been doing that?"

"That I have been supported, guided, educated, I know full well; but by whom I know not. And I know, too, that I have been punished. And therefore — therefore I cannot free the thought of a Him of a Person — only of a Destiny, of Laws and Powers, which have no faces wherewith to frown awful wrath upon me! If it be a Person who has been leading me, I must go mad, or know that He has forgiven!"

"I conceive that it is He, and not punishment, which you fear?"

Lancelot was silent a moment. . . . "Yes, He, and not hell at all, is what I fear. He can inflict no punishment on me worse than the inner hell which I have felt already, many and many a time." "Bona verba! That is an awful thing to say: but better this extreme than the other. . . . And you would — what?"

"Be pardoned."

"If He loves you, He has pardoned you already." "How do I know that He loves me?"

How do I know that He loves

"How does Tregarva?"

"He is a righteous man, and I --"

"Am a sinner. He would, and rightly, call himself the same."

"But he knows that God loves him — that he is God's child."

"So, then, God did not love him till he caused God to love him, by knowing that He loved him? He was not God's child till he made himself one, by believing that he was one when as yet he was not? I appeal to common sense and logic. . . . It was revealed to Tregarva that God had been loving him while he was yet a bad man. If he loved him, in spite of his sin, why should He not have loved you?"

"If He had loved me, would He have left me in ignorance of Himself? For if He be, to know Him is the highest good."

"Had He left Tregarva in ignorance of himself?"

"No. . . . Certainly, Tregarva spoke of his conversion as of a turning to one of whom he had known all along, and disregarded."

"Then do you turn, like him, to Him whom you have known all along, and disregarded."

"T?"

"Yes — you! If half I have heard and seen of you be true, He has been telling you more, and not less, of Himself than He does to most men. You, for aught I know, may know more of Him than Tregarva does. The gulf between you and him is this: he has obeyed what he knew — and you have not."...

Lancelot paused a moment, then ---

"No! — do not cheat me! You said once that you were a churchman."

"So I am. A Catholic of the Catholics. What then?"

"Who is He to whom you ask me to turn? You talk to me of Him as my Father; but you talk of Him to men of your own creed as The Father. You have mysterious dogmas of a Three in One. I know them. . . . I have admired them. In all their forms — in the Vedas, in the Neo-Platonists, in Jacob Boëhmen, in your Catholic creeds, in Coleridge, and the Germans from whom he borrowed, I have looked at them, and found in them beautiful phantasms of philosophy, . . . . all but scientific necessities; . . . . but —"

"But what?"

"I do not want cold abstract necessities of logic: I want living practical facts. If those mysterious dogmas speak of real and necessary properties of His being, they must be necessarily interwoven in practice with His revelation of Himself."

"Most true. But how would you have Him unveil Himself?"

"By unveiling Himself."

"What? To your simple intuition? That was Semele's ambition. . . . You recollect the end of that myth. You recollect, too, as you have read the Neo-Platonists, the result of their similar attempt."

"Idolatry and magic."

"True; and yet, such is the ambition of man, you who were just now envying Tregarva, are already longing to climb even higher than Saint Theresa."

"I do not often indulge in such am ambition. But I have read in your Schoolmen tales of a Beatific Vision; how that the highest good for man was to see God."

"And did you believe that?"

"One cannot believe the impossible — only regret its impossibility."

"Impossibility? You can only see the Uncreate in the Create — the Infinite in the Finite — the absolute good in that which is like the good. Does Tregarva pretend to more? He sees God in his own thoughts and conciousnesses, and in the events of the world around him, imaged in the mirror of his own mind. Is your mirror, then, so much narrower than his?"

"I have none. I see but myself, and the world, and far above them, a dim awful Unity, which is but a notion."

"Fool! — and slow of heart to believe! Where else would you see Him, but in yourself and in the world? They are all things cognizable to you. Where else, but everywhere, would you see Him whom no man hath seen, or can see?"

"When He shows Himself to me in them, then I may see him. But now -"

"You have seen Him; and because you do not know the name of what you see - or rather will not acknowledge it — you fancy that it is not there."

"How, in His name? What have I seen?"

"Ask yourself. Have you not seen, in your fancy, at least, an ideal of man, for which you spurned (for Mellot has told me all) the merely negative angelic the merely receptive and indulgent feminine-ideals of humanity, and longed to be a man, like that ideal and perfect man?"

"I have."

"And what was your misery all along? Was it not that you felt you ought to be a person, with a one inner unity, a one practical will, purpose, and business given to you — not invented by yourself in the great order and harmony of the universe, and that you were not one? — That your self-willed fancies, and self-pleasing passions, had torn you in pieces, and left you inconsistent, dismembered, helpless, purposeless? That, in short, you were below your ideal, just in proportion as you were not a person?"

"God knows you speak truth!"

"Then must not that ideal of humanity be a person himself? — Else how can he be the ideal man? Where is your logic? An impersonal ideal of a personal species! . . . And what is the most special peculiarity of man? Is it not that he alone of creation is a son, with a Father to love and to obey? Then must not the ideal man be a son also? And last, but not least, is it not the very property of man that he is a spirit invested with flesh and blood? Then must not the ideal man have, once at least, taken on himself flesh and blood also? Else, how could he fulfil his own idea?"

"Yes ... Yes ... That thought, too, has glanced through my mind at moments, like a lightning-flash; till I have envied the old Greeks their faith in a human Zeus, son of Kronos — a human Phoibos, son of Zeus. But I could not rest in them. They are noble. But are they — are any — perfect ideals? The one thing I did, and do, and will believe, is the one which they do not fulfil — that man is meant to be the conqueror of the earth, matter, nature, decay, death itself, and to conquer them, as Bacon says, by obeying them."

"Hold it fast; — but follow it out, and say boldly, the ideal of humanity must be one who has conquered nature — one who rules the universe — one who has vanquished death itself; and conquered them, as Bacon says, not by violating, but by submitting to them. Have you never heard of one who is said to have done this? How do you know, that in this ideal which you have seen, you have not seen the Son — The perfect Man, who died and rose again, and sits for ever Healer, and Lord, and Ruler of the universe? ..... Stay — do not answer me. Have you not, besides, had dreams of an All-Father — from whom, in some mysterious way, all things and beings must derive their source, and that Son — if my theory be true — among the rest, and above all the rest?"

"Who has not? But what more dim or distant more drearily, hopelessly notional, than that thought?"

"Only the thought that there is none. But the dreariness was only in your own inconsistency. If He be the Father of all, he must be the Father of

persons - He Himself therefore a person. He must be the Father of all in whom dwell personal qualities, power, wisdom, creative energy, love, justice, pity. Can He be their Father, unless all these very qualities are infinitely His? Does He now look so terrible to you?"

"I have had this dream, too; but I turned away from it in dread."

"Doubtless you did. Some day you will know why. Does that former dream of a human Son relieve this dream of none of its awfulness? May not the type be beloved for the sake of its Antitype, even if the very name of All-father is no guarantee for His paternal pity? . . . But you have had this dream. How know you, that in it you were not allowed a glimpse, however dim and distant, of Him whom the Catholics call The Father?"

"It may be; but -"

"Stay again. Had you never the sense of a Spirit in you - a will, an energy, an inspiration, deeper than the region of consciousness and reflection, which, like the wind, blew where it listed, and you heard the sound of it ringing through your whole consciousness, and yet knew not whence it came, or whither it went, or why it drove you on to dare and suffer, to love and hate; to be a fighter, a sportsman, an artist -"

"And a drunkard!" added Lancelot, sadly. "And a drunkard. But did it never seem to you, that this strange wayward spirit, if anything, was the very root and core of your own personality? And had you never a craving for the help of some higher, mightier spirit, to guide and strengthen yours; to regulate and civilize its savage and spasmodic self-will; to teach you your rightful place in the great order of the universe around; to fill you with a continuous purpose, and with a continuous will to do it? Have you never had a dream of an Inspirer? — a spirit of all spirits?"

Lancelot turned away with a shudder.

"Talk of anything but that! Little you know -and yet you seem to know everything - the agony of craving with which I have longed for guidance; the rage and disgust which possessed me when I tried one pretended teacher after another, and found in myself depths which their spirits could not, or rather would not, touch. I have been irreverent to the false, from very longing to worship the true; I have been a rebel to sham leaders, for very desire to be loyal to a real one; I have envied my poor cousin his Jesuits; I have envied my own pointers their slavery to my whip and whistle; I have fled, as a last resource, to brandy and opium, for the inspiration which neither man nor demon would bestow . . . Then I found . . . . you know my story . . . And when I looked to her to guide and inspire me, behold! I found myself, by the very laws of humanity, compelled to guide and inspire her; - blind, to lead the blind! - Thank God, for her sake, that she was taken from me!"

Did you ever mistake these substitutes, even the noblest of them, for the reality? Did not your very dissatisfaction with them show you that the true inspirer ought to be, if he were to satisfy your cravings, a person, truly — else how could he inspire and teach you, a person yourself? — but an utterly infinite, omniscient, eternal person? How know you that in that dream He was not unveiling Himself to you — He, The Spirit, who is the Lord and Giver of Life; The Spirit, who teaches men their duty and relation to those above, around, beneath them; The Spirit of order, obedience, loyalty, brotherhood, mercy, condescension?"

"But I never could distinguish these dreams from each other; the moment that I essayed to separate them, I seemed to break up the thought of an absolute one ground of all things, without which the universe would have seemed a piecemeal chaos; and they receded to infinite distance, and became transparent, barren, notional shadows of my own brain, — even as your words are now."

"How know you that you were meant to distinguish them? How know you that that very impossibility was not the testimony of fact and experience to that old Catholic dogma, for the sake of which you just now shrank from my teaching? I say that this is so. How do you know that it is not?"

"But how do I know that it is? I want proof."

"And you are the man who was, five minutes ago, crying out for practical facts, and disdaining cold abstract necessities of logic! Can you prove that your body exists?"

"No."

"Can you prove that your spirit exists?"

"No."

"And yet know that they both exist. And how?" "Solvitur ambulando."

"Exactly. When you try to prove either of them without the other, you fail. You arrive, if at anything, at some barren polar notion. By action alone you prove the mesothetic fact which underlies and unites them."

"Quorsum hæc?"

"Hither. I am not going to demonstrate the indemonstrable — to give you intellectual notions, which, after all, will be but reflexes of my own peculiar brain, and so add the green of my spectacles to the orange of yours, and make night hideous by fresh monsters. I may help you to think yourself into a theoretical Tritheism, or a theoretical Sabellianism; I cannot make you think yourself into practical and living Catholicism. As you of anthropology, so I say of theo logy, — Solvitur ambulando. Don't believe Catholic doctrine unless you like; faith is free. But see if you can reclaim either society or yourself without it; see if He will let you reclaim them. Take Catholic doctrine for granted; act on it; and see if you will not reclaim them!"

"Take for granted? Am I to come, after all, to implicit faith?"

"Implicit fiddlesticks! Did you ever read the Novum Organum? Mellot told me that you were a geologist."

"Well?"

"You took for granted what you read in geological books, and went to the mine and the quarry afterwards, to verify it in practice; and according as you found fact correspond to theory, you retained or rejected. Was that implicit faith, or common sense, common humility, and sound induction?"

"Sound induction, at least."

"Then go now, and do likewise. Believe that the

learned, wise, and good, for 1800 years, may possibly have found out somewhat, or have been taught somewhat, on this matter, and test their theory by practice. If a theory on such a point is worth anything at all, it is omnipotent and all-explaining. If it will not work, of course there is no use keeping it a moment. Perhaps it will work. I say it will."

"But I shall not work it; I still dread my own spectacles. I dare not trust myself alone to verify a theory of Murchison's or Lyell's. How dare I trust myself in this?"

"Then do not trust yourself alone; come and see what others are doing. Come, and become a member of a body which is verifying, by united action, those universal and eternal truths, which are too great for the grasp of any one time-ridden individual. Not that we claim the gift of infallibility, any more than I do that of perfect utterance of the little which we do know."

"Then what do you promise me in asking me to go with you?"

"Practical proof that these my words are true, practical proof that they can make a nation all that England might be, and is not, — the sight of what a people may become, who knowing thus far, do what they know. We believe no more than you, but we believe it. Come and see! — And yet you will not see; facts, and the reasons of them, will be as impalpable to you there as here, unless you can again obey your Novum Organum."

"How then?"

"By renouncing all your idols — the idols of the race and of the market, of the study and of the theatre.

Yeast.

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Every national prejudice, every vulgar superstition, every remnant of pedantic system, every sentimental like or dislike, must be left behind you, for the induction of the world-problem. You must empty yourself, before God will fill you."

"Of what can I strip myself more? I know nothing; I can do nothing; I hope nothing; I fear nothing; I am nothing."

"And you would gain something. But for what purpose? — for on that depends your whole success. To be famous, great, glorious, powerful, beneficent?"

"As I live, the height of my ambition, small though it be, is only to find my place, though it were but as a sweeper of chimneys. If I dare wish — if I dare choose, it would be only this — to regenerate one little parish in the whole world.... To do that, and die, for aught I care, without ever being recognised as the author of my own deeds .... to hear them, if need be, imputed to another, and myself accursed as a fool, if I can but atone for the sins of".....

He paused; but his teacher understood him.

"It is enough," he said. "Come with me; Tregarva waits for us near. Again I warn you; you will hear nothing new; you shall only see what you, and all around you, have known and not done, known and done. We have no peculiar doctrines or systems; the old creeds are enough for us. But we have obeyed the teaching which we received in each and every age, and allowed ourselves to be built up, generation by generation — as the rest of Christendom might have done — into a living temple, on the foundation which is laid already, and other than which no man can lay."

# "And what is that?"

"Jesus Christ -- THE MAN."

He took Lancelot by the hand. A peaceful warmth diffused itself over his limbs; the droning of the organ sounded fainter and more faint; the marble monuments grew dim and distant; and, half unconsciously, he followed like a child through the cathedral door.

exclusion at least for me," that I bays through a thirth

mennel designed wante a min presentation of subition our light fast

# EPILOGUE.

I CAN foresee many criticisms, and those not unreasonable ones, on this little book - let it be some excuse at least for me, that I have foreseen them. Readers will complain, I doubt not, of the very mythical and mysterious denouement of a story which began by things so gross and palpable as field-sports and pauperism. But is it not true, that sooner or later, "omnia exeunt in mysterium?" Out of mystery we all came at our birth, fox-hunters and paupers, sages and saints; into mystery we shall all return . . . at all events, when we die; probably, as it seems to me, some of us will return thither before we die. For if the signs of the times mean anything, they portend, I humbly submit, a somewhat mysterious and mythical denouement to this very age, and to those struggles of it which I have herein attempted, clumsily enough, to sketch. We are entering fast, I both hope and fear, into the region of prodigy, true and false; and our great-grandchildren will look back on the latter half of this century, and ask, if it were possible that such things could happen in an organized planet? The Benthamites will receive this announcement, if it ever meets their eyes, with shouts of laughter. Be it so ... nous verrons. . . . In the year 1847, if they will

### EPILOGUE.

recollect, they were congratulating themselves on the nations having grown too wise to go to war any more .... and in 1848? So it has been from the beginning. What did philosophes expect in 1792? What did they see in 1793? Popery was to be eternal: but the Reformation came nevertheless. Rome was to be eternal: but Alaric came. Jerusalem was to be eternal: but Titus came. Gomorrha was to be eternal, I doubt not: but the fire-floods came. . . . "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man. They were eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage; and the flood came, and swept them all away." Of course they did not expect it. They went on saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For all things continue as they were from the beginning." Most true; but what if they were from the beginning over a volcano's mouth? What if the method whereon things have proceeded since the creation were, as geology as well as history proclaims — a cataclysmic method? What then? Why should not this age, as all others like it have done, end in a cataclysm, and a prodigy, and a mystery? And why should not my little book do likewise?

Again — Readers will probably complain of the fragmentary and unconnected form of the book. Let them first be sure that that is not an integral feature of the subject itself, and therefore the very form the book should take. Do not young men think, speak, act, just now, in this very incoherent fragmentary way; without methodic education or habits of thought; with the various stereotyped systems which they have received by tradition, breaking up under them like ice in a thaw; with a thousand facts and notions, which they know

#### EPILOGUE.

not how to classify, pouring in on them like a flood? — a very Yeasty state of mind altogether, like a mountain burn in a spring rain, carrying down with it stones, sticks, peat-water, addle grouse-eggs and drowned king-fishers, fertilizing salts and vegetable poisons - not, alas! without a large crust, here and there, of sheer froth. Yet no heterogeneous confused flood-deposit, no fertile meadows below. And no high water, no fishing. It is in the long black droughts, when the water is foul from lowness, and not from height, that Hydras and Desmidiæ, and Rodifers, and all uncouth pseudorganisms, bred of putridity, begin to multiply, and the fish are sick for want of a fresh, and the cunningest artificial fly is of no avail, and the shrewdest angler will do nothing - except with a gross fleshly gilt-tailed worm, or the cannibal bait of roe, whereby parent fishes, like competitive barbarisms, devour each other's flesh and blood — perhaps their own. It is when the stream is clearing after a flood, that the fish will rise. . . When will the flood clear, and the fish come on the feed again?

Next; I shall be blamed for having left untold the fate of those characters who have acted throughout as Lancelot's satellites. But indeed their only purpose consisted in their influence on his development, and that of Tregarva; I do not see that we have any need to follow them further. The reader can surely conjecture their history for himself. . . . . He may be pretty certain that they have gone the way of the world . . . . abierunt ad plures . . . . for this life or for the next. They have done — very much what he or I might have done in their place — nothing. Nature brings very few of her children to perfection, in these

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days or any other. . . . And for Grace, which does bring its children to perfection, the quantity and quality of the perfection must depend on the quantity and quality of the grace, and that again, to an awful extent — The Giver only knows to how great an extent — on the will of the recipients, and therefore in exact proportion to their lowness in the human scale, on the circumstances which environ them. So my characters are now - very much what the reader might expect them to be. I confess them to be unsatisfactory; so are most things: but how can I solve problems which fact has not yet solved for me? How am I to extricate my antitypal characters, when their living types have not yet extricated themselves? When the age moves on, my story shall move on with it. Let it be enough, that my puppets have retreated in good order, and that I am willing to give to those readers who have conceived something of human interest for them, the latest accounts of their doings.

With the exception, that is, of Mellot and Sabina. Them I confess to be an utterly mysterious, fragmentary little couple. Why not? Do you not meet with twenty such in the course of your life? — Charming people, who for aught you know may be opera-folk from Paris, or emissaries from the Czar, or disguised Jesuits, or disguised Angels . . . who evidently "have a history," and a strange one, which you never expect or attempt to fathom; who interest you intensely for a while, and then are whirled away again in the great world-waltz, and lost in the crowd for ever? Why should you wish my story to be more complete than theirs is, or less romantic than theirs may be? There are more things in London, as well as in heaven and

earth, than are dreamt of in our philosophy. If you but knew the secret history of that dull gentleman opposite whom you sat at dinner yesterday! — the real thoughts of that chattering girl whom you took down! — "Omnia exeunt in mysterium," I say again. Every human being is a romance, a miracle to himself now; and will appear as one to all the world in That Day.

But now for the rest; and Squire Lavington first. He is a very fair sample of the fate of the British public; for he is dead and buried: and readers would not have me extricate him out of that situation? If you ask news of the reason and manner of his end, I can only answer, that like many others, he went out - as candles do. I believe he expressed general repentance for all his sins - all, at least, of which he was aware. To confess and repent of the state of the Whitford Priors estate, and of the poor thereon, was of course more than any minister, of any denomination whatsoever, could be required to demand of him; seeing that would have involved a recognition of those duties of property, of which the good old gentleman was to the last a staunch denier; and which are as yet seldom supposed to be included in any Christian creed, Catholic or other. Two sermons were preached in Whitford on the day of his funeral; one by Mr. O'Blareaway, on the text from Job provided for such occasions; "When the ear heard him, then it blessed him," &c., &c.: the other by the Baptist preacher, on two verses of the forty-ninth Psalm -

"They fancy that their houses shall endure for ever, and call the lands after their own names. "Yet man being in honour hath no understanding, but is compared to the beasts that perish."

Waiving the good taste, which was probably on a par in both cases, the reader is left to decide which of the two texts was most applicable.

Mrs. Lavington is Mrs. Lavington no longer. She has married, to the astonishment of the world in general, that "excellent man," Mr. O'Blareaway, who has been discovered not to be quite as young as he appeared, his graces being principally owing to a Brutus wig, which he has now wisely discarded. Mrs. Lavington now sits in state under her husband's ministry, as the leader of the religious world in the fashionable watering-place of Steamingbath, and derives her notions of the past, present, and future state of the universe principally from those two meek and unbiassed periodicals, the Protestant Hue-and-Cry and the Christian Satirist, to both of which O'Blareaway is a constant contributor. She has taken such an aversion to Whitford since Argemone's death, that she has ceased to have any connexion with that unhealthy locality, beyond the popular and easy one of rentreceiving. O'Blareaway has never entered the parish to his knowledge since Mr. Lavington's funeral; and was much pleased, the last time I rode with him, at my informing him that a certain picturesque moorland which he had been greatly admiring, was his own possession . . . After all, he is "an excellent man;" and when I met a large party at his house the other day, and beheld dory and surmullet, champagne and lachryma Christi, amid all the glory of the Whitford plate . . . (some of it said to have belonged to the altar of the Priory church four hundred years ago),

I was deeply moved by the impressive tone in which at the end of a long grace, he prayed "that the daily bread of our less-favoured brethren might be mercifully vouchsafed to them." . . . My dear readers, would you have me, even if I could, extricate him from such an Elysium by any denouement whatsoever?

Poor dear Luke, again, is said to be painting lean frescoes for the Something-or-other-Kirche at Munich; and the vicar, under the name of Father Stylites, of the order of St. Philumena, is preaching impassioned sermons to crowded congregations at St. George's, Bedlam. How can I extricate them from that? No one has come forth of it yet, to my knowledge, except by paths whereof I shall use Lessing's saying, "I may have my whole hand full of truth, and yet find good to open only my little finger." But who cares for their coming out? They are but two more added to the five hundred, at whose moral suicide, and dive into the Roman Avernus, a quasi-Protestant public looks on with a sort of savage statisfaction, crying only "Didn't we tell you so?" - and more than half hopes that they will not come back again, lest they should be discovered to have learnt anything while they were there. What are two among that five hundred? much more among the five thousand who seem destined shortly to follow them?

The banker, thanks to Barnakill's assistance, is rapidly getting rich again — who would wish to stop him? However, he is wiser, on some points at least, than he was of yore. He has taken up the flax movement violently of late — perhaps owing to some hint of Barnakill's — talks of nothing but Chevalier Claussen

and Mr. Donellan, and is very anxious to advance capital to any landlord who will grow flax on Mr. Warnes's method, either in England or Ireland. . . John Bull, however, has not yet awakened sufficiently to listen to his overtures, but sits up in bed, dolefully rubbing his eyes, and bemoaning the evanishment of his protectionist dream — altogether realizing tolerably, he and his land, Dr. Watts's well-known moral song concerning the sluggard and his garden.

Lord Minchampstead, again, prospers. Either the nuns of Minchampstead have left no Nemesis behind them, like those of Whitford, or a certain wisdom and righteousness of his, however dim and imperfect, averts it for a time. So, as I said, he prospers - and is hated; especially by his farmers, to whom he has just offered long leases and a sliding corn-rent. They would have hated him just the same if he had kept them at rack-rents; and he has not forgotten that; but they have. They look shy at the leases, because they bind them to farm high - which they do not know how to do; and at the corn-rent, because they think that he expects wheat to rise again -- which, being a sensible man, he very probably does. But for my story — I certainly do not see how to extricate him or any one else from farmers' stupidity, greed, and ill-will. . . . That question must have seven years' more free-trade to settle it, before I can say anything thereon. Still less can I foreshadow the fate of his eldest son, who has just been rusticated from Christchurch for riding one of Simmons's hacks through a china-shop window; especially as the youth is reported to be given to piquette and strong liquors, and, like many noblemen's eldest sons, is considered "not to

have the talent of his father." As for the old lord himself, I have no wish to change or develope him in any way — except to cut slips off him, as you do off a willow, and plant two or three in every county in England. Let him alone to work out his own plot . . . we have not seen the end of it yet; but whatever it will be, England has need of him as a transition-stage between feudalism and \*\*\*\*\*, for many a day to come. If he be not the ideal landlord, he is nearer it than any we are like yet to see. . . . .

Except one; and that, after all, is Lord Vieuxbois. Let him go on, like a gallant gentleman as he is, and prosper. And he will prosper, for he fears God, and God is with him. He has much to learn; and a little to unlearn. He has to learn that God is a living God now, as well as in the middle ages; to learn to trust not in antique precedents, but in eternal laws; to learn that his tenants, just because they are children of God, are not to be kept children, but developed and educated into sons; to learn that God's grace, like his love, is free, and that His spirit bloweth where it listeth, and vindicates its own freewill against our narrow systems, by revealing, at times, even to nominal Heretics and Infidels, truths which the Catholic Church must humbly receive, as the message of Him who is wider, deeper, more tolerant, than even she can be. . . . And he is in the way to learn all this. Let him go on. At what conclusions he will attain, he knows not, nor do I. But this I know, that he is on the path to great and true conclusions. . . . And he is just about to be married, too. That surely should teach him something. The papers inform me that his bride elect is Lord Minchampstead's youngest daughter. That

should be a noble mixture; there should be stalwart offspring, spiritual as well as physical, born of that intermarriage of the old and the new. We will hope it: perhaps some of my readers, who enter into my inner meaning, may also pray for it.

Whom have I to account for besides? Crawy though some of my readers may consider the mention of him superfluous. But to those who do not, I may impart the news, that last month, in the union-workhouse — he died; and may, for aught we know, have ere this met Squire Lavington. . . . . He is supposed, or at least said, to have had a soul to be saved. . . . as I think, a body to be saved also. But what is one more among so many? And in an over-peopled country like this, too. . . . One must learn to look at things and paupers — in the mass.

The poor of Whitford also? My dear readers, I trust that you will not ask me just now to draw the horoscope of the Whitford poor, or of any others. Really that depends principally on yourselves. . . . But for the present, the poor of Whitford, owing, as it seems to them and me, to quite other causes than an "over-stocked labour-market," or too rapid "multiplication of their species," are growing more profligate, reckless, pauperized, year by year. O'Blareaway complained sadly to me the other day that the poor-rates were becoming "heavier and heavier" had nearly reached, indeed, what they were under the old law. . . .

But there is one who does not complain, but gives, and gives, and stints herself to give, and weeps in silence and unseen over the evils which she has yearly less and less power to stem.

For in a darkened chamber of the fine house at Steamingbath, lies on a sofa Honoria Lavington beautiful no more; the victim of some mysterious and agonizing disease, about which the physicians agree on one point only — that it is hopeless. The "curse of the Lavingtons" is on her; and she bears it. There she lies, and prays, and reads, and arranges her charities, and writes little books for children, full of the Beloved Name which is for ever on her lips. She suffers - none but herself knows how much, or how strangely — yet she is never heard to sigh. She weeps in secret — she has long ceased to plead — for others, not for herself; and prays for them too - perhaps some day her prayers will yet be answered. But she greets all visitors with a smile fresh from heaven; and all who enter that room leave it saddened, and yet happy, like those who have lingered a moment at the gates of paradise, and seen angels ascending and descending upon earth. There she lies - who could wish her otherwise? Even Doctor Autotheus Maresnest, the celebrated mesmeriser, who, though he laughs at the Resurrection of The Lord, is confidently reported to have raised more than one corpse to life himself, was heard to say, after having attended her professionally, that her waking bliss and peace, although unfortunately unattributable even to auto-catalepsy, much less to somnambulist exaltation, was on the whole, however unscientific, almost as enviable.

There she lies — and will lie till she dies — the type of thousands more, "the martyrs by the pang without the palm," who find no mates in this life .... and yet may find them in the life to come. .... Poor

Paul Tregarva! Little he fancies how her days run by!...

At least, there has been no news, since that last scene in St. Paul's Cathedral, either of him or Lancelot. How their strange teacher has fulfilled his promise of guiding their education; whether they have yet reached the country of Prester John; whether, indeed, that Caucasian Utopia has a local and bodily existence, or was only used by Barnakill to shadow out that Ideal which is, as he said of the Garden of Eden, always near us, underlying the Actual, as the spirit does its body, exhibiting itself step by step through all the falsehoods and confusions of history and society, giving life to all in it which is not falsehood and decay; - on all these questions I can give my readers no sort of answer; perhaps I may as yet have no answer to give; perhaps I may be afraid of giving one; perhaps the times themselves are giving, at once cheerfully and sadly, in strange destructions and strange births, a better answer than I can give. I have set forth, as far as in me lay, the date of my problem: and surely, if the premises be given, wise men will not have to look far for the conclusion. In homely English, I have given my readers Yeast; if they be what I take them for, they will be able to bake with it themselves.

And yet I have brought Lancelot, at least perhaps Tregarva too — to a conclusion, and an all-important one, which whoso reads may find fairly printed in these pages. Henceforth his life must begin anew. Were I to carry on the thread of his story continuously, he would still seem to have over-leaped

as vast a gulf as if I had re-introduced him as a greyhaired man. Strange! that the death of one of the lovers should seem no complete termination to their history, when their marriage would have been accepted by all as the legitimate denounement, beyond which no information was to be expected. As if the history of love always ended at the altar! Oftener it only begins there; and all before it is but a mere longing to love. Why should readers complain of being refused the future history of one life, when they are in most novels cut short by the marriage finale from the biography of two?

But if, over and above this, any reader should be wrath at my having left Lancelot's history unfinished on questions in his opinion more important than that of love, let me entreat him to set manfully about finishing his own history — a far more important one to him than Lancelot's. If he shall complain that doubts are raised for which no solution is given, that my hero is brought into contradictory beliefs without present means of bringing them to accord, into passive acquiescence in vast truths without seeing any possibility of practically applying them — let him consider well whether such be not his own case; let him, if he be as most are, thank God when he finds out that such is his case, when he knows at last that those are most blind who say they see, when he becomes at last conscious how little he believes, how little he acts up to that small belief! Let him try to right somewhat of the doubt, confusion, customworship, inconsistency, idolatry, within him - some of the greed, bigotry, recklessness, respectably superstitious atheism around him; - and perhaps, before

his new task is finished, Lancelot and Tregarva may - have returned with a message, if not for him - for that depends upon his having ears to hear it - yet possibly for strong Lord Minchampstead, probably for good Lord Vieuxbois, and surely for the sinners and the slaves of Whitford Priors. What it will be, I know not altogether; but this I know, that if my heroes go on as they have set forth, looking with single mind for some one ground of human right and love, some everlasting rock whereon to build, utterly careless what the building may be, howsoever contrary to prejudice, and precedent, and the idols of the day, provided God, and nature, and the accumulated lessons of all the ages, help them in its construction — then they will find in time the thing they seek, and see how the will of God may at last be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven. But alas! between them and it are waste raging waters, foul mud banks, thick with dragons and syrens; and many a bitter day and blinding night, in cold and hunger, spiritual, and perhaps physical, await them. For it was a true vision which John Bunyan saw, and one which, as the visions of wise men are wont to do, meant far more than the seer fancied, when he beheld in his dream that there was indeed a Land of Beulah, and Arcadian Shepherd Paradise, on whose mountain-tops the everlasting sunshine lay; but that the way to it, as these last three years are preaching to us, went past the mouth of Hell, and through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

THE END.

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