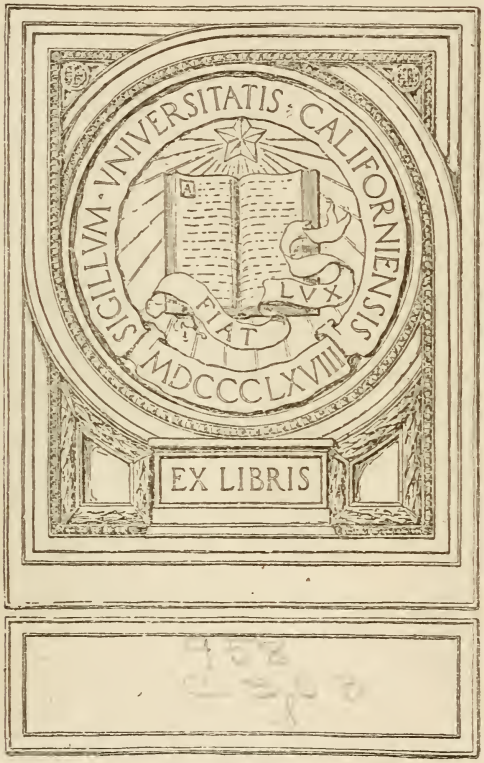
Little Hours in Great Days

Agnes and Egerton Castle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LITTLE HOURS IN GREAT DAYS

LITTLE HOURS IN GREAT DAYS

BY

AGNES & EGERTON CASTLE

Authors of "A Little House in War Time," etc.

Ourselves and every day and hour,
One symphony appear;
One road, one garden—every flower,
And every bramble, dear.

R. L. STEVENSON.

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* Contributed by the Signora.

Prologue

THE LAST DAYS OF THE YEAR 1918

Things of a day! What are we, and what not?
A dream about a shadow is man.

Pindar.

THE gardener's year starts, like that of the Church, in the late autumn. As under the old Christian dispensation, as still in monasteries and convents, Advent ushers in the time of preparation for the coming of the Lord, so in humble material fashion, the husbandman proceeds to eradicate his weeds and cast away the rags and tatters of his outlived satisfactions; to prune and harrow and cleanse and air; and finally set seeds and seedlings for the quickening of the Lord's gracious promise of the Spring.

The little house, after many vicissitudes, stands, even as the world stands to-day, upon a return to order and new kindly hopes.

We have a gardener.

The words ought to be written in large capitals and illuminated in royal blue and gold, vermilion and apple green, to represent the jubilation they express. We have passed through strange cycles

of vicissitude, and with every fresh turn of the wheel those ten acres, those borders, once our joy and pride, descended lower in the scale. When The Gardener came he pronounced sentence.

"The place, Miss," he said to the daughter of the house, who was promenading him through paths of desolation,—"The place, Miss, to be candid, is simply *choss.*"

If he meant chaos, his definition was quite correct. It is a celestial attribute to be able to bring order out of chaos, and this our new broom is doing with the most delightful precision and rapidity.

What a curious gift is the quality of having "a hand" over things! The milliner, the horseman or the cook who has "a hand" will do what they like, even with bad material; whereas the best the world can provide will be wasted under the heavy touch. Nowhere is it more noticeable than in the garden, as we know to our cost. There was one who shall be nameless, and the utmost of her exertions resulted in mud-pies. Our late treasure, Mullins, choked the beds with a kind of reckless clumsiness. At last we have an artist in the completest sense of the word; tact characterizes his dealings with all the charming, delicate lives confided to his care. We like looking out on our terrace where long rows of wallflowers, arabis and polyanthus are tucked in for the winter in the most cosy and symmetrical way imaginable. The mistress of the house has once again a brain teeming

with spring plans. Mr. Wilson can scarcely cherish his League of Nations more tenderly than she does her next year's scheme for the "Villino" gardens. Along the terraces stretch already, as has been said, snugly in place, an outer line of arabis, an inner border of giant polyanthus, of orange and yellow shades; the rest of the beds are filled in with wallflower of the good old-fashioned kinds, Vulcan, Blood-red, Harbinger; there ought to be some of that newer splendid sort, Fire King, but it is a capricious creature, and, as Mullins carefully avoided labelling anything, it is ten to one that it may have disappeared out of the ranks of the seedlings. Between the wallflowers are to arise large clumps of tulips, twenty to the clump. Tulips, the glory of our May panorama, and the most dearly beloved of the soul of the mistress of the establishment—tulips, in all the flaming shades she can find!

The pots on the terrace wall will, next May, crown the scene with the orange flare of "Caledonia." The two long beds in the Dutch Garden will take a slightly lower key. As far as Green, that knowledgeable man, can tell from the colour of the foliage, the wallflowers will blossom yellow. Here, too, there is a fringe of arabis, and the circles of tulips, three groups to each bed (Pride of Haarlem, Clara Butt and Inglescombe Pink), will present a daring combination of cerise, deep rose and soap-bubble pink.

Down in the semi-circle the eight green tubs are going to make a new departure from the usual forget-me-not carpeting, and Clara Butt will emerge out of wreaths of double carmine-daisies. It ought to be a nice rose-garland effect to look down on. The flowering peaches will be in full blossom, also the floribunda (those trees which a dear friend of ours solemnly terms Flora Bunders !) ; the white broom, too, and all that wealth of May blooth which makes of this little place a brief paradise. The courtyard, which has always been a thorn in the Villino's side, was last year the most crucial disappointment, owing to Mullins' muddling, combined with a really cruel freak of weather. It was meant to be a Fra Angelico picture of crimson and white, with its tubs of alternate white and scarlet tulips set in white arabis on the one side, and the drifts of old English tulips flamed and feathered, red and white, along the borders on the other. But everything straggled out at irregular intervals, the white tulips withered before the red bloomed—and then they were maroon and half of them were yellow, to put it in an Irish way. (And that was the fault of the man who sold them to us, whose name we cannot mention for fear of a libel action !)

The courtyard is to blow a yellow trumpet in Anno Domini 1919. The border that runs across the wall which supports the high tongue of pine trees, is to be carpeted with golden Alyssium,

yellow Polyanthus and hold drifts and clumps of yellow tulips, Gesneriana Lutea, Inglescombe Yellow, Parisian Yellow and other darlings. The sixteen pots are filled with varying shades of mauve tulips set in forget-me-nots. The part of our soul which is Pantheistic warms toward the consummation of these delights.

There is aubretia growing in the interstices of the rough walls; the common purple kind, if one can call aubretia common! Besides these a box of seedlings of the choice kinds, mauves and roses, must find their home in the same region. We hope they will thrive, they are such shy, capricious things.

There has been a radical change made on the third terrace of the Little House garden consecrated to roses. The great fir trees which overshadowed the rough bank dominating it have been felled, and now there is an untidy stretch on either side of the steps that lead down to the rose garden, with weeds and stumps sticking up; an eyesore which we have hitherto lacked labour to remedy. Half-a-dozen plans have been mooted for the eventual metamorphosis which is to turn it into a beauty-spot; whether to level the slope as much as possible and plant dwarf orchard trees in it with wild narcissus underneath, to have a feast for the eye in Spring which would bring one back to Italian scenes? Whether to cram it with azaleas, which thrive almost as well as wild sorrel

on our heights? Whether merely to leave it in the rough, made lovely by ferns and primroses? The fit of enthusiasm raised by each of these propositions has been followed by doubt. In each case the steep banks at top and bottom of the slope would remain as great a problem as ever.

Finally another solution has been decided upon —almost!—to cover the whole of the incline with a mantle of different wichuraiana roses, things which "ramp" with us. Green, when consulted, opines they would do nicely, as "them sorts grow vicious."

We have seen a garden here, some years ago, sunk in a kind of cup of ground, the whole circle of which was hung with roses after this fashion. The effect was rather strange and rich, set as we are in the middle of wild moors.

The farther side of the rose garden is to have a new arrangement of pillar roses with ropes which will look well against the falling away background of moor with dark woods between.

We have now a Gardener.

Perhaps some of the visions may materialize?

So the Little House makes its new plans, as the New Year dawns, as it has done ever since its existence. We change and we remain the same. Yet, like a revolving wheel we travel along the road and, willy-nilly, the outlook is different. We are all so much older, and several pounds thinner, than this time last year. Life is more difficult. We

pay out a great deal more money, there is less to draw upon, and we get considerably less value for it. It is a simple sum. Yet even within Villino precincts there are real changes. Some fraught with the inevitable doom of finality, others cheerful with anticipation. There are kindly presences we shall never see among us again; friends for whose reception the little place decked itself symbolically in flags of welcome; who, coming, warmed our hearts, who, going, left us richer with memories dear and delightful. May they be "gladdened in the garden of light," as St. Ephrem prayed, those who looked with such indulgent eyes upon our flower borders; may they "rejoice in the green pastures by the waters of rest"; may they "stand on the holy mountain of God!" There is, too, a very small grave under the birch trees, near the azalea bed, and a fur child the less in the house. It makes a great blank, the loss of a fur child, and all the agonies and all the horrors, the whole dreadful atmosphere weighted with tragedy of this war, does not make the death of our little dear dog one whit less piteous to us. Superior people will say: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself to be sorry for a dog when there are such overwhelming bereavements all about you!"—an argument of which we cannot see the force. Because we have hearts that can mourn for the suffering and the death of a little innocent creature, yes, and mourn very acutely too, it will not make these same hearts less susceptible,

but rather more, to the dreadful troubles of our neighbours.

" There is nothing so funny as people," as a gay young man of our acquaintance was fond of saying in our own youth. There is another class of acquaintance who thinks it is a comfort to you, when you have to struggle against some desperate pain, physical or mental, yourself, to say : " Think how much worse So-and-so is ! Think of the very much greater trial that befel somebody else ! "

Are there human beings, we wonder, who really find a panacea for their own woes in reflecting upon the greater smart of the woes of others ? We wonder, for instance, if the *bon vivant* who laments his short rations as a real calamity could take some kind of solace from the thought of how our poor boys, prisoners in Germany, were starved ?

He might be glad to think that the Germans were eating crows ; but that is quite another order of ethics. It is the balancing of a legitimate satisfaction against a real hardship.

" Aren't you tired splitting that wood ? " said a sister of ours to a dear old Dorsetshire job gardener, whom she found wrestling with work certainly unfitted for his years and infirmities.

" 'Tis a bit tiring, Miss, but there, I do say to myself it's that there Kayser's head I am chopping at, and it do seem to get me along wonderful."

After this divagation to come back to changes in the "Villino," we have imported two rosy-cheeked stout little damsels from Ireland to replace the sophisticated young domestics who have drifted off into, Heaven knows what, dreary moral waste, blown out of our house by the spirit of the times. The little Hibernian pair started valiantly the day after the sinking of the *Leinster*, and arrived, in spite of the discomforts and dangers of the traject and the long night vigil at Euston station, looking like two full-blown garden peonies with the dew on them. "A very nice journey they had, indeed," they said, "and sure they weren't tired; not at all." And as for lying down, they wouldn't hear of it, and wait till they'd changed their clothes on them and they'd give a hand anywheres. They were bursting with giggles as if life in general and England in particular was the hugest joke they had ever come across. We hope it is not too bright a dawn to presage a settled day.

Distressful country as it is, there is something exhilarating in the atmosphere of Ireland, and these humble daughters of hers have brought a breath of it with them. The household laughs a great deal more than it did before their arrival. Anecdotes illustrating the Hibernian point of view float up to us and make us laugh too.

"Shure, didn't me father thry and enlist on us? It's an old soldier he is and has seen fighting—' And how many children have you got?' says they to

him. 'Eleven at prisint,' he says, 'from the wan that's eighteen year down to the baby that's eighteen month.' 'Go-long out of that,' they says, 'eleven childher. It's ruining the Government you want to be!'"

Would that recruiting officers over here displayed as much common-sense and humour!

From this zeal for service it would appear that "Da" must be loyally disposed, yet our damsels have brought a framed photograph of Countess Markievicz to hang over their beds. Cut out of a newspaper, it bears the dramatic inscription: "Condemned to death." They are pious children, and we strongly suspect that they firmly believe the heroine was somehow persecuted for adherence to the "ould Faith" by the Protestant tyranny of England. A good many soldiers we know are very nearly as muddled, and firmly believe Sinn Fein to be the old Nationalist party. Small blame to them, as the phrase goes yonder, it would take a strong brain, a wet towel, and much midnight study to disentangle the ramifications of Irish politics as they stand to-day. If those who try to govern her would realize that Ireland's bark is not only worse than her bite, but that like many another waggish animal, she barks when she does not mean to bite at all, how much better things would go all round! One would say that the moment English intelligences begin to tackle Irish business, they are stricken with a kind of dathering idiocy; and

the only policy evolved seems to be that (to pursue the canine simile) which a nervous and foolish individual might adopt with a lively terrier : threatening him with his umbrella and running away ; holding up a lump of sugar and snatching it back again. If the dog does end by biting, will any one be surprised ?

In spite of a great deal of effervescent speech, the Irish people really respect a strong hand, and contemn anything but a settled policy.

The mistress of the Villino having to address her new importations on the subject of " days out " and the dangers of the roads at present to the wandering damsel, owing to the ubiquitous soldier, concluded the recital of some stringent regulations with the remark : " I am sure your mother would wish it so. She is probably very strict."

" Shure, she's tirrible ! " responded both the little girls, all one broad beam.

Another novelty at the Villino is The Imp. He might be called general utility urchin. He hovers between the hens and the wood-shed, the flower borders and the laundry. Calling himself seventeen, he looks not twelve. He is the very apotheosis of the gutter snipe. He might have walked straight out of the pages of Dickens, own brother to young Bailey with a dash of Sam Weller thrown in. We feel that his education has certainly been conducted on the lines adopted by Weller senior for his offspring : he was left to " run in the streets when he

was wery young and shift for his-self. It's the only way to make a boy sharp."

It is as mischievous and impervious to rebuke as a puppy, and as difficult to keep out of the mud. It already has taken the measure of everybody in the house, and knows that it has come into a soft place and that hard words break no bones. It stands on the terrace and loudly cheeks the young footman within the house, to the inarticulate rage of the latter. It smokes cigarettes all day and is ingenious in inventing excuses for getting down into the village to buy more. It has been three times already to have its hair cut; each time, for some mysterious reason, "the lydy" has not been able to do it. Its locks are now curling up round its dubious collar.

The other day when there was a more than usual agitation for news, it stood under the window of the mistress's bedroom—this is an incurable habit—and shouted for her familiarly by name, till some one appeared; when, grinning with excitement, it said: "Would you loike me to take the boyke and run down for the evening poiper?"

He knew as well as we did that the evening paper was coming up of its own accord; received the answer in the negative with a resigned sigh and trotted back to the arabis border where he was heard observing to the gardener: "Such is loife!"

He ought to be snubbed, but he isn't. The little

rascal has measured the weakness of those with whom he has to deal, and at his naughtiest moments there is a twinkle in his bright green eye. The only real conflict we had was when he disappeared on his master's bicycle for the best part of the day. Being charged with having deliberately played truant—indeed he admittedly had been to the camp which was two miles distant from the village, his destination—he wept tears of pure grime (the camp is a very dirty place), and vociferated: "No I never," in every tone possible to the human voice, till dismissed by his helpless inquisitors to wash.

The religious convictions of young Bailey are in a considerably jumbled state; he having drifted from fold to fold, his conclusions are latitudinarian. "It's all just the same," he opined to the scandalized Mrs. McComfort, the devout Roman Catholic cook of the Villino establishment. "Mass in English or Mass in Latin, I can't see any difference."

The difference was explained to him by one who thought it vitally important that he should perceive it, both for here and hereafter, and he was told to choose. He considered us very fussy people, especially as some degree of solemnity was observed in impressing upon him that he was to regard himself as quite unhampered in his decision.

Leaning against the edge of the table and carelessly drumming upon it with his fingers, he surveyed the speaker with an expression equivalent to "Keep your hair on."

"I 'ave made up my moind. I'd rawther stay in the religion I was born in. Yus, Miss, I do mean Cawthlic. Your kind of Cawthlic. When may I go down to 'Aslemere and 'ave me 'air cut?"

"He is a little turk," says Mrs. Green, that pink of housewives, who certainly answers her husband's encomium ("As clean as Mrs. Green you *might* find, but cleaner—never!")—"A dirty little turk as ever I see!" But even she smiles as she speaks of him.

The Imp, we fear, will never be anything but a flibbertigibbet, and a grimy one at that, but wherever he goes, and whatever his destiny, he will be better liked than many cleaner, worthier boys.

No one can foretell what may yet be in store for us before peace bells ring out; the sound of them nevertheless is already in the air. We of the Little House, those of all the other houses in England, great and small, can look out of the window now and gaze upon the treasured stretches of land, and know that they will never be violated or trodden by the hoof of the Blond Beast.

At least he will never come now as the "wild boar from the thicket," laying waste, uprooting and devastating. It is too much to expect that he will not return shod with soft shoes, showing his tusks merely in a pleasant grin. The Hun, like the poor, we shall always have with us. We shall continue to cherish him, not because we are a Chris-

tian people, or a superlatively magnanimous people, or even an out-of-the-way idiotic people, but because there are too many among us who place profit before patriotism, convenience before loyalty, luxury before common honesty.

But the Hun will not come as a conqueror. That is surely much to be grateful for. Humanity may not have learnt a great deal; the chaff may settle down again after the awful winnowing, and all that seed of life, that glorious splendour of youth which has been sown in deep furrows, may, after all, germinate to bear its noble grain only in the heavenly fields. But this is too pessimistic a thought to be admitted. England has sown in tears, shall she not reap in joy; even the joy of the good harvest, unspoiled by tares?

Returning, they shall come with joy, carrying their sheaves.

They cannot return in their dear living presences, those beloved of our hearts, those uncomplaining heroes. In every home there will be the empty chair, or the many empty chairs, but at least, let us pray that the spirit of our soldiers—spirit the grandeur of which we scarcely yet understand—may come back from those bloody fields, not in the stammering and irreverent ineptitudes of the séance, but in the realization of the ideals that have been worth dying for; the sacrifices that clean living and true thinking entail upon the self-respecting community.

I

Garden Friendships

There's rosemary; that's for remembrance,
Pray you love remember;
And there is pansies, that's for thoughts.
Shakespeare.

"A TOUCH of nature makes the whole world kin."

Truth, we are told, lies hidden in a well, and there are, no doubt, many deep verities at the bottom of most trite proverbial statements, but I am concerned to-day with the lesser things; things that float, like water-lilies, to the surface.

One touch of garden nature—or art—certainly creates a curious bond between the most dissimilar people; and now-a-days a cabbage patch—especially a cabbage patch!—becomes a matter of national importance.

Yet my thought goes back to the pre-war, prehistoric epoch when flowers bordered the horizon of every garden lover.

We live in a funny small house, very high up on the Surrey hills, on pure sand: and we have stony terraces laboriously cut out in the flank of

the moorland height : terraces that are narrow and Italian looking and obviously quite unsuited to anything serious in the way of food production. The kitchen garden runs in a kind of little valley in the curve of the moor where there is a different strata of soil ; and here a tennis court, a new rose garden, and a very dear half of a so-called reserve garden have been sacrificed to the altar of Lord Rhondda (or is it Mr. Prothero ?). I have no remorse therefore—nay, I consider it my duty to grow flowers on the upper slopes. We have three camp chapels and one hospital chapel to adorn weekly. We have one large recreation hut and four hospitals to brighten with fragrance and colour when we can ; and once a week, or oftener, such wounded as can walk or hobble on crutches come to spend the afternoon in our garden, and say the place is " a fair treat." In spite of these excellent reasons for keeping my terraces as lovely as I can, I have no doubt that those people who are wiser than their neighbours would be shocked at such extravagance and waste of time. Yet I am unrepentant. I know what the flowers mean to the soldiers.

The first day last year that I brought primroses to the Recreation Hut above mentioned—it is in a Canadian camp—a rough-looking, elderly man in hospital uniform, who was sitting alone at a table, said to me in a hoarse whisper : " Excuse me, lady, may I have two or three of them flowers ? "

I brought him a bunch. He took them in his

hand, gazed at them, lifted them to his cheek, and then exclaimed—and his voice shook : " I haven't seen the primroses not for twenty years !—I'll send these to my wife, lady, to show her what they're like."

He was a rough-looking man, as I have said, and had thus, by his own showing, been away from the old country and settled in the new all these years. He had left his hard-won home, his wife and children, to come and fight at the call of an abstract cause. The call was the call to sacrifice ; and this man, who had answered it so unhesitatingly, looking at the primroses, thought of his boyhood perhaps, and of the hills where he had seen them grow, and poetry was bursting out of that inarticulate heart ; exquisite feelings, delicate and fragrant as the flowers themselves. He would send them to his wife that she might see what grew in the old England for whose sake he had left her. Little ghosts the blossoms would be by the time they reached her ! One could but hope that she had a heart to match her man's and might understand.

It is a delight to see the excitement of the Canadians over flowers. One lad was all on fire at the thought that there were actually woods where bluebells grew and that he might be able to go and see this marvel with his own eyes. He would not care how far it was.

" Say, just to see those little things growing of themselves, I'd go miles."

Another—a serious, gentle-voiced youth—went about with a note-book, taking the name of every new flower he saw, for future reference when he went back to Canada. Alas! poor lad, where is he now?

In our little house at the top of the hill we can hear, of nights, the cheering that accompanies the departure of troops at the station a mile and a half away. There is no sound more full of poignant tragedy to my ear than those hurrahs, cleaving the silence up to our heights.

The fighting men of every country like to see flowers. These lovely, innocent, fragrant things have a special message for souls, consciously or unconsciously tormented by the ugliness of war conditions in camp and field. How much more then of pleasure, subtle and uplifting, will they not bring to the wounded? A splendid Lancashire boy who has lost both legs, has the joy of a child over a bowl of growing bulbs. He lies looking at them, his poor face all smiles. In the camp chapels "the flowers make all the difference to the men," the chaplains will tell you. We have, as I have said, some four or five military chapels, camp and hospital, to keep beautiful. Of course the soldiers are not the first thought here. To neglect the altar would hurt every believing heart, but the men who come to pray—and how they pray!—seeing everything fair and fragrant and orderly when they raise their eyes to the Tabernacle, have a sense of

comfort, which is certainly helpful and uplifting.

I have heard of the scene in a French trench when a box of violets was unpacked. The men dropped tobacco, chocolate, all the other gifts, and stretching out their hands begged each a flower—just one ! I think of the rough *poilus* holding the dim, sweet things against their unshaven faces, as did my Canadian the primroses.

On a certain torrid June day last year the occupants of a Dorsetshire manor house, where I happened to be visiting, were stirred to the marrow by those sounds of beating drum, flaring brass, and marching feet, which, even after four years of war, have not lost their strange and almost painful appeal. A whole Australian division was on its way to Salisbury Plain ; now they were passing along the road at the top of the fields, scarcely a hundred yards from the old house. We went up the path to the hedge to watch them go by, lamenting that we had not known in time to prepare lemonade and other cool and refreshing drinks for them. (Ours was a *petit ménage*. To offer what we had would have been about as useful as Dives' drop of water in the unquenchable fires.) These men had been in Egypt before going on the downs, and the tan of the East, the look of the East was on their faces : a hardened, lean, dried, strenuous air was about them—that kind of Arab defiance of, nay, of victory over the elements which stamps

those who have faced and conquered the huge enmities of the desert.

Joking, singing, laughing with strong white teeth, they swung down the road, white to their dark chins with the Dorset dust ; and eyes, oddly luminous in those deep-hued countenances, flashed upon us straight, friendly, smiling looks.

" The spirit of the troops is excellent," quoted a mounted officer with ironic geniality as his sweating horse picked his way past us.

It was horrid to stand empty-handed with such full hearts. Then one of us remembered that the garden behind us was brimming with roses. *There* were stores of fragrance and beauty, messages of refreshment. . . .

The thought was instantly put into action. We fled down the field to the garden enclosure, panting in the blaze, and the whole household set to work, cutting and filling baskets. The great stream was still flowing onwards unabated when we returned with our scented burdens—the great stream of youth and strength and manhood, so much the more splendid that it was unaccompanied by any trappings, any outward pageantry, that pomp and circumstance were all absent ; the glory shone out unadorned ; humanity, as the Greek ideal saw it, the noble disciplined body, clothing the noble yet more disciplined soul. In another moment it was a battle of flowers. Ah ! how many of England's sons, from home and overseas, have

already tramped along dusty French and Flemish roads on the way to death, pelted with flowers—the way of the Palms before Calvary! But on this June morning there were no smoking horizons, no distant thunder of guns before them; it was all kindly sympathy and the frankest, most touching pleasure.

To hear their shouts of joy! To see their eager hands, their craving eyes; how they caught the roses, stuck them in their caps; the boyish, almost childish, disappointment of him who thought he might have to pass without one! The officers were as keen as the men. It was a picture for some great military painter.

And this reminds me that one of the greatest exponents of that rare branch of the art—and she is woman—told me how of all her war impressions none had struck her more deeply than a certain fleeting vision in a railway station. She had gone to meet a soldier son coming home on leave, and a Red Cross train had to be cleared before the troop train entered. The vision she saw was the face of a young wounded officer, to whom some one had given a bunch of red roses.

"Ah, my dear," she said, "the way he looked at them, buried his face in them, inhaled their fragrance, held them out to look at them again, and once more breathed their breath. The whole story was there written on his poor face—what he had come from, what he had been through, what his

eyes had beheld, what had haunted his nostrils, what his heart had endured—and yet there were still roses in the world ! "

She meant to make a picture of that incident. I hope she will.

" Three things our soldiers must have," writes Miss Lena Ashwell : " some kind of dog, some kind of music, and some kind of garden."

She goes on to describe how when the dreadful limitations of trench life prevent the creation of flower plots, the men make odd little parterres with bits of coloured stone and glass.

It is a singular fact that, though the most unobservant traveller in England would see much to fill him with sad impressions as to the low standard of morals—the increasing materialism of all classes (not induced indeed by war conditions, but most mournfully unchecked by them)—that this vast army should have arisen out of our midst, not only ready for, but persevering in sacrifice. " It's the bloom of England that's giving itself," said a wounded soldier to me. It is to these that a primrose by the river's brim means—how infinitely more than a yellow primrose ; perhaps as much more as means the flag, the badge, the stripe, the cross, than a handful of silk or a fragment of metal !

Socialism would do away with the romance of life, with all symbolism and all ideal. (It is not surprising that the German militarist should find in the advanced Socialist his easiest tool, for, para-

doxical as it may sound, there is a common platform, that of gross materialism, upon which these two extremes of human folly can stand together.) The doctrine of pure Socialism, as taught by a notable martyr of that nauseous faith, Ferrer, is that the three great enemies of mankind are Religion, Patriotism, and Justice. For the mystical bread of religion you are offered a revolting mess of pottage to be consumed by a communal spoon; yclept Universal Brotherhood again, to be flavoured *ad libitum* with the distillations of treachery.

It is not so far a cry as it might seem from love of gardens to dislike of Socialism, for the very essence of joy in a garden is the sense of possession. The first rapture of the country-bred child is to have a garden of "one's very own," and however the little span of earth may resemble a mud-pie, Baby Adam and Baby Eve will have far more pleasure in it than in the parental acres. Every truth is doubled by a paradox. The preachers of the strange creed of Socialism in advocating community of property strike at the very roots of generosity. You are to have nothing of your own; you have nothing to give.

There was a very great luminary in the firmament, no less a person than G. B. S. himself, who once visited a garden I temporarily possessed. We walked together through my roses, and I offered to send some to his wife, ill, and unable to accompany him.

He turned his dancing eye upon me and said

with his brilliant air of making a point: "If I admire your child I do not want you to cut off its head for me."

Would there have been any use assuring him that I would take the tips off my child's hair and cut her nails with benefit to her health?

The Socialist in the nursery is about as useful and beneficial as the Socialist in the garden. For one of the theories dearest to his heart is that there is nothing more criminal than to curb the natural instincts of a child; to expose the fallacy of which theory, as Mr. Chesterton says, you have only to bring a child and a precipice into conjunction. Without going to such extreme measures, a child and a coal-box would suffice to convince me.

People who are fond of gardens are generally nice people. Think what an amount of virtues the real working garden-lover has to acquire—patience, punctuality, perseverance, and other styptic qualities that do not begin with P—such as enterprise, endurance, and early rising! And the pleasant give and take of garden intercourse, the readiness to share the rare plant with another enthusiast! I do not think that garden-lovers try to outshine each other. On the contrary: "Do you like that? Yes, it is rare. I'll send you a cutting," have you ever admired anything in a garden without some such phrase springing to your hostess's lips?

A friend of mine once gave me some seed which

had been found in an Egyptian tomb ; the " mummy sweet pea," we called it. Alas, it was before I had a garden of my very own, and so, though it came up in the hireling plot, and bloomed and flourished exceedingly, I lost, through what I consider now to be the most criminal carelessness, this most poetical and precious thing !

It was dwarfer than ordinary sweet pea, but its blossom was beyond words exquisite ; the colour of Egyptian enamel, a vivid, exquisite turquoise blue. I could cry when I recall the beauty of it and the strangeness and far romance, coming from the sun-steeped land after its thousand years' slumber in the mystery of the tomb, to germinate and spring to life on our island soil.

A further charm about the love of gardens is that, unlike most other passions, the praise of them does not weary the ears of those similarly kindled. If the lover were to chant poems on his beloved's eyebrow, the tilt of her eyelashes, the curve of her cheek, the peculiar virtue of a taper finger, how extraordinarily tiresome he would become, especially to those who are enslaved by another eyebrow, other eyelashes, and different fingers ! These latter, indeed, would be not only bored, but indignant. Vastly different is it with us, garden enthusiasts. We are thrilled to hear of our rival's successes. We race to gaze at his lady's perfections. We are almost over-ready to admire superiority. Divine discontent possesses our souls.

I remember, many years ago, being taken to visit the residence of a certain distinguished explorer. Being young, I was ready to hero-worship, and ventured to express my gratification at having met so great a person to our hostess, as we perambulated the garden after a visit to the august one's study.

"Well, indeed," she responded, candidly. "He's not looking at all nice to-day. He's had his fever and it always makes him so yellow."

This is often our attitude towards the choicest treasures of our plot. We are apt to deprecate. They are so personal to us that we are perforce humble. "We do not think they are looking at all nice to-day," is our feeling, and we would shield them from the critical eye. I think it is only the garden owners who leave everything to a paid potentate and his underlings, who can gaze with a swelling satisfaction on pleasure grounds and borders. "Yes, Pruneham is very successful with his carnations," they will say, or it may be: "Beddingham is always taking first prize with his roses." I don't grudge them their satisfaction.

Once I visited the country house—I beg his pardon, *one* of the country seats—of a noted millionaire. It was winter, but "a stroll round the place" is always *de rigueur*. There was, I should think, half a mile of glass houses; and outside one of them were rows of little begonia pots. What they were doing there on a November day I don't know —whether waiting to come in or just come out?

—it was the number of them that appalled me. It appals me still. There must have been a thousand —more ! If I were the owner of a thousand begonia pots I should go mad. They were all the same, too ; the little fibrous pink kind that can never appeal to any soaring garden soul.

I remember seeing in a beautiful Irish garden two beds of malmaison carnations that must have been some thirty feet long by fifteen wide. I saw them the first day of a somewhat prolonged visit. They were just in their toppling perfection. The whole air, long before one reached them, was heavy with perfume. I looked at the pink sea and wondered what the use of it was. The garden was a walled one, some distance from the house. The scent was almost too much. The immense, pale pink expanse was not placed in any way to add to the beauty or even the picturesqueness of the scene. And nobody plucked them, though, oh ! what a harvest one could have made, what joy one could have sent broadcast to hundreds of beauty-starved dwellings, hundreds of unlovely hospital wards.

" Whereto this waste ? " one felt inclined to ask. But the question impressed itself upon me with infinitely more force when at the end of my visit I once again passed the carnation beds. We had had uncertain weather, with heavy showers. The whole field was a brown mass of putrefaction.

I confess, however, though I glibly talk of the

dispersal of garden treasures, there are certain flowers, especially the Spring ones, that it goes to my heart to cut. Some are never grown for cutting, like hyacinths. But it is the tulips, which, decorative as they look in vases, are left in my borders to live out the brief splendour of their span. And of tulips in particular, I can never make up my mind to snap the late old English ones. Those proud, stately chalices, swaying on their long stems, wine-coloured, wine-scented, full of an invisible yet surely potent wine—I watch them, day after day, for the first sign of the dishevelment that spells the end, and it is a real grief when, as happened this last year, late frosts and a too fierce May sun first kept them back beyond their usual flowering season, and then drew them into premature bloom, and burnt them before they had had even time to grow to full stature.

On the other hand, roses, sweet pea, iris, peonies, pansies—oh, what a host of loveliness it is that can be, that ought to be, called to the colours, so to speak, more for one's friends than for oneself.

I planted a thousand pheasant-eye narcissi in a strip of kitchen garden in pre-war days—for the mere pleasure of cutting and giving. They all came out together in the sudden burst of May heat, and the sun blazed down with such strength that even the little Belgian children could not be persuaded to gather them, and most of them withered off; shrivelled away like paper in the fire. And there's no moral at all to this tale.

The blossoms to grow for one's hospital friends are certainly sweet pea. Beautiful as Irises are, they are scarcely flowers to give away, on account of that horrible trick they have of drawing together and congealing all in the space of an hour into an oozy mass, out of which drops a black-purple fluid. They are certainly not flowers for altars, unless carefully watched. But how nobly exquisite if properly arranged; preferably as if growing, in a Japanese kind of way, out of a large glass bowl. We used to have our Florentinas in this fashion, on a table by themselves last year; these Florentinas that are like moonlight and snow materialized. They looked so pure and so knightly, accompanied by their own spear-shaped leaves, that they reminded me of Sir Galahad.

Talking of Iris brings me to Gladioli, and the mere sound of that name will always evoke a memory of one of those pleasant little episodes that fall to the lot of garden lovers (though I doubt whether my particular experience was not unique in its delightfulness); the forming of a garden friendship with an unknown friend. To make acquaintance through one's love of flowers is assuredly a very pretty way of accomplishing what can be so banal. We did not meet each other at a tea-fight, through a perfunctory hostess obviously charmed to rid herself for the nonce of the entertainment of two guests; we did not call upon each other, going through the inane process of dropping a label at an

undesired front door, because of some unwritten law of social duty, imposed by proximity. We were drawn together through mutual friends; a whole host of friends; the flowers we love in common. We stretched out hands across the great ocean and clasped in spirit because of all that fragrance and loveliness, that colour, form and fancy, fragility and ecstasy that mean so much to us both. I have had many letters from America, and people tell me of their gardens who have read of mine and been amused and interested and stirred to sympathy. But the unknown friend of whom I speak is more than the rest; not only because she is herself a garden lover, before whom I am the merest and the humblest of amateurs, but also because of the charming letters which came to me from her.

Alas! now there is silence except for the little token of a Christmas greeting, I should be sad to think that this garden friendship were on that far side of the Atlantic as evanescent as the glory of some spring flower. She can never be forgotten in my garden, for were I likely to do so, there would yearly come to me a reminder in the shape of grace, stateliness and purity itself embodied; in other words, the Regale lilies which she sent me. It was my first introduction to that Queen of the Tribe. They have done well; and the second year better than the first, after their generous habit. She also sent me a wonderful collection of Gladioli.

They made tropical splendour of our borders; a sight for angels and men to gaze upon! But, alas! of these latter treasures the dishonesty or incapacity of a gardener has robbed me. So that, although, as I have said, the very mention of the "sword flower" will bring my dear, unknown correspondent to mind, her name is only written in my garden pages for all to see, by the lilies.

One does not love one's friends for their gifts, but one loves the gift all the more for the sake of the friend, and there are no gifts more welcome to the woman who cherishes a garden than something for it; any kind of plant bulb or herb.

Our family gets to know this preference. Indeed, there is a charming frankness about the garden enthusiast which prevents any false modesty in the expression of desires. "If you *were* thinking of giving me anything this Christmas, I *should* like——"

And one has all the pleasure of giving back in kind, not necessarily out of one's own patch; but if one is in a generous mood, can anything be more agreeable than to pick the Christmas box or the *Étrennes* or the Easter egg out of the catalogue of some noted grower?

Those catalogues—it would take pages to chronicle the delights of them to the true comrade in flowers—but the worst of them is that, like the apple-green wool of the little embroidering lady in Gustave Droz's sketch, *cela entraine.* Would it

be possible to rise from the selecting out of a garden catalogue of a choice tribute to another, without having secured, be it ever so slight, a portion of the booty for yourself? No, it would not be possible.

Nevertheless I am out in praise of gardens, not in disparagement. If the passion for them runs to some extravagance, after the manner of all passions, even that for sanctity, does it not amply make up by the fine quality and superabounding quality of its merits? To take but a single illustration: It is a common accusation against us women that when we get together there is a great clack of tongues and an interchange of much gossip and scandal, not to say backbiting. Now there is perhaps a certain amount of truth in this; people must talk about something when they meet, preferably something with a spark of interest in it. It is undeniable that one's neighbour's character affords this with the least strain on the intellect. But if the fair conclave is made up of garden lovers they will not discuss, with languor or malice, the peccadilloes of their friends, but the success and failure of their borders. And the subject will present, to those engaged, thrills, ardours, inspirations and illuminations far superior to anything that the most unpruned divagations in social parterres could afford.

I have known the dullest of ladies' lunch parties transformed by the single mention of the plant

Anchusa. It ran like an electric spark down a table which was bored at the top by women's suffrage and at the bottom by the slow pomposities of the chief guest, who discoursed of ducal relatives, whom nobody else knew, to a harassed little hostess. From Anchusa we pranced to Godetia and gaily on to rough banks and sandy soils. The lady who was spreading an atmosphere as freezing as it was reverential, was silenced. Everybody else talked together, and we were all quite happy, and forgot that such dull things as heraldic strawberry leaves existed at all.

I think it is hardly possible to imagine that any garden lover could bore me, though I suppose people can be dull even on that inspiring subject. I received the other day a very severe letter from a lady in the country, who, among other criticisms of a little rural article of which I had been guilty, informed me, "The buttercups you speak of in the Dorset meadows are kingcups" (*sic*).

I do not think I could have had much pleasurable garden intercourse with the writer of this document. She might insist that Caroline Testout was a peony.

And then there is the other type, the ultra-gushing. She would be even more trying:

"Come off the grass, lest we should tread on a daisy."

After all, common sense is as necessary in a garden as elsewhere; and, like bread or water, the unnoticed essential of all possible profit in existence.

II

Garden Failures

Ne dorste I to the rose bede,
For this tels sharpe of many manieres,
Nettes, thornes, and noked breres;
Ful muche they distourbled me.

Chaucer.

IF the schemes of mice and men gang aft agley, what can be said of the schemes of the garden lover?

It is now something over eight years that we have owned a garden, and the mistress of it is constrained to admit that, with the exception of one programme of spring bedding, realization has not only been below anticipation, but so grotesquely different from it that there would seem scarcely any connexion between the two.

She looks back with a sad amusement on a long list of failures. The first, as is perhaps natural, were due entirely to ignorance; when, for instance, she tried to turn a sandy slope into a little Eden of peonies and lilies she was merely courting disaster. She was so hopelessly a neophyte, indeed, that she did not even realize that peonies demand not only rich soil, but—fat, comfort-loving, deliberate crea-

tures as they are—full time to spread and make themselves at home. When, therefore, the first year after planting, the hot hill-slope, which should have blossomed like the rose, displayed only four or five scorched leaf-fronds, thrust out like skeleton hands imploring a vain succour, when the lily bulbs threw up abortive shoots, jaundiced with disease, and left it at that ; the prospect was like a nightmare of famine, and the lady of the garden could not quick enough have the whole eyesore uprooted and swept away.

From this anecdote it will be seen that she suffers from the most fatal weakness that ever beset a gardener—impatience.

(She has had that sandy bank sodded, and even still it requires constant watching to keep the ineradicable heather from working through. But this is a parenthesis.)

Another sad failure—indeed, a constant series of failures—have been her rose-gardens. She has lain awake at night feasting the mental eye on visions beyond the dreams of Persia. She has spent hours, almost too exciting for a not very strong constitution, in picking items out of the catalogues of such benefactors of the human kind as Benjamin Cant and Messrs. Paul. She gave orders with a recklessness with which every kindred spirit will sympathize. One of the effects she desired to produce was a hedge of Dorothy Perkins roses at the top of a terrace wall, to terminate at each end with a column of

White Garland climbers. Against the warmth of the rose hedge she planted a cool band of Nepeta. From the terrace below, Rêve d'Or and Boule d'Or roses were to fling up yellow and creamy sprays to meet the overhanging strands of cherry pink. The border in which they were planted was to run with the delicate charm of the common monthly rose, with lavender, and the mauves of pansy, and in season the porcelain hues of the pale stocks. Perhaps you can imagine the picture as it appeared in the night vigil of the waking dreamer ?

What really occurred was, first, crucial disappointment ; then, an odd ephemeral success. The Dorothy Perkins behaved after the manner of its kind. I suppose every floral ignoramus has passed through the stages of adoring and then detesting that gross climber. The hedge took instant and gluttonous root ; it ramped and straggled and stretched, dreadfully pink and hot, across the garden prospect. It led its great ringlets down over the wall in a most indecent abandonment, and ate up all the sweet efforts of Rêve d'Or—delicate only in scent and looks though it is. It devoured Boule d'Or altogether. The monthly roses, warranted to bloom all the year round in any situation, dwindled to nothingness, the lavender persistently died, the garland columns at either end, happening to bloom a month before the Perkins, naturally failed to produce the expected contrast ; Nepeta shared the fate of Rêve d'Or, and practically disap-

peared in the embrace of the irrepressible Dorothy. This latter furthermore thrust out bold suckers across the grass walk to catch the unwary as he passed; a creature not at all unlike the modern specimen of young womanhood that haunts the camps, down to the colour of the favourite sports coat!

That was the failure; not a touching disillusion, poetic even in death, like Elaine in her love-barge, but a screeching, blatant fiasco, proud of itself, trumpeting its own bad taste.

The success came accidentally. Orange lilies and purple stocks, every hue of brilliant phlox were thrust into the meagre border below, upon one of those frantic impulses which the mistress of the Little House admits as temperamental. The result was a post-impressionist glory; one of those strokes of unconscious genius that can never be repeated. Dorothy's obtrusive boldness attained a kind of pagan splendour, when it became a background for Tigrinums, and the most immense purple stocks and flaring phloxes we have ever seen.

The pageant passed, and, as has been said, could never return. Dorothy, her brief spell of devil's beauty over, remained vulgar and greedy, a blot on the garden life and a devastation. We think a very obvious moral might be drawn; so obvious, indeed, that we shall refrain from drawing it.

It was a great decision to dig up that deep-rooted hedge, but it had to be made. The incubus was

removed, and half the terrace wall promptly collapsed. It is rebuilt; and the garden breathes more freely, although it is but an odd, queer little patchy border that runs where the daughter of the house-leech throve, and on the new-built wall from the relieved terrace below, Rêve d'Or and its companion have to be coaxed again into the proper position, and, practically, a new generation encouraged to take the place of the old and dwindled parentage.

Vaulting ambition led to the construction of two rose gardens in addition to the long, enclosed, turfy strip on the third terrace that already existed when we purchased the place. You went down to it by a flight of stone steps through an archway smothered in Euphrosyne, the lovely, sweet-scented Wichuraiana. It was guarded by a nondescript tall hedge on the top of a sloping bank, and the bank itself was a tangle of evergreens, interspersed with fir-trees. Below this ran the two long wide beds further shut in by an untidy shrubby hedge on one side, towering rose screens on the other. The roses grew as they could in the unwholesome enclosure, that is to say, very badly.

"I'll never get no good of that there rose-garden," said poor Adam, our late gardener, whose sudden death in the prime of life the Little House continues to lament. "There's a draught a-running along their roots, that's what it is Nothing'll stand a draught."

To obviate which regrettable situation, he further blocked each end with trellises and climbers: it need scarcely be added that the Rosary Terrace remained an object of fury and dismay to its owner. Her spirit rose; she determined to remedy matters by a double supplement.

She created a new rose-garden with great expense, elaboration, and a frenzy of enthusiasm, in the valley at the bottom of her five acres, where the soil is really quite decent. A lane divides it from the heathy hill. A little avenue of pines separates it from the kitchen garden; the triple beds of the reserve garden are generally a mass of indiscriminate herbaceous bloom; really an adorably pretty spot! We put up a hedge of Penzance Briars, we enclosed the new garden with a hollywood trellis, and flung new climbers against it, the best obtainable from Luxembourg. China roses were planted all the way round the trellis, and a large Maltese Cross in the middle of the new-laid turf was filled with crimson and pink roses most recommended for sweetness and hardihood. The centre of the cross was marked by a fountain in crimson rambler.

Here, then, was a garden scheme, well thought out and carefully executed. The first disappointments were the sluggishness of the ramblers to flower; and the complete refusal of the China roses to live at all. Then Adam died, and war came; the Little House suffered an excruciating visitation of gardeners, female and otherwise, and the lower

rose-garden was always the very last spot to which attention could be paid, more especially as it was farthest from the piercing eye of the lady of the house; and she was ill.

Next rationing began, and the voice of economy was as a trombone through the land.

"Take the new rose-garden!" cried the mistress of the Little House, in one of those moments of self-sacrifice which are the most bitterly regretted ever after. "Plant it with potatoes!"

The last "blighter" who had charge of our garden interests—we know the word has a slang sound, but it is dreadfully appropriate in a horticultural sense—set to work and rolled up the only good turf we had in the whole place into strips, with more zest than we had seen him yet display. And he planted my rose pleasaunce with early potatoes, interspersing the rows with broad beans, which last grew up to such magic strength and height that the potatoes, cowering under their giant shadows, remained hopelessly dwarf. And the beans were all blighted on the top, as might have been expected, considering the hand that planted them; and the moral is—once again you can draw it for yourself.

Mullins, the gardener, said he could have told us from the beginning that "there wasn't no option" in planting potatoes and beans together. And as he was stone deaf, it was only adding to one's exasperation to yell at him that the idea was entirely his own.

As for the turf—rolled up earthside out and looking like monster chocolate éclairs—he deposited most of it in an unsightly mound before one of the garden taps, in full view of the top terrace, and, in spite of daily remonstrance, it was still there at his departure, having produced a fine crop of every weed most hated in the garden.

Mullins is worth a divagation, though, indeed, he may fitly be included under garden failures. Hope springs in the garden owner's heart more eternally than in any one else's, I think. It has to, or one would lie down and die, crushed beneath accumulated tombstones of recurrent flat despairs.

After the gardener that took our wages and worked for somebody else, so that the under-gardener gave notice because of the remarks passed by stray pedestrians on the weeds; after the female that couldn't distinguish between Monardas and Peppermints, and did not know there were different kinds of tulips—a tulip in a garden bed a gaudy tulip was to her, and it was nothing more—who tied all the lovely delphiniums tightly round their middles in their spring infancy, and was surprised to see them break into zig-zags and piteous crippled shapes as they grew up; who went about in the most convincing knickerbockers and gaiters all the week, and on Sunday sported a pink dressing-gown and smoked cigarettes in an inconceivably untidy room (though the room was nothing to the mud-pies she made in the garden); after the gardener

who took all our big potatoes and gave us the little ones (it was astonishing we had any potatoes at all, as he hardly dug an inch below the soil) ; who made us a bill for nineteen shillings for our own seeds ; who said he wished he was dead, when he got notice, and that indeed his days were numbered, and that no one would be more glad of it than he, and wept into the weeping standard he hadn't pruned—*then*—

We had Mullins.

He came to interview us in London, and we liked him awfully. That he was deaf didn't matter at all, and his lameness was merely a cause for congratulation, since it made him ineligible. He had the air of a good worker (he was, when he liked). He was specially qualified, his "character" said, to "pull round a place." It was impossible for any place to want "pulling round" more than ours. He was very much shocked at the idea of a gardener demanding money for overtime, or objecting to watering in the evening. "There wasn't no option" in any one going on like that !

"Now," we said to each other, when we had engaged him, drawing a long breath of relief and satisfaction, "we have got the right man !" We had said that three times already,—or its equivalent, in the case of the female before mentioned. We said it a fourth time with an optimism only intensified by previous disappointments.

Mullins arrived, very bland and deaf, with the

most dilapidated wife and small family that we have ever seen, even in our rich acquaintance with the hopeless poor. Their luggage, including furniture and bedding, seemed to be tied up in a doubtful sheet. The atmosphere of the pretty, fresh cottage after they had been in it about ten minutes was strongly reminiscent of the Monkey House in the Zoo. We wondered, but optimism predominated. We rushed to the rescue, after our really foolish habit, with beds and bedding, clothes for the naked, a bath for the dirty, and other sundries.

The four children were not attractive specimens. They might all have walked out of the pages of one of Mary E. Mann's realistic village sketches. The youngest, not yet two, was nearly bald, and made the garden hideous with his roars. They looked as if they had been kept in cellars where they were unable to develop the proper colouring matter. They all had frog-like mouths, and as I have tried to hint by the above literary allusion—cold in their heads.

It is pleasant to relate that during their nine months' stay with us they became quite normal brats. The baby grew hair and red cheeks ; though his roars increased, they were now due to lusty temper. The only member of the family who did not improve was the eldest boy. He worked early and late, poor mite ! and though we gave him supplementary meals, he remained scarcely human to behold. We were very sorry for that child, and

tried to keep him on when the rest left, but he was too useful to his parents; a wretched little beast of burden they made of him.

His mother explained his delicacy by saying that he ought to have "had his throat cut" when he was five—i.e. his adenoids removed; but that the kind lady who had offered to defray the expense of the operation, gave it up in view of his determined opposition.

"'Little coward,' she called him," said Mrs. Mullins, drearily pleating her grimy apron with her fingers that seemed too nerveless to lay hold of anything. "Very unkind I took it of her. 'No, ma'am,' I says, 'e's not a coward, 'e's meek-'earted, that's what 'e is!'"

Mullins was certainly not meek-hearted. Having received from us a notable increase of wages on his last situation, he promptly extorted an extra seven-and-sixpence a week as soon as he was well established, at the considerable expense to us entailed by their destitute condition. He next demanded money for overtime, and informed us that a good few gardeners in the district were, he had ascertained, making double their wages by working on their own, after hours. The scriptural warning that a man cannot serve two masters had already been illustrated for us to our cost in the most unpleasant manner; and, as well as his convenient deafness would allow, we reminded our Mullins of his contract. It ended, however, in our feebly conced-

ing half-a-crown a week for the watering of the parched seedlings after tea-time ; this half-crown to remain a permanence when watering days were past.

Mullins had now taken our measure ; he waxed fat and kicked. He began to show increasingly ugly tempers. When an order was shrieked into his ear, he would give a horrid grunt, and either flatly disregard it, or proceed to act in direct opposition to instructions. Hence, Jacoby blazed the whole summer in the terrace pots against a background of Dorothy Perkins and Stella roses, instead of the cool pink and white geraniums that had been picked out for them ; asters were thrust, like white cotton buttons on a brocade gown, into the middle of groups of antirrhinums. Hence, too, giant sunflowers were sown in a delicate bed of Phloxes, and none of the new anemones planted at all.

The frog children did not leave us a strawberry, and Mullins was so partial to lettuce as a relish that we went uncommonly short.

In a burst of rage at our daring to cut one of our own cabbages, he gave notice, and was terribly " taken to " to find it accepted with alacrity.

We can only imagine that it was poor Mrs. Mullins' unrestrained laments over having to " shift " from her " good place " that led him to try and murder her on the subsequent Saturday morning. Screams before which Mullins-Baby's best efforts paled, drew most of the members of the little house-

hold down at a headlong gallop to the cottage at the bottom of the garden, and not all Mrs. Mullins' explanations that she had "felt it coming over her funny all the morning" could remove the firm impression that the razor which Mullins was still holding had something to do with the wild shrieks of "Oh! he's going to—he's going to——" which had rent our ears.

We felt a great compassion for our late gardener's unfortunate spouse, hopeless slut as she was, though, with the exception of his treatment of that drudge, the eldest boy, Mullins was not usually unkind to her or the little ones. He was indeed gratified in an odd way over his bawling Benjamin. "Shows 'e's got a bit of spirit, I like to 'ear 'im," he would say. And when the two youngest developed measles, he was paternally interested in their symptoms.

"When Edward took 'em—a couple of year ago, I was in Bath then—I put little Vi'let in with 'im, so as they could 'ave 'em together, you see, and get it over. Then I went out and I bought the strongest old beer I could lay me 'ands on, and I give 'em a glassful each, hot. Brought them out lovely, it did. Hunt down the lane there—'is little boy just 'ad 'em—specks that's where our Artie took 'em—Hunt, 'e gave 'is cider, but I'm not so sure as I hold with cider for measles. There ain't no option in cider! Not like beer. I don't suppose I could lay me 'and on any beer for our Artie, not with this 'ere war? "

His conversation used to be a delight to the daughter of the house. In an abnormally warm spell of April weather, when work was pressing on every side, he declared to her : " I feel like a cat on 'ot bricks, wanting to jump all ways at once."

And it was in perfect gravity that he described to her the " tin uniforms " he had once seen hanging up in the hall of a country house. " What they used to wear, 'e was told, though 'e could 'ardly believe it."

In a burst of confidence he once informed her that his *real* vocation was that of a policeman.

" I do feel," he explained, " something inside of me that makes me want to go catching people and telling them as wot they're doing wrong."

It was a pity he did not give this admonitory tendency a little more exercise at home.

With the departure of Mullins we hope for an era of success in the garden. Disillusion lies heavy on it still.

To complete the trilogy of rosary failures, the most trying, certainly, is that of the beds immediately under the library windows, in the so-called Dutch garden.

The plan was to fill them with vivid crimson and deep carmine roses, adding a border of Polyantha roses in bright shades. The result has been a struggle against aspect complicated with our own ignorance—why do not rose-growers, why does not the common-or-garden gardener tell you that some

roses eat up the others ? That if you put the Hun, Ulrich Brunner, in with refined creatures like Generals Jacqueminot, and McArthur, and Warrior, —what an omen—these last will dwindle and disappear ; while the German will thrust out immense shoots, and his horrid blooms will grow more purply, more gigantic, more blatant, year by year. What a moral lies there !

It would be useful too for any one who wanted to make a border of the Polyantha, as we did, if the vendor of the same would drop you a little hint that Orléans is a greedy rose and Mrs. Cutbush a frail one, that the former will elbow the latter out of existence in the space of a season.

The effect schemed for the border was dark shading into pale and back again. To obtain this end, Madame Normand Levavasseur—I don't regret her, horrid, maroon thing !—Orléans and Mrs. Cutbush were chosen. Now Orléans alone reigns triumphant, and between its bold, clear branches some miserable skeleton twigs with two or three yellow-pocked leaves are all that is left of her unfortunate sisters. Mrs. Cutbush had great charm, and I drop a tear upon her remains ; but in this instance the ramping of the strong plant cannot be regarded as a calamity. Orléans is one of the most attractive of the Polyanthas. Her fresh pink has a kind of porcelain shine. Her foliage is as healthy as it is emerald. She has successfully resisted the disease which has overwhelmed my

garden, with that of most others, the last two seasons. Go in for Orléans, if you want a fine dwarf rose, but plant Mrs. Cutbush by herself if you want her ethereal beauty.

In the same manner, White Pet entirely disposed of Perle des Rouges on the top terrace. I am now experimenting with a new border against a warm wall, and Annie Müller, Ellen Poulsen (a delightful rose), and others run against a background of climbing Bardou Job, the sweetest-scented of climbers, as well as one of the most lovely; Zephyrine Drouhin, vivid, sturdy, thornless, as well as sweet, and Noélla Nabonnand, a sort of glorified Bardou Job. We shall see how it all develops next year. The promise so far is good. And here let it be added that strong seedlings of Ipomea Cerulea Major were planted in between the roses, and that the effect—oh ! those blue chalices, I kiss my hand to them ! The sight of them is a kind of ecstasy to any one who loves colour. What if they last but a couple of hours ? Nature is generous, and the buds crowd one upon the other. If people only realized what pure delight nine pennyworth of seed and a little trouble could procure for them, there would not be a wall uncovered by Ipomœa. Morning Glory, the Americans call it, expressing both its swiftness and its splendour.

In a recent book of Mr. E. F. Benson's, he describes the wall of an Italian garden as literally blue as the heavens with this flower. This would look as if it

throve best in the heat. Nevertheless, I think it likes its roots cool.

To come back to greedy flowers, I suppose every beginner has passed through the stage of being under the spell of *Kultur* as far as Ulrich Brunner and Frau Karl Druschki are concerned. I intend to root every Ulrich Brunner out of the garden ; it is really an offensive rose. But although Frau Druschki is also a very coarse being, large and unfragrant, she has certain distinct merits which bid my impulsive hand pause : the beautiful quality of her white, the fine manner in which she holds her blooms on straight stems, and her obligingness in flowering in a vase even from the last and tightest autumn bud on a denuded stem. Moreover, she is a rose for the altar, singularly adapted for certain lovely feast days. Call her Etheldreda, and keep her in your garden.

Another rose to rebaptize is Gruss an Teplitz. If it was not for its tiresome habit of hanging its head, what a satisfactory creature ! lovely in colour, foliage and scent, generous in autumn, and, as the catalogues have it, " very floriferous." I have heard the name " Hail Columbia " suggested for her, but America represents at present something far too virile, grave and determined for this compliment to be appropriate.

Another German rose in my garden does not meet with general approval, but nevertheless I am exceedingly fond of it. Veilchen Blau, which the cata-

logues now advertise as Violet Blue, is the nearest approach to the unroselike tint that has yet been achieved. It is a fine, clean climber, and its trusses of mauve flowers are unusually large. Mixed in vases with branches of pale pink Wichuraianas, such as Blush or Dawn Ramblers, or even with Tausendschön or Coronation, a curious Rococo effect is produced, which is exceedingly pleasing.

In a certain corner of my drawing-room this year, a large silver cup was filled with Veilchen Blau alone. It stood on a little table on one side of a statue of Polyhymnia in draperies of chrysoprase green—we bought her like that in Rome—she has waxen pale hands and face, a lovely thing! Just below the statue is a carved wood gilt Italian chair, upholstered in the Florentine flame pattern, all ambers and greens: this sports a lemon satin cushion. The colour-loving writer used to sit and just look.

She once heard an amateur palmist tell the fortune of a young Jew lady who one would have known at first sight to be attached to the material things of life. "You love colour," said the soothsayer.

"I could roll in it," replied the daughter of Israel, unctiously.

I do not go so far as that, but it is pleasant to note a success in the middle of a chronicle of failures. Nevertheless to failures I must return.

Perhaps of all the disappointments that have smitten the hill-top garden, the spring of this year held the most bitter. She who must be obeyed and

isn't—in other words, the mistress of the place—had a windfall, a very unexpected and handsome share in a piece of monetary good luck that came, in the fourth autumn of the war, the way of the Surrey Villino.

She sometimes wonders whether the crushing blow that followed was just a Nemesis for an undue extravagance—extravagance, that is to say, for such times of trial as these!

She had nights—one cannot call them white nights—tinted with all the rainbow hues of tulips, all the sun-tints of daffodils, the blues of chionodoxas, of scillas, not to speak of crocus purples and anemone enamels. Her terraces were to chant tulips, her wild garden to blare daffodils, Narcissus poeticus was to make the glade silver—alas! why prolong the recital of such exquisite dreams; dreams that seemed so certain of fulfilment, since, for once, she had the means. She was taken in by specious catalogues. It is useless to pretend; our home-grown bulbs cannot compete with the unobtainable Dutch. She was betrayed by wind and weather; by an odious puck-like trick of fate the only really good bulbs were planted in a little narrow bed under the house, where, craning to the sun, they all resembled irate geese advancing in the defence of their common. Mullins the muddler stowed away fifty promising old English tulips in a huge tub in which no provision had been made for drainage, with the result that they all rotted.

The Macrospilas came up a hideous maroon. The yellow tulips in the terrace pots rushed into bloom in irregular battalions; so that half were dishevelled before the others coloured.

The two central beds in the Dutch garden which were to have been a triumph of harmony, developed into an odd and dingy tortoiseshell, partly because the purple wallflowers were a frost-bitten fraud; and partly because Bronze Green tulips are of an unwholesome, fungusy tinge.

What really destroyed the spring garden was the late spell of snow and frost after an unwontedly mild February.

Every time the garden lady looked out upon her frustrated schemes, she had a sort of inner howl. The unkindest cut of all was that conscience added a squeak: "It serves you right!"

She had to admit it, in the face of her favourite and oft-expressed im-moral, that nothing is ever so deeply repented of in life as an economy.

She fears, however, that she is incorrigible. The bulb catalogues are just coming in. She pores over them, pencil in hand. She has little or no money to spend on them this year; nevertheless she knows—— Her list will go out, and she will dream the winter through, as hopefully as ever.

III

The Little Friend of Man

" In dreams I see them fly to meet,
With rapture more than tail can tell,
Their master of the silent feet,
Who moves across the Asphodel
And through the glad Elysian Bounds
Leads all his pack of little hounds."

THE tie that binds us to our dogs is many-stranded; and when we say "dogs" we do not mean those animals that are kept in kennels or stables for divers uses, but the happier creatures that are admitted into our household as one of the family; in other words, the dogs we keep for love.

" It is certainly permitted to grieve for the loss of a dog," said a French-Canadian chaplain sententiously to us—he had been professor many years in Rome before an odd drift of vocation sent him out to work among the Iroquois—" since God has given the dog to be the little companion and friend of man."

The little companion and friend of man! How devoted a companion, how unchanging a friend!

At the Villino, the dogs are the Fur children.

But he that was the first and the dearest, and is now the mourned, was Loki. From the moment when he was brought round to us on a string from his birthplace, the High Street, Kensington (where in correct Eastern fashion he lived upon the roof), looking more like an ambulant Teddy Bear than a real animal, a perky ball of cream-coloured plush, he walked straight into our hearts. Never was there a Pekinese who held himself more gallantly, although deportment is not the least of their points. Loki's eyes had that human depth of intelligence and tenderness which is almost painful to see; the look of the soul struggling for expression—the gaze of the Pekinese is notably profound, often melancholy—yet he was the gayest little being, even to the last week of his life, we have ever known. In his puppyhood his spirits were extravagant. He would race round and round his mistress's room taking the obstacle of her bed, despite its height, in two flying bounds, each time. There is a certain spot on our moors where he daily dashed in the same mad circle until years and illness robbed him of his strength.

For a long time he was only dog; a circumstance quite pleasing to his feelings in some ways, but in others the subject of perpetual unassuaged longings. He passed the months of his young doghood in the vain endeavour to lure every living thing to play with him. He would make advances to hens and cart-horses, to cows and goats. On one

occasion when the goat from a neighbour's garden contrived to get into ours through a gap in the hedge, Loki's rapture passed description. Which leaped the higher, he or the goat, would be difficult to say. He did not even disdain frogs. The first summer of his existence he spent at Ascot, and every night he would make for a corner of the garden where dwelt a toad, and fondly kiss it.

He was fond of practical jokes. They were not very varied, and they were rather elementary, but he did enjoy them so extremely that one could not but enter into them with him. The chief joke was to refuse to follow us on first starting for a walk. No Pekinese, of course, ever comes when he is called—a calculated display of independence is regarded as incumbent on the race,—but a joke was conducted on different principles; instead of wandering off with an occasional backward look to impress upon his foolish family that a Chinaman must really be allowed to choose his path for himself, Loki would sit squarely on the doorstep or on the top of the hill, in full view, struck apparently into rigidity. The climax of the joke was reached in two ways; both equally hilarious. One was when a member of the family had to retrace his steps and stamp behind his obstinate little back with cries of: "Naughty dog, naughty dog!" (This was really the dénouement which Loki thought the most funny. He would fly off in convulsions of merriment, his rose-leaf tongue hanging

out of one side of his wide laughing jaws, every hair of his immense coat bristling with fun.) The other way of ending the pleasantry was fraught for him with a thrill of anxiety. It was when we chose to walk on and leave him to his own devices. He would watch us till we were nearly lost to sight; then with a yelp, as piercing as a steam-whistle, hurl himself in pursuit and arrive like a ball of fur flung from a catapult, panting and frenzied, into our arms, full of wild congratulation that we had all escaped the dreadful peril of final separation.

The second joke was founded on the same general idea. (We have said, little darling! that his conception of wit lacked variety.) It was to get in front of his "Grandpa" when he was pulling his "Grandma" in the bath-chair and sit down every ten paces, at the imminent risk of being walked over. This form of amusement, it must be owned, did end by getting on his family's nerves, especially down a steep hill; and it was generally put a stop to by the small buffoon being captured and put into the bath-chair, where he lay and laughed. He was as devoted to driving as all his breed; but the kernel of the amusement lay, for him, in the trampling of the feet behind him and the exquisite humour of the idea that any one should pretend to be going to hurt him.

Whenever our two present Pekies, Mimosa and Eliza, feel in extra good spirits, they each seize a corner of your skirt and worry it. Loki had not

this trick. His indoor instrument of relaxation was a large green footstool which with astounding strength he would contrive to shake and spin between his little paws, and which if set on one edge could be made to roll, to the sound of the most ecstatic growls.

He was more fond of playing with his regular toys than the others. He had a Teddy Bear—unspeakably zoological after daily mumblings—from which he one day succeeded in triumphantly pulling out the glass boot-button eyes; much to our anguish, for they had to be extracted with considerable difficulty from jaws closed like iron upon them, we being in terror the while lest he should chew them with fatal results.

Every one who owns Pekinese knows the clockwork regularity of their habits, and their annoyance over any unpunctuality of yours. Loki arrived at an unvarying hour every morning at his "Grandma's" door, and announced his presence by one short imperious bark, repeated at regular intervals till he was admitted. He would then walk round to her bed, and beg and wave his paws till he was lifted up into his particular corner under the eiderdown, over the hot-water bottle; where he gave from time to time fierce if muffled objurgations (especially in later years) if anything annoyed him, such as the crackling of a newspaper over his head, or the unwary placing of some article in close proximity to his repose.

It may here be noticed that all attempt at economy, by covering him with an old woollen shawl instead of the satin eiderdown, was treated with the scorn it deserved.

Towards the hour of the servants' dinner he would emerge from his nest, drop over the edge of the bed and signify his desire to go forth in the same way as he had expressed his intention to come in. Should the doors into the domestic quarters be shut (in exceptional concession to the mistress of the Villino's orders) Loki would let off his minute guns till one or other of his slaves hurried to attend to him.

Our lunch time, at which he had his own mid-day repast, was naturally an hour of considerable emotion, which became intensified for Loki when the other two Pekinese appeared on the scene. The three dogs would sit up in a row waving frantic paws, to rise on tip-toe and dance in wildest excitement on the appearance of their three plates. Then there ensued a moment of dark suspicion, for each little dog was not sure that his neighbour had not the better dinner. It was often necessary for authority to interfere and for the fur children to be posted, each before its own plate, by firm but kindly hands. At the conclusion of the repast, which was accomplished with the appalling rapidity of canine gusto, it became a consecrated usage for the dogs to lick the others' plate in turn ; with what fruitless result the triple experience of every day showed in vain. The last lick had no sooner been

given than with a great bustle they gathered about the more leisurely feasters and claimed tit-bits, until every one rose from the table. That was a moment of new rapture; for after lunch comes coffee which Pekinese adore, and of which it is our habit to give each of ours a saucerful, not only because it is agreeable to their little palates, but because it is what I once heard a young Radical M.P. (who had very vast designs on the remodelling of society) describe as "*high-gee-i-nic.*"

The three dogs would issue from the door of the dining-room across the hall and into the drawing-room, as if shot pell-mell from a gun, in one united clump, growling jocosely as they ran. It grieves us to the heart that there should be only two of them to do it now: and in every corner of the house the presence of Loki is missed. The quaintest, the most loving and, as we have said the most beloved! He had such pretty ways of creeping up to you with patting paws and laying his little head coaxingly on your feet. His was a most generous nature, and true to his early love of playfellows, he welcomed every new addition to the household, whether cat or dog. The two other children won't tolerate an intruder, even of the male persuasion and of their own race, anywhere within the precincts; and chase old Bunny, the great, black Persian garden cat, to whom they have been accustomed from the days when they wore plush instead of fur for their coats, till he has to fly for his life.

No one welcomed us home like Loki; indeed his screams and sobs of joy, his bounds and leaps and wriggles and tail-waggings were almost too much for his small frame. We could feel his heart thudding to bursting when he finally rested, exhausted and panting, in our arms; and as soon as he had drawn breath, the paroxysms would begin again, and he who never licked—for it is not the custom in Pekin—was for ever leaping to try and reach our face. We cannot think that a spirit of such faithfulness and pure unselfish love can be extinguished.

How infinitely touching is the devotion of a dog for its master; and how great a claim it makes on our responsibility! As to that dreadful ulcer on our civilization, vivisection, the subject is too acutely painful for any one who loves dogs in general, who has loved dogs in particular, to approach without actual anguish. One could very nearly as soon contemplate experimenting on the children! The special pleading that these cruelties are to the ultimate benefit of humanity, can be made to apply in both cases. Personally I would rather die a hundred times than be healed at such a price. It is moreover a very moot point whether the results obtained, at any rate in surgery, are what they are represented to be. I hope that when women get their share of the reins, they may bring another spirit into a changing world, but I very much doubt it. The first impulse of the scien-

tific woman seems to be to fling off the best attributes of her sex ; to regard it as a sign of efficiency to out-do the male in callousness and ruthlessness ; and, paradoxically, while insisting in theory on her own superior qualities, to ape man's worst characteristics in the name of feminine progress.

Pathological investigators ought to remember that dogs, the little friends of man, have, through constant association with him in generations of domesticity, developed extraordinarily high faculties of intelligence and sensitiveness. Their nervous system has become quite as susceptible as our own, if not more so ; their powers of thought and of affection are pathetically developed. Pekinese are notable examples in the long evolution of canine culture. The pure-bred male Pekinese has become practically a silent dog, because his celestial masters disliked noise. He has a hundred pretty ways, originally inculcated for the amusement of his owner. You need rarely teach a Pekinese to beg, dance on his hind legs or to wave his paws. He will also quite instinctively put his paws together in an attitude of prayer when he wants anything. Some Pekinese will sit by the water-edge and fish like a cat ; their ancestors were taught to do so in the ponds of the Imperial gardens. One little specimen of the race, of whom I know, used to watch for hours on the brim of an ornamental garden pool and neatly scoop out of the water gold-fish after gold-fish as they swam round. They would be

found in shining rows as he laid them down, for he made no attempt to profit of his sport.

Many dogs feel with a finer sense than is vouchsafed to our humanity the menace of sickness or disaster that may be hovering in the air.

A retriever, belonging to a near relation, rent the air with his lamentations the whole of one spring night in the yard of his master's English home, he alone of the little household knowing by some super-instinct that the said master was lying dead in Ireland.

The day, the blackest in the annals of the Villino, when a message of death came from the bitter shores of the Tigris to this peaceful height, Loki was aware beforehand that calamity was upon us. The message only reached us in the afternoon; but all the morning the little dog slunk about with his tail down, almost unrecognizable in depression, and twice he turned and looked at his mistress's face, his eyes full of an agonized questioning. She can never forget that gaze, charged with so strange a meaning, so deeply pathetic an anxiety.

A wise, serious, old Aberdeen terrier of our acquaintance was overwhelmed with distress the day his mistress had a slight operation to her hand for a piano strain. He lay the whole day upon her bed, beside her, refusing food or water or walk; and ever and anon would very gently sniff at her bandages and then crawl 'up and tenderly, with infinite gentleness, lick her face.

We have heard our own little Loki cry out like a frightened child at the sight of a cut finger and fling himself, with the most urgent caresses, upon the sufferer.

When his last illness came upon him—that insidious complaint so fatal to dogs, gastric catarrh —the first really disquieting symptom was when he lay down on the moor in the middle of his daily walk and had to be carried home. Mrs. McComfort, the kitchen-mother, who loves the little dogs with a special tenderness, ran out to take him when she saw that he was being carried in.

"Ah, ma'am," she said to his mistress, "I knew he would never recover, for when I stood on the terrace with him, he looked up into my face, and then out on to the moor and up at the house. I knew he was saying good-bye to it all. Oh! when I saw that look, ma'am, I understood what it meant. It was just the way a great, big, beautiful Newfoundland dog I once had charge of looked at me the minute before he died. I'd brought him in a bit of something to try and tempt him to eat. And he flung out his great paw to shake hands, the way he always did, and he gave me that look, the look you couldn't mistake, and then he was gone."

Everything that was humanly possible we did to try and save our dear little dog. He was eight years old, and though Pekinese are short-lived we thought we might have kept him a few years longer. We got him round several bad corners; it is a

most dreadful illness to have to nurse a dog through, because the poor precious creatures are so thirsty, and it is fatal to let them drink ; but we found that by holding and patting him like a baby we could distract his mind. The last day he seemed to have taken a turn for the better ; the sickness had stopped and he craved for food, crying like a bird. Wrapped in a shawl he lay in his mistress's arms and she walked him about, as we say, as if he had been her sick child. His pretty face was quite unaltered. His eyes were as bright as we have ever seen them. Though he had gone to skin and bone, he had such beautiful fur that it was hard to realize his emaciation. We gave him raw meat-juice, which he loved and drank out of a spoon, really just like a baby ; alas ! we think that the vet.'s advice to progress to Benger's Food was what brought on the relapse. We shall always blame ourselves for having let him out of our sight that night, but we were afraid that he might be restless if he did not sleep as usual with the maid whom we called his " Nana." Up to this, his nights had been good, and it has been set down before—Pekies are creatures of a monkish regularity.

His mistress bade him a more cheerful good-night than she had been able to do that week ; but in the very middle of her laughter at this quaint imperious call for food, she felt the shadow of the wing of death come over her ; that strange and awful blackness of the spirit that once felt can never

be forgotten, nor confused with any other sensation ; that presentiment which, however you may try to reason it away as a nervous trick of the imagination, sets its seal upon hope with the finality of doom. Never has that portent failed of fulfilment in our experience !

Loki's mistress tried in vain to put it from her, telling herself that it was not likely the omen should come for a little dog, however beloved. Alas ! alas ! next day all that was left of her eager, loving, faithful friend was a bundle of fur.

Once again—we will not believe that the spirit, so individual, so vital, so tender and faithful, has been extinguished like a spark. " The earth shall be renewed "—what can that comforting text mean, save that life shall be given back to all creation ? It would be intolerable to think that the All-just and the All-merciful should permit this innocence to share the suffering which is the curse of sinful humanity, and not share too in the resurrection.

It is the most piteous thing in all the world to see a small sick dog look at you with wounded gaze, craving help which you, omnipotent power as you are to him, cannot give. The other day a young officer lost his life in Wales, by dashing back into his burning hut to save his dog. Will you tell us that the spirits of those two shall not be together where all life is eternal ? A third time : we do not believe you.

Here is a story told us by a friend ; it happened to her brother. He had a dog, a Chow, to whom he was extremely attached and who was, on his side, exclusively and passionately devoted to his master. The owner of the Chow was informed, while on a visit to England, that his favourite, left behind at his Irish country seat, was ill ; he instantly started for home, but though he arrived to find his dog still breathing, he was unable to save his life. The man grieved very much for his canine friend. One night, about three months after his loss, he had a strange dream. His Chow came back to him and spoke with a human tongue, fawning on him with many caresses.

" I have had so much trouble to reach you, my dear, dear master. I cannot stay now, but in the spring I will return to you for good."

The odd sequel to the true tale is that in the spring a puppy of the same breed was brought to the house as a gift to the wife of this dog lover ; the little creature would have nothing whatever to say to her, but attached himself to the husband with the same concentrated ardour that the former comrade had shown.

Very shortly after Loki's death his mistress was greatly consoled by a dream which came to one of her sisters. This latter dreamt she saw their own dead mother—who had so tenderly loved little dogs—walking on a kind of golden hillside, a place transfigured with light, so that the grass itself was

golden. And their mother, who was moving in full strength and comeliness, turned an irradiated face upon the dreamer and said: "I thought I would take Ronnie for a run." And then, our sister adds, she saw the old grey Aberdeen, loved and lost and mourned too, come running along the golden grasses with the ecstatic bustle of the dog who is thoroughly enjoying himself.

A dream! "We are such stuff as dreams are made on!" . . .

We like to think of our Loki's jocund spirit playing about the enaureoled fields, but unless his faithful heart is greatly changed, he will not be happy till we join him there.

IV

The Widow Crump

This widwe of which I telle you my tale
Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,
In patience ladde a ful simple lyf.

Chaucer.

WE always thought there was a strong strain of the Jew in the widow Crump, even before she became a widow and had to fend for herself in a hard but remunerative world.

She kept her good, submissive Crump and the two little Crumps uncommonly tight, but it was only when left lone and lorn like Mrs. Gummidge that she displayed her full talents. One eye—it was black and steely—was always fixed on the main chance, even when the apron was held to the other. And the elder Crumplet was as like the maternal Crump as a little pea is like a big one.

When the sympathizing inmates of the Villino went down into the lane to offer condolence after the funeral of poor Crump, the widow received them with that air of mingled dignity, resentment and grievance which is the attitude of the respectable poor towards the dispensations of Providence, for which—as being likewise a member of a superior

order—they regard you as being jointly responsible.

"Thank you, miss; every one's very kind, I'm sure,"—sniff. The apron was at one dry eye, the other was fixed unblinkingly on the look-out for something more than mere words. "Crump, he had a long illness, as you say, miss; very trying it was, very trying! Sometimes, I hardly knew, in a manner of speaking, which of us would be the first to go. Yes, miss, *as* you say, a 'appy release. That is a way of looking at it, so to speak, it being as 'ow human nature—and I never set up to be anything but human, miss—'as its limits. But it comes cruel 'ard. All them months, having 'ad to draw on the club money.—Thank you, miss, I'm sure!"

Mrs. Crump's eye glances downwards at the coin. Only half-a-crown! her heavy sigh proclaims.

"Yes, Miss, Albert's growing up. He do cost me in boots and clothes as much as a grown man, he do, and there ain't no return to be expected, not for years, in a manner of speaking. Yes, miss, he'll be a comfort to me. The sense he has, you'd never believe. Only this morning, he says to me, 'What a pity,' he says, 'that the Almighty should have sent us Baby!' he says. 'It do seem odd of Him,' he says, 'and Him taking Daddy. Another mouth to feed,' he says."

A wan smile appears on Mrs. Crump's face. "Yes, miss, as sensible as a grown-up, you may say."

The neighbourhood and her employers were

really very sorry for Mrs. Crump. And it does not require to have any out-of-the-way kindliness to realize that the world *is* "cruel hard" for a widow with two children. And Crump had been liked; and, when all is said and done, employers are not heartless towards the dependants of those who have served them. Mrs. Crump was established in a cottage (rent free and garden stocked) in the lane that borders the Villino grounds. She was guaranteed ten shillings a week for a corresponding amount of washing, and as much more as she cared to earn. Here it may briefly be said that she made easily forty shillings a week, never less, and sometimes a good deal more.

But people with that Jewish kind of eye and with that natural crook in their fingers have this in common with the saints, that they are never satisfied with their achievements. The widow developed an increasing sense of injury and an ever more vociferous ambition, with scarcely an interval for the assimilation of fresh gain. Like the daughter of the horse-leech, she cried "Give, give!" and she was an adept at varying the method of demand.

An attack of hysterics; a sudden menace of heart failure, when to sit up in the bed might be fatal; a strange request from a titled lady to go and be a comfort to her for untold remuneration, only there might be a difficulty about Baby; a demand for friendly counsel on "whatever was to become of Albert when he'd set his heart on elec-

trical engineering, and the premium was—well, if me and Baby was to go barefoot for years, Miss Mauree, and eat, in a manner of speaking, nothing at all, we couldn't, in a manner of speaking, rise to it" ;—from irrelevant dithyrambs on the priceless privilege of washing for one, who is, so to speak, a real lady, to mere chatty, jocose, allusions to Baby's little feet being "on the ground, bless 'em" ; to quiet appropriation—"the damson trees 'as always belonged to these cottage plots. Yes, Miss Mauree. What if they *does* grow the other side of the 'edge ? Custom is custom, in a manner of speaking."—Mrs. Crump was an adept at garnering. Her methods of getting at your purse were as numerous and varied as Mercutio's points of challenge.

She had, as we have hinted, however, moments of intervening placidity. As these were the exception, it is easier to set them down first.

The first ray of consolation that gleamed across the black sky of the bereaved was when she returned from the purchase of the grave.

"Bought it, I 'ave, Miss Mauree, a good plot—very dear, but in a manner of speaking, it'll be cheapest in the end. Plenty of room for Baby——and for Albert—one never knows, does one, with children ? It's best to be on the safe side."

When Mrs. Crump moved into her new cottage, she contrived to have several expensive improvements carried out. She also gave instructions to the builder (empowered by those who were inter-

ested in her to put in a new range for her) to build her a coal-cellar, it being, "in a manner of speaking," highly important that a poor widow should be able to lock up her stores; not that she meant to hint anything against anybody, "as the saying goes," but if the listeners would excuse her, she might mention that "human nature was human nature!"

Our mouths were open to protest that we might at least have been consulted before orders were given in our name, when up went Mrs. Crump's apron to her eye; an ominous quivering permeated her frame. There wasn't anybody now to stand up for her! Our mouths closed upon the unspoken protest, and Mrs. Crump triumphantly returned to her new home to issue commands about the putting up of a few shelves.

Having, to use the widow's own phraseology, in a manner of speaking, settled down, no one must imagine that Mrs. Crump folded her hands metaphorically. She was not one to allow herself or her patrons any repose.

The washing with that little copper would break anybody's heart, much less an organ that was already so severely afflicted.

"Rinsed out those sheets, I did, Miss Mauree, ten times, if I did them once, and look at their colour. A lady that *is* a Lady, like my mistress, she wouldn't close her eyes on sheets that colour. Oh! I know that, Miss Mauree, and indeed I never as much as closed my own eyes last night.

Beat, my 'eart did! There, I thought I'd never see morning. 'I'm going to Daddy!' I says to Baby. 'Oh!' she says, 'do, Mammie,' she says, 'and tell *Jeser* I want some new shoes.' She's that sharp, Miss, you'd never believe! 'I'll tell Daddy,' I says, 'Baby, that the washing's killed poor mother and that he'll have to look after Baby himself. No more bread and milk for Baby when Mammie dies.' Holler, she did, and me afraid you'd be hearing her and thinking I'd been nervous with her. I do get nervous with Baby sometimes, Miss Mauree. A temper she has, and break it I can't, no matter if I try ever so. And indeed, so has Albert. You wouldn't believe it, Miss Mauree, but I've beaten that boy till I'm tired, and it's no good."

From the date of this conversation onwards, every week as the hour of payment returned, Mrs. Crump detailed symptoms brought on by the brutal infliction of our washing. She went in great state to visit her physician, in the black satin mantle which had been presented to her to eke out the mourning for Crump. Little Albert was sent up to inform us that Mother might be behindhand with the pocket-handkerchiefs, as she was feeling that poorly she had to go to the doctor.

Next morning Albert appeared on the scene again. Mother was very sorry, but she had taken to her bed, and the doctor said that if she sat up he wouldn't answer for the consequence. She was very sorry

to inconvenience. She hoped the ladies would excuse her. Lady Prowley had been round and left a Dover sole.

We knew that things were going very badly indeed in the moral sense for Mrs. Crump, when Lady Bedelia Prowley came on the scene.

We sent down, as was expected of us, chicken broth and a custard pudding to the sufferer. And to put our minds at rest (though really we ought to have known Mrs. Crump by this time), we rang up the doctor.

"Anxious about Mrs. Crump? Ye needn't be, then." He's a jovial Irishman. "She's got a bit of a chill, or maybe a touch of the flu,—a mild touch, mind ye! What's that you say? Heart? Heart trouble! Not at all. A bit of a little cold, didn't ye hear me?" He walked away from the telephone, apparently, at this point: good-natured, for he can't be anything else, but convinced that we belong to the fussy class; a great trial to a hard-worked doctor!

Mrs. Crump presented herself in the kitchen next day, with her hand to her side and a long countenance of sourest resignation. Dying but dauntless, she deposited the mistress's pocket-handkerchiefs on the kitchen table, mentioned Lady Bedelia's sole, pointedly ignored the chicken broth, and took her way back to the lane again, with a fresh egg.

The following morning she appeared, radiant on her doorstep:

"Very porely I was, Miss Mauree, very porely indeed. 'Mrs. Crump,' the doctor says to me, 'you're killing yourself, you are indeed!' And Lody Prowley, she *was* sorry for me. 'Pore soul,' she says, 'you *do* look bad,' she says. 'The work,' she says, 'is beyond a woman's strength.' And she offers me, Miss Mauree, to come and do for her in a cottage in Wales. 'In a manner of speaking,' she says, 'it'll be a pleasant change for you,' she says. 'And,' she says, 'it may be the saving of your life."

Here Mrs. Crump paused, and fixed two expressionless eyes on the listener's face.

"But certainly, Mrs. Crump," says the latter, patiently, "we think it might be very nice for you indeed, and of course, if the washing is too much——"

The widow interrupts with a flung-out hand. "Lady Prowley, she did offer, so to speak, but I said, 'No, Lady Prowley,' I said, 'leave my mistress I will not. I'd die at my post,'" says Mrs. Crump, raising pathetic eyeballs, "'before I abandon them as stood by me when standing by did mean standing by, in a manner of speaking.' Yes, Miss, Lady Prowley did give me a sole, and I took it very kind of her, though unexpected, but the friend in need is the friend indeed, as the saying goes, and it's nothing for nothing in the world, if you'll excuse me mentioning it, Miss Mauree."

Mrs. Crump folded her hands across her narrow

chest. Her meaning seemed as impenetrable as her eye, but she proceeded to expound.

"The first time her ladyship came to see me after the obsequies—yes, Miss Mauree, she *had* been away, and it was a month since Crump had been laid to rest, fair is fair—but Lady Prowley she set down there, as it might be yourself, Miss Mauree, and in the middle of a tex' I see her staring at the top of the harmonium, and then she draws a finger along the top of it and looks at it. Yes, Miss Mauree, it *was* dusty, but that wasn't no business of hers! —looks at her finger and then at me,—and her no more good—to a pore widow—not *then* she wasn't—than a cymbal nor yet a tambourine!"

"A cymbal, Mrs. Crump?"

"Yes, Miss, a cymbal, them as Paul alludes to in the scrip, as comes in and tinkles and have not charity. And, 'No, Lady Prowley,' I says, 'if I give Baby to any one,' I says, 'it'll be to my own ladies. What if they *are* papists,' I says, 'it's a very nice religion, as I've found it. And if,' I says it plain to her, Miss Mauree, 'the ladies will set me up in a laundry as is a laundry, then, in a manner of speaking,' I says, 'I'll feel myself,' as I always 'ave, Miss Mauree, 'bound to the family!'"

This was how the suggestion of the model laundry was conveyed to us. It was also the first time that Baby's soul was dangled before our eyes, like an object to be sold by auction.

Mrs. Crump, having established her premises,

lost no time in reaching her conclusions. To do her justice, she had planned the whole enterprise very cleverly and completely. The stables would "do nicely" for the laundry, and the harness-room would "do nicely" for an ironing-room. It wouldn't, so to speak, be an expense which people of our distinction would be likely to feel at all, but in any case, the economy to be derived in the course of a few months, would amply compensate for the original outlay. Mrs. Crump got her own way. She settled her own terms as head laundry-woman, and she arranged that "Mother" was to give up housekeeping in Middlesex, come and live in the cot, help to mind Baby, and give the necessary "hand."

The laundry turned out a really charming installation, and "Mother" duly arrived; a most formidable lady with whom we were already acquainted, and who was, indeed, a large edition of the Widow Crump in every particular.

The laundry was inaugurated, and we drew a long breath, thinking that now, at last, the relict would be satisfied and that we might expect peace. Little had we yet measured that amazing woman's resources.

On the Saturday of the initial week, Mrs. Crump staggered into the kitchen and promptly swooned on the floor. On being with great difficulty restored to consciousness, she moaned that "Mother" was packing at the cottage. "'That laundry,

Bess,' she says, 'will be your end. And I warn you fair. You'll be found,' she says, 'lying dead on the floor within there.' "

Next day quotations from "Lady Prowley" were freely hurled at us. "'Mrs. Crump,' says she to me, 'it's not my custom to interfere,' she says, 'not with nobody, but I can't stand by,' she says, 'and see you lose both soul and body'—(Yes, Miss)—she says. 'Ever since you took up with the Church of Rome, in a manner of speaking, I've felt that a judgment would come on you. For a delicate woman like you,' she says, 'to undertake a family washing, unhelped,' she says, 'is suicidal madness, and oh! Mrs. Crump,' she says, 'let me warn you.' Yes, Miss Mauree,—she says, 'I speak from experience,' she says, 'they're very fascinating. I've seen many of my own go the way to perdition by being brought into contact with this insidious power. I hear Albert's been backwards and forwards up to the house, and oh, Mrs. Crump, would you peril his immortal soul?' 'Lady Prowley,' I says, 'if the child does get an orange or a biscuit—it's no more than that,' I says.' . . . And, indeed, Miss Mauree, how I'm to pay for his outfit at the college, let alone his pension there—two sets of singlets and pants, wool, and four pairs of woollen stockings—Will you cast your eye on this paper, Miss Mauree, and show it to my mistress, and oh! Miss Mauree, if my master would advise me how I'm to get the pension? A word

from a gentleman like him—'tisn't as if I'd any one to stand up for me. And as for the washing, Miss Mauree, I'm not going to give it up, don't you think it! All I want is a little 'elp, Mother being so disagreeable. And disagreeable she always was, Miss, 'ard as nails from childhood up. 'How can you 'ave the 'eart?' I says to her, many a time. 'Eart?' she says. 'Yes, mother,' I says, 'you may well say it. 'Eart it's not, unless the name of 'eart is stone.'"

Thus Mrs. Crump obtained local help in the laundry, a complete set of underclothes for Albert, and a subscription towards his pension. The rest the indomitable woman raised in the district.

We were all glad that Albert should be sent to college, for the relations between him and his mother were increasingly strained. She would candidly enlarge on the recurrent tussles.

"Tired, Miss Mauree? In a manner of speaking, I wonder I'm alive at all! What that boy has been this day, and it Sunday! Defied me, he did, regular defied me. I took the broom to him, I did indeed, Miss Mauree, and 'Mother,' he says, 'I'll smash you.' Kick me, he did. He's too strong for me. He wants a man's 'and over 'im. And only a hour ago he came in to tea with his face all cut, all gory, in a manner of speaking, him having had a regular tumble off his new bicycle. 'There,' I says, 'if that isn't a judgment on you. Going down to church with those wicked feelings in your breast, and if

you *'ad* been killed, as might 'ave 'appened easy, who is to say as the Almighty wasn't justified in His works ? ' "

It is needless to say that Albert, the little pea, was not developing into much promise of filial tenderness under the maternal rule. Indeed once, coming across Mrs. Crump, black-robed, spare and fierce, engaged in " laying it on " her offspring with an energetic hand, while Albert retaliated, according to custom, with his legs, one could not help thinking what a sketch might have been made of the scene, with the cynical inscription, " The only son of his mother and she was a widow."

When the day of his departure for the engineering college finally arrived, Mrs. Crump met us in the lane with an unwontedly triumphant expression on her melancholy countenance.

" Yes, Ma'am, yes, Miss Mauree, to-morrow's the day. Albert's taking on dreadful. Met a boy, he did, this very afternoon, seems like Providence, and he had a brother at the very same college that Sonnie's going to. ' You won't like it,' he says, ' it's a terrible place. Cold baths with ice on them on a winter's morning, and it's the cane if you as much as sneeze.' ' Well,' I says to Albert, ' I am glad,' I says ; ' now you'll know there's worse places than 'ome.' Yes, Miss Mauree, ' and,' I says to him, ' maybe you'll think of Mother when you're feeling very miserable.' "

We have often thought that there must be a special

paradise for the souls of people like Mrs. Crump; she had her own peculiar code of right and wrong, and adhered to it rigidly. Certain ways of picking our pocket she regarded as lawful perquisites. We are sure she thanked the Lord every night for not being as bad as her neighbours; and, indeed, the certain virtues she had shone as brightly as her own brasses. There never was any one so clean in her person, her cottage and her children. You could kiss the smallest Crump whenever you felt inclined, and meet nothing but a skin as fresh as a daisy, and a fragrance of recent soap and water. She was moreover a capable needlewoman and, when she chose, a first-class washerwoman, and if it was pushing thrift to an extreme to use our laundry, our soap and our coke to wash for the neighbourhood, on the whole we could not complain of her neglecting us. It was however a prudent step of ours with regard to the locking up of the coal cellar which produced Mrs. Crump's graceful backing manœuvre out of our sphere. She, too, was a prudent woman and, like the Hun, she knew when a position became untenable. One may say she retreated according to plan. We received a letter addressed collectively to the whole family in which she thanked us for past favours and deeply regretted that the state of her health precluded her continuing to profit by them. I have said she was a woman of precaution; nevertheless she had evidently not been able to prevent the appearance, some time after her depar-

ture, of a dilapidated female, with a wheelbarrow in which was an immense bundle of soiled linen, who looked about her with a wild eye, asked where was the lady who ran the laundry, and was much put about at finding unenterprising strangers in her place.

"Dear me, it is a disappointment. I used to look to Mrs. Crump to take over 'alf my wash when it was partickler 'eavy."

To come back to the widow's virtues. She was propriety itself; moral rectitude protruded, so to speak, from her pointed elbows. In spite of her "nervous" fits she was as sober as she was proper; the kind of wife to give the labouring husband an eminently respectable home, to keep him and it spotless and polished, if a little tight, to assist him valiantly in the accumulation of the nest-egg, clothe his children and scrub them daily so that they might have passed for little walking advertisements of Sapolio . . . and to break his heart by one long nag, nag! Seeing that there are so many homes made miserable by slattern, spendthrift and drunken women, there must be a special corner in Paradise for the Mrs. Crumps; but we doubt whether Crump himself and the little Crumps would regard it as an Eden for themselves.

We miss Mrs. Crump. Her humours amused us. The variety of her manœuvres relieved the monotony of domestic existence. I think the garden is still haunted by that black-robed figure that

crept up and down the terraces with one hand to its heart, in mute protest against our brutality in living on a hill and the general callousness of the upper classes to the sufferings of their dependants. We miss, too, the priceless anecdotes of Lady Bedelia, but Prowleys, like the poor, we shall always have with us.

V

Tommy to Tea

Faces cheerful, full of whimsical mirth,
Lined by the wind, tanned by the sun.
. . . . . .
Beloved soldiers who love rough life and breath
Not less for dying faithful to the last.

Robert Nichols.

TO entertain the wounded soldier is a privilege: to amuse him is quite another matter. It is an art to succeed in which the first principle is that you must appear artless. A sense of effort is fatal to enjoyment.

We are all painfully familiar with the young violinist who, frantically working an elbow, produces the travesty of a favourite bit of music by much conscientious scraping; the physical strain communicates itself to the listener so that we sit twisted on our seat, unconsciously endeavouring to aid the effort with our own nerves and muscles. We have been reminded of some such half-hour of torture many a time when assisting at other people's praiseworthy endeavours to "do their bit" for the wounded soldiers: horrible phrase, but appropriate to a section of the community which regards its

contribution of war-time duty much as the average churchgoer his shilling in the plate on Sunday.

To invite the largest number available and to get it all over on the one day is a system more satisfactory to the host than to the guest. Your wounded man is very often a creature of curious sensitiveness, his helplessness, the disability, perhaps, that marks him out among the rest; a sojourn of months or even years in hospital has made him vulnerable in many unguessed-at ways. He will not take it as a great compliment to be asked to form one of a herd; to be set down at a packed table and offered buns and cakes with conventional smiles and the minimum of individual attention. If, subsequently, he is told off to play games, like a child at a school treat, while his manners remain gravely courteous, his attitude is only one of toleration.

"Yuss, I was awsked there to tea again," said a Cockney to us one day, leaning on his crutch and scratching his jaw thoughtfully, "but I didn't gow. Got out those little poozles she did, and 'anded 'em round. Awst us to set down in a row loike. Ow! very koind, she is, very koind, a nice lady; but I excused myself."

Neither is it a happy thought to invite a regimental concert-party from the nearest camp to divert the blue-coat company after the buns. In the first place they are, in their own language, "fed up" with the concert-party, which inflicts itself upon

the hospital once a week; the same lanky boys dressed as prima-donnas, the same funny soldier with his imitations of Harry Lauder, the same terrible comic or sentimental songs with their choruses! No doubt the audience will join in these choruses with apparently unabated enthusiasm; we have hinted that hospital manners are unimpeachable. But besides the fact that you must get "fed up" with what you have heard every week for several months, and that you cannot be particularly fond of an institution which hospital discipline expects you to patronize whether you like it or not, the wounded soldier does not see why, if there is any noise to be made, he should not make it himself.

For us who have looked in to help at the entertainment, the "concert-party" is undiluted agony. We suppose, in its proper place at the front and in the camp, it has its uses. It is clear it would not be encouraged if it were not regarded as a necessary distraction, but personally, this dressing up of the most effeminate-looking boy as a woman, the amusement to be derived from his falsetto voice and painted face, from his grimacings, archnesses and ogles, is repulsive in the extreme, and we cannot see why diversion should not be of a character that will leave audience and performer a little better instead of a little deteriorated. The whole world is full of beautiful, touching, noble things that are also joyful. Why must laughter

be sought in the equivocal and the vulgar, rather than in the gay and wholesome ?

But this is a digression. To come back to the point : if you want really to give the wounded soldier an hour that he will appreciate and remember, ask him with but a few comrades, receive him as if he were a friend—as indeed, who has more truly proved himself your friend ?—make him feel at home. You will then be treating him as an individual. He has been treated long enough as a unit, God knows ! Let him sit and smoke and talk to you and tell you of his wounds and show them to you if he wants to—he will like to do that—and, if you don't like the sight of them, that doesn't matter at all. It is an advance in your intimacy and you will remember who it is that bears the pain. Don't talk down to your wounded guest, there is no need. If you converse with him as with an equal, you will be surprised at his intelligence, his grasp of the situation, his common sense, even his knowledge. There is a world of tolerant philosophy about these men who have suffered so terribly, often been sacrificed to incompetence and folly, often, too, been badly and stupidly treated. He will notice the things in your room, the pictures, the books, the artistic treasures. In this house there is a collection of obsolete weapons which is a never-failing source of interest and amusement to the men. They will have the old flint-locks down, become very jocose with a blunderbuss, knowing

with the eighteenth century duelling pistol, amazed over the weight of the old Brown Bess, and will wax dithyrambic in explaining the intricacies and singing the praises of the Lewis gun.

We have found that they prefer their tea in the servants' hall, where they are not preoccupied by etiquette. And it is advisable to recollect that "a relish" will be much appreciated. Pickled salmon and cocoa is a favourite combination; tinned pine-apple is a happy succession to sardines; walnuts, spring onions, finnan haddock; anything with a taste that reminds them of home will be enjoyed. If you follow these hints you will find that your guests will endeavour to prolong the outing beyond hospital hours, and you will have considerable difficulty in getting them off in time to avoid serious consequences. They will wring your hands in farewell; declare it's been a treat; suggest dropping in to-morrow to bring back the lantern which is to light them across the winter wood; or if it be summer, the basket which it seems you have forgotten at the hospital. No matter what the excuse, you know they want to come again. You can return to your armchair a little tired, perhaps, but with the consciousness that you have been thoroughly successful, that you have given some half-dozen poor wounded lads a happy afternoon, and that you have probably made six friends for life.

The "dropping in" is a sure sign of this success. It may be a little trying to your cook if it coincides

with dishing-up hour and the dropper-in shows a disposition to linger; but if she is of the right kind, with a woman's heart for the poor lads, she will never let him guess at his slight breach of tact. She will find something to offer him beside the necessary cigarette, and no one need be afraid that he will presume unduly. We have said he is sensitive. He will be dashed by the merest shadow of change in your manner.

"Some one has been *pass*ing remarks" (with a very flat *a*), said a little Northumbrian soldier, "and I have applied to leave the hospital."

We knew that the wound in his shattered shoulder was still discharging, that another operation was pending; we had seen his small hatchet face grow smaller and whiter every time he came. We expressed our astonishment. Surely never was any one more unfit to do without constant attendance.

"They can send me to another hospital then," he maintained. "Some one has been *pass*ing remarks."

Pushing the question a little farther, we ascertained that "some one" was a Sister who had made a perfectly general statement that though in hospital they were sorry to see their patients go, they had to remember that every bed was wanted for another wounded man.

The observation had not been made to McRannock personally, nor was there the slightest evidence to prove that any thought of him had crossed the

Sister's mind. Quivering with hurt feeling, he wagged an obstinate head.

"I'm not blamin' her. I've been nine months in the place. It's not their fault if I'm no better. I'll not put up with any such *pass*ing of remarks. I'll keep no wounded man out of my bed."

He had been our most faithful visitor. He wept freely when he said good-bye. For he got his way, and go he did.

Excellent little McRannock! He was distinctly what Edward Lear would have dubbed "a Quangle." He assumed certain rights in view of his long residence at the hospital, marshalling and rebuking, and sometimes bullying the other men, which they accepted with the utmost good humour; the only retaliation being an occasional hiding of his slippers and substitution of a ragged pair; which mild practical joke never failed to put him into rages which convulsed the ward.

In looks as in character he was not unlike one of these long-faced, short-legged Aberdeen terriers; serious, conscientious dogs that take umbrage at a look, will not endure a cross word, and nurse their hurt feelings under beds and sofas, to the distraction of their adoring owners; little dogs that do not easily see a joke. Not demonstrative, McRannock's praise scarcely ever went beyond the moderate allowance that So-and-so was "a nice porson"; scarcely more enthusiastic than the "no that bad" of his neighbours across the border! But it meant a good deal from "Mac."

He called himself Irish, in spite of his name and characteristics, and many were the battles fought across the Sinn Fein flag, until the day when the little man discovered the difference between Sinn Feiner and Nationalist, when he changed his note. We have a vivid recollection of one sunny afternoon on the terrace here when we sat between him and a comrade, and a violent dispute arose on the merits of French officers. Mac's opponent, a bright-eyed Cockney who would have made three of him, had opined that according to his experience they were not up to much. Mac, with less insular prejudice, took the opposite view, and, upon a smiling contradiction, suddenly burst into one of his explosions. He attempted to confound his opponent by a quotation from Napoleon: "Napoleon said—Napoleon said . . ." but he was too wrathful to produce it and had to fall back upon a reiterated "You've got to be said—you've got to be said" (turning to us): "He's got to be said. He's got to be said ——" and back again to the culprit, who remained imperturbably smiling, like a Newfoundland wagging his tail at the onslaught of a little terrier.

This cryptic remark, with which Mac went in, growling, to his tea, meant, we suppose, that inferior intellects must submit to instruction.

Fortunately, few of the many convalescents that have come and gone in small batches to the little house have got such sensitive feelings as dear little Mac, although we had some trouble with a South

African soldier whom the master of the house happened to meet casually in the village, snapshotting with much hilarity an equivocal group of damsels who were not at all to be described as "nice porsons." The poor lad, who was a kind of a giant, six foot four and a half and broad in proportion, with the soul and heart of a child, was nevertheless sufficiently sophisticated through his war experience to realize that he was in company he had better have avoided; and his conscience became so alarmingly and inconveniently active that he fled from us all for a fortnight and was only to be lured back by the most delicate and persevering advances. He presented himself at last between two comrades, scarlet in the face and trembling all over his huge frame, like a girl. He was not happy until he had got the whole story off his chest in a burst of confidence to that member of the household who, young as she is, is peculiarly the soldier's friend.

"Oah, Mees Castle, I so shamed: when your Papa he see me with those gurls—I know that, Mees Castle, ver' bad taste! No friends of mine, they catch me as I go by with my leetle camera. Oah, Mees Castle, what I feel when your Papa see me! Oah, I rush away! I say: never I speak to a gurl again. Now it is finish. Never no more can I go and 'ave tea with my naice friends. Oah! I feel ver' bad, Mees Castle."

Then his whole face becoming illuminated with a

radiant boyish smile: "Now I glad I come back. This naice place—so interesting. I write home, tell my old mother!"

Those whose experience has brought them in contact with South Africans must have received the same impressions as we have, of the extraordinary straightness, manliness and engaging unsophistication of their character. Of all the splendid phalanxes that have crossed the seas, none perhaps know better the nature of the enemy they have to fight. The Hun has unveiled the peculiar amiabilities of his disposition more thoroughly in German East Africa than anywhere else, and most of these men have seen things, perhaps even suffered things, almost beyond the power of the human brain to credit, much less to conceive. Some have been actually in the German service, and such are the best haters of all. One magnificent youth stood squaring his great chest, with flashing eyes, describing in his odd expressive Boer-English, the German officer on parade.

"Lady, we stood there before him in the sun—that sun of our country, blazing—and if a man lift a hand to his face to wipe away a fly—the flies, lady, swarming about us—I say, if a man lift a hand, or move an eyelid, the German strike him—strike me," he smote his outraged breast, "with the flat of his sword."

The Hun never made a greater mistake than in attempting to rule by brutality these strong, free-

spirited men. Should the Government commit the deliberate crime of giving back the hard-won territories to the hideous Teuton clutch, the Germans may exterminate the race ; they will never subdue it.

" If the German flag is to float again over the ground we have won with our blood," said Barnabus, the young Boer giant of whom I am speaking, " I pray that the ship that take me home, may go down in the great sea, that I may never see my land again ! "

And if this be the case with the Boers, what can be said of the natives who have fought against their dreadful masters ? South Africans will describe what they have seen of the reprisals meted out to such unfortunates as have fallen back into those relentless hands.

One young soldier—not a Dutchman this, but an English settler—has told us of his own disbelief in the stories of atrocities, and of the manner in which he discovered horrors even beyond rumour ; among others, how he himself dug up bodies of black men, who had been buried alive, tied four together.

There was yet another : an elderly man, of Irish parentage yet a thorough Afrikander, the spirit of the Veldt seemed to have sunk into his very bones. He spoke with such outlandish intonations that it required some practice to understand him. He had been all through the " German East " campaign,

and would sit smoking his strong Boer tobacco, slowly narrating his experiences; experiences wonderful enough in themselves and rendered still more singular by the personality of the speaker.

He had been also through the Boer War on the loyal side, and had had his farm burnt down by the British for strategic purposes—the labour of thirty years destroyed! With that balance of judgment and grasp of the situation which we have already spoken of as very characteristic of the fighting man—and which, in his case, belied Irish blood—he had made his sacrifice and accepted compensation with the utmost philosophy. He had rebuilt his farm and was in full tide of prosperity, boss of numberless flocks and Kaffirs, when the second call came; the call to join up with the honest old foe against an enemy recognized as that of the human race.

The story of the East African campaign would have thrilled the world if the echoes of it had not been lost in nearer reverberations. They thrilled us, such episodes as we heard from Afrikander lips. Never was there a campaign carried through to success with more audacity, heroism and wisdom against every conceivable difficulty of climate, ground and well-prepared enemy positions! General Smuts is the idol of his men, and well he might be. The Germans had thought themselves secure behind stretches of fever-poisoned jungle and waterless desert. No circle of Dante could be more appalling

than those forlorn regions through which the great leader brought his legions; whether it were the desolate sea-board, white with the accumulations of salt in the furnace heat, where the parched horses, seeing water, could not be kept back from plunging in to drink, and drank to torture and madness; or the seething swamps where fever clutched at the troopers like demon shapes as they went by, and winged things, more dangerous than Maxim bullets, swarmed about their heads. The Germans deliberately left the bodies of their miserable native victims unburied in order that the flies might spread pestilence. The account of how the water was brought to the force, agonized by thirst, is an epic in itself. The Hun had poisoned the wells and the men had strict orders not to touch a drop. The two or three boys, who, like the dumb animals, went crazy at the sight of the water and disobeyed, fell almost instantly into the convulsions of death.

Especially severe was the fighting for the possession of the great mountain which—our informant is once again a soldier-guest—was a birthday gift from Queen Victoria to the German Emperor.

"Just a little birthday present, all that big territory," says the South African, and there is some humour in the irony of his gaze, "*from Grandmamma*," "and we have to buy it back for the Empire in our blood."

Even our small experience of offering welcome to the disabled gives one a striking insight into

the vast movement that has drawn Greater England to defend the Mother Country. Besides South Africans, we see many Canadians and a few Australians. (A strange race this, umbrageous, proud, reserved, defiant creatures. You feel they look at you with the eye of the half-tamed, ready to resent a familiarity. Splendid fellows, they find more pleasure in the slaughter of the enemy than in the making of new friends. But once the amicable bond is knit, we can conceive no stauncher keeper of it.) Backwoodsmen, too, with something of an Indian wildness and furtiveness in their ways, and the sons of Irish settlers with the ineradicable Hibernian dream in their gaze. We had to a Christmas party a jovial black man from Jamaica, who was extremely popular among the others and affectionately addressed as " Blacky."

Nothing is more typical of the English soldier than his charming anxiety to help a comrade who seems to him in any way at a disadvantage.

" Pore chap ! It 'ud make your heart bleed," he will say of some limbless lad ; but to him encouragement is all of the cheeriest description.

" See you daunce ! What'll it be when you get your noo leg ? Leave us all behoind, you will ! "

Then there is the no less touching desire to bring out the talents of a companion.

" Awsk 'im to sing ! " a husky whisper will be breathed into your ear. " He's a fair treat, 'e is."

The artist is generally willing to oblige. He has

a simper of conscious power. On one never-to-be-forgotten occasion a square, red-faced, solemn, Lancashire youth stood up and sang, in the most raucous of voices with the minimum of tune, a long, strange ditty, narrating the tragic end of a soldier lad who shot his Colonel, by mistake for another officer, with a button off his coat.

"I thought to kill my Capting—
But I my Colonel slew—"

The pathos and injustice of being hanged for this mistake was the theme of the ballad:

"I 'aven't got a fawther
To plead my cause for me—"

It was delivered and listened to with the most perfect gravity on both sides, but the whole attitude was quite dispassionate and the enthusiasm purely artistic.

"It's a true tile," said one Tommy, wagging his head lugubriously. "They did 'ang the pore chap for his mistake, and it's forbidden to sing it in the Ormy."

"But he did mean to kill his Captain," we suggested. Our friend wagged his head again. It was a point of view that had not struck him before. There was something to be said from the military side, he conceded generously.

Another sure factor for success in the entertainment of soldiers, wounded or otherwise, is to allow them to help you in any little job you may have

on hand. Four stalwart jovial casualties volunteered to clean a whole collection of swords—displayed in our library—the rust on which they had lamented with great frankness and disapproval. They were provided with the necessary implements, and four happier, grimier men it would have been impossible to find in the whole British army, valid or invalided. So long as a single member of the quartette remained in the neighbourhood, it was a standing triumph to march the newcomer into the library and point out the splendid effect.

"Me and my pals polished them there swords! Bit of all right, ain't it? What yer say? Fine! it is fine, sonny! You should have seen the rust! Why, we couldn't tell what they was made of. Polished 'em, we did!"

They will carry pots up from the greenhouse for you; complacently regard earth stains on their blue coats. "Clean muck, I call that," said a Lancashire boy with satisfaction.

They will stand on either side of you as you plant, each pouring a different tale into your ear.

"There's not many parts of the globe I ain't familiar with; China, ye know, and Egypt. I'm very inte-rested in Mahommet, I am. I had a friend out there who was an Arab. Oh! a fine man he was, a good man! Seems to me Mahommet knew what he was about . . ."

"Give me old England! There ain't no place to beat old England, that's what I say! Drove a

motor-car I did, and took my governor through every bit of the South Downs. . . ."

It is a little difficult for the listener between these two fires of eloquence, for the smallest symptom of absorption in one or the other leads to an abrupt pause, the gaze of reproachful eyes, and much hurt feeling. In this case the traveller, a master mariner by trade, out-talked the Hampshire boy who could not believe in any beauty outside England. The latter retired into silence after the single bitter remark :

" That chap would talk for weeks and weeks. I can't get a word in edgeways."

He did talk ; but he was a very interesting personality, this master mariner who had an admiration for Mahommet, founded upon Arab friendships. He was the owner of an ancient stone house at Whitby, under the lea of the Abbey, which had been in his family for three hundred years. And every man of them from generation to generation had been a master mariner. His own seven sons were for the sea. He had a valiant wife who had had to fly her home with the youngest child in her arms when the bombardment of Whitby took the roof off the old dwelling. She was bringing up that family of English seamen as they should be brought up.

" There is always a stone of bread in the oven," the father told us. When he would bring his catch of fish in, fresh from the sea, she would be ready to

cook it. "Cod roast and braised with onions and sage, and the dripping from the Sunday beef!" Those little mariners will be fit for hard work when their sea-day dawns.

Yet the man with his strong home affection had the true wandering sailor blood in his veins. He had an intense desire to go to Rome; surveyed with intelligent interest the great engravings by Piranesi's master, Vasi, which adorn our hall, and was very anxious to know whether we, who had been there, could advise him as to the possibility of his earning for himself a winter's livelihood in the Eternal City.

"I wouldn't have the money, you see, to go there without I could work for my keep. But I wouldn't mind what it was! Many is the day I have sawn wood for my breakfast."

The spirit of adventure shone from his blue eyes; seaman's eyes, with the dream of great spaces in them, looking out far beyond the immediate vision.

Yet another, an Irish lad, will have no yearning but for his home in a back Glasgow street. A gas case, this, poisoned through and through with the abominable deadliness of the invention. His soft Irish eyes kept filling with tears at the thought of that return, while he assured us in his odd mixture of Hibernian and Glaswegian brogue, that he would be "a' richt the moment he could set to upon a cake of mither's baking."

These poor sufferers are quite unconscious of any pun when they describe their ailment as "Gasteritis." All would infinitely prefer the most serious wound, and indeed, with reason. There is, however, one comfort in inviting them to one's house; they are generally able, and with benefit to themselves, to partake of the something new "and tasty" which you set before them.

The hospital authorities have learnt that anything in the way of dieting is quite useless, and that it is better for the patient to eat all he can, even with the certainty that little will be retained. One unfortunate child—he was scarcely more than a child—had seemingly been brought to the point of death by a week's relentless attacks of vomiting, when he partook at our table of tinned salmon, tinned pineapple, nuts, oranges and walnuts; the whole washed down by copious draughts of the strongest and sweetest tea. A week after he was hardly recognizable: "That there tea-party had done him such a world of good, he hadn't known himself since."

We would not take the responsibility of offering this example as a precedent; but only state a pleasant fact.

The truth is, that to be happy in entertaining those whom we all want to help and comfort, to make them happy, you must, for the once, turn your home into their home. Don't receive them as visitors. Above all, it cannot be too often

repeated, never let them see that you are accomplishing a duty with some effort to yourself. Let them loaf and talk and smoke as if they were in their own house, and be as interested in their condition and in their experiences as their own people might be. If they bring out of their pockets the bit of bone that was extricated last week from shoulder or thigh, examine it and, if necessary, handle it with a due amount of horrified excitement. You've got to bring yourself to the level of innocent and childlike minds with a good grace, remembering that you will never spring to the heights of unnamed heroism, sweet resignation, courage, modesty and endurance from which the very roughest and humblest can look down upon you. These men have found their souls, in a world which was sunk in the most sordid materialism. They have learnt, even those young blushing lads, that have not yet seen their twenties, secrets which it has taken saints and mystics a life-time of relentless sacrifice to glimpse.

As a soldier-poet, who has himself solved the ultimate riddle, expresses it: "These boys' minds" have looked on death, and seen "a slave, blustering and presumptuous"; they have known with full knowledge the

> "Something stronger than ourself moving in the dust of us,
> Something in the soul of man still too great to die."

Many are facing the thought of a return to danger

and suffering; to the death perhaps which they have just escaped. Many are facing the prospect of a life robbed of man's most cherished possession, his health and strength. Many poor mutilated boys will go back to be a burthen upon their own, so far as personal dependence is concerned, so long as their cheated years endure. You will not hear a complaint from their lips, you will not see a shadow on their faces. You must not, you dare not, pity. You must gather into your heart a huge debt of gratitude, expending it with love, and above all with faithfulness. Especially you must purge your mind of base thoughts of condescension. It is not you who honour when you receive the wounded soldier. It is your threshold that is honoured when he limps across it.

VI

The Soul of the Soldier

O loved, living, dying, heroic soldier,
All, all my joy, my grief, my love are thine!
Robert Nichols.

THAT the fighting man has a soul is a proposition which most people will admit—save those who do not believe in anything beyond the material world. There are such unfortunates; but fewer now, we think, since the power of the spirit has been shown forth in awful revelation. They must be blind, indeed, those who won't see, and few can be bothered with the moles of humanity to-day.

But what is perhaps less understood is the special quality of the soldier's soul.

An abominable article in a noted weekly, in the second year of the war, declared, in so many words, that it was absurd to make a fuss about the admitted virtue of our wounded men in hospital, and to deduct therefrom a high appreciation of their character; "the moment they resume their civil life they will relapse into their original shapelessness like jelly poured out of a mould," said the writer.

Other people will tell you that all one admires so much, of patience, heroic resignation and sweet courage in our stricken lads is mere hypocrisy,

put on to please the visitor. This kind of pessimism is as unjustifiable as it is insidious. On the face of it, it is a point of view which only a common mind can entertain and a common mind acquiesce in.

There is nothing quite so sordid and cheap as the belittling of great things, and it is the sordid and cheap to whom it is a satisfaction. But one must want to drag down, to tarnish, very much indeed, to be satisfied with such arguments now.

When a man, not twenty-three, has to be segregated from his companions, because the gas-shell which deprived him of both his legs has poisoned him so thoroughly that he is covered, from the crown of his head down to those two terrible wounds, with an eruption to which weeping eczema is a joke, when this unfortunate remnant of humanity turns his poor eyes upon you out of the cotton-wool mask, dauntlessly, and murmurs in a voice so faint that it can hardly be heard, that he's " doing fine " —can any one outside a criminal lunatic asylum maintain that his courage is pose ?—that our friend, Edward—would we could give the full name to prove the illustration—is wearing a mask on his soul as well as on his face ?

" Oh ! they'll say anything to please a lady ! " It was one who ought to have known better, one whose position should have qualified him for knowledge as well as respect and tenderness, who made this remark to us.

What can one answer to such utterances when the unanswerable refutation fills nine out of every ten hospital beds in the country this moment?

"Is thine eye evil, because mine is good?"

The true quality of the soldier's soul is manifest in camp as unmistakably as in the dressing station, the ambulance, the field. It is not hidden under a bushel, it cannot be, in this great epoch of visitation: it shines for all to see. Nevertheless one may admit that it is less manifest in the camp, which is a demoralizing atmosphere even to the best, and where temptations of every kind are not only permitted, but condoned and encouraged. Yet a hundred examples from personal knowledge rise up to contradict us even as we write.

The senior Chaplain of a Canadian Camp close to us who understands his men, who has indeed been apostle and father among them, had a touching thought the other day. He suggested that the members of an out-going draft might like to write their petitions to be placed on the altar on which the great Sacrifice would be daily offered for them.

It has been our privilege to be shown some of these petitions which we found packed under the linen cloth, when we went to carry out our weekly task of dressing the altar. Nothing more poignant in pathos, in simplicity, in childlike faith, nothing more revelatory of the soldier's soul has ever come our way.

"I ask for the grace of a happy death."

This unsigned slip needs no comment. It was a Christian soldier, a crusader, who was going out to fight with that prayer on his lips.

Others are most intimately human, nearer the fount of earthly tears and hopes.

"*Bon Dieu,*" writes one French Canadian, "give me back to my family. They have such need of me. I have sometimes not appreciated their love (*mal compris leur amour*), I ask their pardon. May God bless my father, my mother, my sister, my brother."

To this real communication, this letter to the Almighty, was appended the signature. Another is still more anxious that his Divine Friend should make no mistake.

"*Mon Dieu*"—he too is French—"give me back to Canada. And bless my dear little friend (*ma bonne petite amie*) who is so good a Catholic, who prays so much for me. *Mon Dieu*, her name is Dorine—*Pardonne moi*" (sic) he concludes. Others contain supplications for the whole family, living and dead:

> "My God, bless my father,
> Bless my mother and restore her health.
> Bless my brother in France.
> Give rest to the soul of my Uncle John."

and so on. Their heartstrings are wound up in their own homes and one can, as it were, hear them cracking as they are drawn out, and the time

approaches—so certainly for some—of the final snapping.

A last quotation :

" 1. That I may come back from the war.

" 2. Heaven after death."

This gives a glimpse into a singular working of the spirit. One almost reads the poor lad's thought. If it is for his salvation he is ready for the dreaded sacrifice.

A distinguished preacher, touching a little while ago on the question of miracles at the front, cried in a burst of eloquence : " Miracles ! the hospitals are full of them. Go from bed to bed, sit beside these uncomplaining sufferers ! There are the miracles of to-day, miracles of resignation, of courage, of forgiveness, miracles of endurance, of unembittered patience. I tell you that the miracles that the grace of God is working in the souls of these men are as great as any the world has ever seen."

To come back to our friend Edward, whom we have instanced as an example of uncomplaining heroism. When he was carried into the hospital where we visited him, mutilated and disfigured, a Sister exclaimed upon an impulse of compassion, more foolish than kind : " Oh ! wouldn't you rather be dead ? "

" No, Sister," said the poor lad simply. " Life is sweet."

What of the soul that can make life sweet in such circumstances ? Edward has done it. He has

fought his way as dauntlessly back to what recovery is possible, as he once fought his way over the German lines. His presence is a radiance in the ward, where now, his torturing eczema cured, he has been admitted among the boys.

" Dear friend," he writes, " I must tell you. My new legs have come. I am to try them to-morrow. —Your happy Edward."

These are the temporary legs issued instead of crutches, and even for his buoyant spirit it was a disappointment to find they had no feet.

" It's not that I can't walk on them, ye see, but when I look down and there isn't any feet, it comes over me like," he explains wistfully. " I'd be all right if I didn't look down."

This confidence had to be taken with due lightness, for it would have been a cruel weakness to let the dear brave boy see how one's heart was wrung over him. Such a splendid bit of youth and manhood laid waste ! A great handsome lad he must have been.

He has a shattered arm as well, and even now the wounds keep breaking out. He was asleep in his dug-out when the shell came, with his arm flung across his breast.

" Wasn't it lucky ? " he says. " That saved my life."

" Am I not lucky ? " he says too, " to have kept my knee one side ; it makes such a difference."

On another count he thinks there has been great

luck about his disaster, and as this shows what stuff our soldiers are made of, better than volumes, it must be set down here.

"I keep thinking," he says, "times and again, wasn't it a bit of luck I should have been alone in the dug-out when that there shell came over? If there had been any other fellows, they might have been hit, d'ye see? Ah! that was a bit of luck!"

This unconscious revelation of a noble mind leaves one speechless.

Before we quit the subject of Edward, a word about the Orderly who nursed him so faithfully in the isolation hut must not be omitted. A delightful little man, prevented by heart complaint from active service, he had succeeded after eleven efforts in getting admitted to the R.A.M.C. He gives a humorous account of his abortive attempts to become a gunner.

"They began to know me a bit too well at Notting 'Ill, they did. So I thought I'd give them a chainge. Shifted to another place, but there, it wasn't a bit o' good. Spotted me 'eart straight off——"

He nursed Edward with the tenderness of a mother, a delicacy of feeling and a strength of mind which must enormously have contributed to the lad's recovery.

When the day came for his charge's removal to the general ward, Johnson was troubled. To her who is the friend of both he confided his misgivings.

"In a way I'm glad. It'll do him good to be with the others; kind of braice and cheer 'im, but in a way I carn't rest thinking of it. I kep' 'im so noice these six months. 'E moight 'ear a bad word. I wouldn't loike 'im to be hearing bad words. 'Im that's got a soul like 'e 'as, that good and pure."

It was in a hospital much nearer us that we came across the little martyr Goodwin, who, with a hundred and twenty gunshot wounds, had lost one arm and still had a bit of shrapnel lodged in his thigh so dangerously near the femoral artery that the authorities neither dared remove it, nor allow him out unattended.

Our first sight of him was after a fruitless operation. He was lying more dead than alive in his cot, but he revived sufficiently to murmur to the visitor bending in helpless pity over him: "There's a lot worse nor me. I ought to be very thankful."

This wonderful child has since been through the most terrible ordeals. The other bits of shrapnel having worked into stomach and kidneys he has had to be operated upon something like fifteen times. After the last operation no one but himself had the least hope of his recovery.

He has given us a vivid description of the experience.

"When I opened my eyes, what should I see but my own people about me. Father and mother and sisters, ye know. You should have seen their

faces! Many a time since, I've 'ad a good laugh when I think of it! 'What are you looking like that for?' I says to them. 'I ain't going to die! Don't you think it!' And so I says to the doctor when he comes and lays his head on my chest to see if I'm breathing still. Must 'ave looked pretty bad, I dare say, for that's wot 'e did twice a day when he came round. 'No! I ain't dead,' I'd tell him, 'nor mean to!'"

On one occasion after placing our gift of cigarettes on his counterpane we offered to strike a match for him.

"No, thank you; even if it takes me a bit longer, I'd rather do it with my one 'and. I've got to learn to make myself independent, and I can't begin too soon."

It is in this fine spirit they face life. In no less fine spirit do they prepare themselves for death.

"I'm ready for whatever He wills," says a Wesleyan lad, incredibly wasted by a disease which it is feared must be fatal. He lifts his large eyes earnestly as he speaks. "Whatever's the will of God will be right. He can cure me if He will," he goes on wistfully, "I know that, but," he adds firmly in his Northumbrian burr, "I wouldn't complain whatever it was. We moost submit."

No less beautiful, no less touching are the prodigals; those poor lost sheep of whom Donald Hankey writes with such insight and tenderness!

"They were lost, sure enough. And then came

the Lord, and they were found. . . . Once more He has called to the lost sheep to follow the Good Shepherd along the thorny path of suffering and death. As of old He has demanded of them their all. And as of old He has not called in vain."

Very many there are of these. It takes but a word, a kind look, to make them open their burdened hearts.

When the soldier goes back to God, he goes with a thoroughness, a humility that brings him, one feels, with a leap into the Divine arms.

"I wasn't always the good man I am now," says a pathetic old scoundrel who nearly lost his foot through frost-bite; he has had a long slow awakening to the profitlessness of a bad life. "Used to drink I was; never go to church on a Sunday morning, but into a public-'ouse! What do you think of *that*? Pretty bad I was. If I'm spared back to the Missis and the kids I'll be different now, with the help of God."

Another Cockney, who had been self-confessedly a perfect heathen for seven years, came home to the faith of his fathers, not only without an effort, but with the joy that shows that the field was ripe to the harvest. One of the finest fighting men we have ever seen—and that is saying a great deal—he seems to have been in most important battles for the last two years. From beginning to end, whether in retreat or advance, his outlook has been indomitably the same. "We have them beat."

" We are ' giving them socks ' " ; to which he generally adds, with the admirable unrancorous spirit which peculiarly marks our British troops : " Pore chaps."

He regularly informs the " dere friend " who helped him to put himself straight with God, of the state of his soul. " You will be pleased to hear I have seen the priest."

Describing his sensations in a big attack he says : " I knew God would protect me, since I had been to my duties that morning and I was carrying Him in my breast."

Every chaplain knows that he has no more zealous worker than the erstwhile black sheep. Tom Burling is no exception to this rule, and narrates with glee how he set the Padre—going the rounds " to prepare the men," because he knew they were in for a " hot corner "—upon some comrades who had hitherto defied his ministrations. " We was all three lying in the dug-out when in he comes, me having told him the hour, and goes at them. I didn't let on, but made as if I was asleep. But they found me out after all, and says to me it was I done it. Only afterwards," he adds with a certain dry humour, " when the fighting begun they owns they was very glad."

Of the apostolic work of the soldier among his comrades there is no room to speak. We could multiply instances that would far outrun the limits of these pages. If the spectacle of their tenderness

to each other when it is a question of bodily disability is beautiful and pathetic, what can be said of their care for each others' souls?

"He'll feel a lot better when he's seen you, Father," says a determined blue-clad casualty, dragging a bashful companion by the hand. If the feet of this latter are recalcitrant, not so his heart, as is plain from his pleading eyes.

"Ain't seen the inside of 'is church for years, 'e ain't," a bandaged youth in bed will declare loudly to the visiting chaplain, jerking his thumb and winking elaborately at his next cot companion. "Just you 'ave two or three words with 'im, Father."

Far from those crystal souls is the least shadow of hypocrisy—of that *cafardism*, to coin a word—which is generally the bane of religious work among the civilians.

"I've led a bad life," some sadly hurt creature will say, in the words of old Whelan, lifting a glance as truthful as it is humbly penitent upon the visitor. "I'll be a better man if God spares me." Or it may be: "I wouldn't like you to be thinking too well of me. I've led a bad life, I 'ave, ever since I was fourteen. I'll be a different man if God spares me, I will that."

And, as far as the experience of the past three years shows, they keep their word.

There are many soldiers the friendship of whom we regard as nothing less than a privilege. If out of the evil of the war has sprung much good, not the

least, surely, is the insight it has given one class into the thoughts and feelings of another. We did not know the treasures of the English heart. We never guessed what minds these working men have ; their simple nobility shames our selfishness. The more we come to understand, the more we respect and esteem.

There is Jim Porter. We have no dearer friend in the fighting line than this artilleryman. "No. 1 on his gun." We first came across him, livid in his hospital bed, gasping in the agony of an attack of pleurisy, brought on by exposure during the ambulance traject, in bitter weather, from Aldershot to Hindhead, eight days after an operation for appendicitis. If any one thinks that these are hardships a patient need not be exposed to, he little knows the ways of the military hospital machine. Porter fortunately, however, had fallen into kind capable hands in his new refuge. He was well nursed. He recovered.

We brought him grapes. It was the beginning of our friendship.

The son of a Durham dairy-farmer, his heart is entirely wrapped up in the English country. The sight of a field of corn, a green slope, move him to a dream of ecstasy which he expresses—an educated, thinking man—in language direct, picturesque, artless, such as many an impressionist writer strives after in vain. He loves, with the passion of the worker on the soil, to see land cultivated;

nevertheless he stared over our waste moorlands with eyes wide with the fill of their beauty.

He came to stay a day and a night in that guest-room of the garden cottage which we keep ready for our soldier friends, and spent a whole summer afternoon on the moor, not just lazying in the hot sun but contemplating the wild beauty of the scene as earnestly as Thoreau himself might have done.

"What could I have wanted more?" he said, when we lamented not having some amusement for him.

To his reflective spirit is added, nevertheless, a body of intense activity. He helped the master of the Little House at a bit of garden work, and did more in the space of an hour than an ordinary labourer would have accomplished in a day.

His sensitive face and his hawk-like brown eye, which is full of extraordinary lights and flashes, would seem at first sight to be the index of a certain wildness, so that you have an impression of a soul like a free strong bird, that could not endure the slightest restraint, that has, indeed, wings quivering always for flight even while you look; you would never guess from the initial impression what a quiet balanced mind he has. If, as the Greeks say, measure in all things is the condition nearest perfection, then Jim Porter has attained the Greek ideal. Perhaps it is because he has the gift of a steady unquestioning faith. He too is a Wesleyan, and

many Wesleyans, we notice, have much of the fervour of their founder in them still.

Driving with us in a motor-car, the door, ill-fastened, swung suddenly open behind him, and had he been leaning against it he might have had a nasty accident.

"How dangerous!" we exclaimed.

He gave a quiet smile.

"Here, or at the front, does it make any difference?"

In one other soldier we have come across the same curious serenity. He was an Irishman and an R.C. We knew him as convalescent after a series of appalling wounds. In the Cambridge Hospital, Aldershot, where he lay many months in a desperate condition, undergoing critical operations, a fellow-sufferer of the next bed told us he was the marvel of the whole ward.

"There he'd lay, smiling—with death, ye'd think, on his face. Never a thought 'ud worry him beyond the one thing. 'Get me a priest!' The chaps couldn't get over him. A body 'ud think he wasn't as much as feeling the pain."

And yet for those who knew, as we did, that he had had three ribs removed, it could not but be realized that this pain must have been excruciating.

His placid strength of character was written on his countenance, and a handsome countenance it was, with chiselled features and clear deep-hued

far-away blue eyes. He was playing tennis before he left for furlough in Ireland, and hoped after that, with a determination in which there was not the slightest hint of bravado, to get back again to the front.

"I wouldn't like that at all," he said in his soft Irish way, when we suggested that with such wounds as his he must certainly be kept at home. "I'd like to finish my job."

With Corporal Byrne, as with Gunner Porter, one got a glimpse of an inner peace, which was, if one may so phrase it, like a brimmed cup, held by a steady hand; or yet like a mountain tarn on a summer's day, open to the sky, unshaken by ripple, unshadowed by cloud.

Whatever fate may hold for them, they will meet it with the front of the man who knows in Whom he puts his trust!

Such souls cannot but be rare, even among the hero ranks.

A chaplain told us of the impression made upon him by a man of this description to whom he ministered at a clearing station; desperately wounded in the stomach, the doctor pronounced the case hopeless and urged haste for the last rite. He would not allow him to be removed from the dressing station, believing that a few minutes must see the end.

"An immense big fellow," said the padre, describing the scene, "and I think, without exception,

the most beautiful lad I have ever laid eyes on. And all the while I was about him, he was smiling at me; I never saw such a thing; the sweetness and the calmness. And every one would turn to look at him—that smile in such a place in such circumstances. He lay as easy, one would have thought he was just preparing for sleep."

But it was not the long sleep that awaited this (surely) favoured soul. To the amazement of all, the man was found still alive in the morning in the corner where he had been put down to pass undisturbed to death. He was able to be moved, and in a base hospital made a good recovery.

This anecdote reminds us of the picture, given to us by another chaplain, a Canadian, of a day and night spent at Arras among his "boys" descriptive of his tragic and consoling labours.

The Germans had been shelling so heavily—drenching the town with gas-shells—that the troops lived chiefly in cellars and in the great white chalk caves, which date, we believe, from the times of Spanish Oppression. There was to be a "push" next day, and it was in a cave that the priest gathered about him those who wished to profit by the comforts of their religion before the attack.

"The place was so packed," he said, "that the men could not even kneel. I sat on a camp stool and spread my coat at my feet, and that was the Confessional. And all night the lads came up there, one after another. I have often thought,"

went on our friend—he has the countenance of a St. Stephen, which the sorrows of a most tender heart have prematurely aged, which the light of a child-like faith kindles as with an inner lamp—"I have often thought what a picture a painter might have made of it, with the candle light reflected on the sparkling snow-white of the walls and the faces of the boys, out of the shadows."

He was not able to say Mass for them. Time was short and the number too great; but in the dawn one after the other they all came, knelt in rows, and it was as much as he could do, with the help of another chaplain, to give each one, going forth to meet death, the Bread of Life.

"Then I lay down to rest a little," pursues the narrator, "and it might be about ten or eleven when I was called again. They were beginning to come back. And the first whom I reached, just before he died, was the young officer who had brought me ninety lads the night before Then there was another fellow, and he was just able to speak. 'Try and tell me, my poor lad,' I said as I bent over him, 'how long it is since you've been to the sacraments?' And he just looked up at me: 'This morning, Father.' Ah! well, well. When I had done with him I said to him: Could he give me a last message for his people. 'Tell them,' he says, 'I've had the priest.' And with that he was gone."

Were those poor bereaved, out in Canada, Irish, it is very likely that with the Celtic vision of the

supernatural, they may have felt as did the Irish woman of our household, who, on being told that one for whom she was praying had had the sacraments—by a miraculous intervention of Providence—before being fatally wounded, cried, striking her hands together: "Glory be to God! What is death now?"

A noble paraphrase of the inspired pæan: "O Grave, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?"

The spirit of a hospital ward, however, regards death itself as something of a weakness.

To be "down-'earted" is in its eyes the paltriest of conditions.

"Don't you be arskin' him 'ow he is!" the visitor will be told. "He thinks too much about himself, 'e does. It don't do 'im any good to be setting 'is mind a-working."

Now and again the comment on a cot companion who has failed to "come round" after the chloroform, is couched in a mixture of compassion, regret and contempt:

"I saw how it would be. He hadn't a bit of 'eart; let himself go, he did. I knew how it would be from the first."

Pity for a comrade is very active in a hospital, but if a man pities himself it is practically cut off at the main. The virility, common-sense and strong self-control of our men prevents the least display of maudlin sentiment or panic, which might

otherwise bring degeneration to the morale of a whole room.

Of the soul of the soldier in the field it does not become us to speak. Its manifestations fill columns of our papers; its splendours are stamped on the history of the world. Words are grotesquely inadequate; it is a banality to talk of heroes. One hesitates, one is afraid lest by feebly expressed enthusiasms one should seem to tarnish that fair fame—surely the adjective takes here a new and shining meaning!

There is nothing the men themselves hate more than sentimentality—slush. If you were tempted to use it towards them you would be requested, unless politeness forbade it, to "dry up." We have never seen a more disgusted row of faces than on one memorable occasion when an indiscreet—we fear a "slushy" lady—happened to address our soldier guests as "heroes all!" Six cigarettes were simultaneously removed from six mouths and twelve eyes glowered, under the most unanimous frown. Then the cigarettes were replaced and with the tact you expect from Tommy, conversation was started on the subject of the weather.

"Looks as if we might get a bit wet before we get 'ome across that 'ill, what you say?"

If they ever happen to mention any deed of valour it will be in the nature of a joke. The soldier, as we have found him, is as silent on his own deeds as he is on the horrors he may have witnessed.

The latter indeed—we speak only from personal experience—we have never heard touched upon; not from the lips of the most shattered shell-stricken lad of the lot!

You will hear moving tales of self-sacrifice, but only narrated in the most guileless unconsciousness.

"Was sent out of the trenches, with my legs swollen twice their size. It 'urt a bit, I can tell you," says our dear old ruffian with the frost-bite, chuckling reminiscently. "Ordered to take a noight's rest in the dug-out and report sick next morning. But there, the chap as was to go on gas-guard, 'stead of me, 'e was done! 'Never ye moind,' I says—pore feller!—'I'll maike shift for to-noight,' I says. 'You go to sleep,' I says, 'you wants it!' and I 'obbles back to my look-out. And my pore old foot it swoll on me something frightful, so I 'ad to take off my boot. That's 'ow I got the frost-bite on top o' two trench legs. My Gawd, that was a noight! I won't ferget it in a 'urry. And the rats; biggest rat I ever see—big as a cat it was—came and ran off with my bit of biscuit, and I couldn't move to get a holt of it, with me legs as they was, ye see. So I threw me mitten after it, and blimey! if it didn't come back and run away with me mitten too. The cheek of it! I 'ad to larf."

When the climax is reached and you are told that Tommy "'ad to laugh," you may be sure that it

is the point at which creatures of less enduring fibre would have broken down.

There was Sergeant Osbiston, a very Mercutio of lightheartedness, a quicksilver fellow, who had lost a leg from a shell in the town square at Ypres, and was fond of dancing jigs on his crutches in the kitchen, to make our good motherly cook scream with terror for his safety. He told us, his blue eyes snapping, how he was carried straight into a house and the doctor operated then and there without an anæsthetic.

" ' And now,' says he to me, ' I've made you all right.' ' All right! I like that,' I says, ' and you just taken off my leg! ' I couldn't 'elp but larf! "

And there was Corporal White, whose poor leg wouldn't heal. He is a Cockney of the Cockneys. " Larst time they took me down to that theayter the doctor says to me : ' My lad,' he says, ' you're making an 'abit of this! An 'abit,' he says! Laugh fit to bust I did. Noice gentleman he is! I do loike 'im."

Valiant as the French soldier is, the difference of race can upon no point be seen more clearly than in contrasting their attitude with that of our own men—Colonial or otherwise—where the splendours and terrors of war are concerned.

" *Pour la Patrie. Pour la France bien-aimée, les souffrances atroces sont acceptées.*" " My sacrifice is accepted beforehand," declaims the Frenchman. " I am proud to die in such a cause."

Your Englishman, whatever he thinks, will admit nothing more than that it's a bit of all right. The Frenchman speaks of his comrade as having gloriously fallen. The Englishman, in the poetic phrase borrowed from his Irish companions, tells you his pal has "gone west."

In a little collection of French sketches which came our way the other day we found this contrast amusingly drawn. A young Parisian, a liaison officer with an English brigade, describes a scene one evening after Mess. A certain Captain ——, newly arrived from England, expresses his melancholy at separation from his young wife. Instead of condoling with him the Colonel cuts him short by starting the gramophone, and a dreamy waltz rolls out. This is too much for the fond husband's over-charged feelings, and he dashes out of the barn. The Frenchman is himself most sympathetically moved; he is amazed when, with one accord, the rest of the company exclaim: "Silly Ass!"

VII

Mother

And she will meet him as an honourable mother: . . . With the bread of life and understanding, she shall feed him: and give him the water of wholesome wisdom to drink. And she shall be made strong in him: and he shall not be moved.

Book of Wisdom.

THE Canadian chaplain sat in the Confessional of the little half-ruined church, waiting. He had been there many hours, and the fatherly heart he bore in his young man's breast for "the boys," had been gratified by a faithful attendance at the sacred tribunal of penance. Row after row of khaki-clad figures had followed each other; each simple-hearted lad had humbly told his tale of sin—in some instances hardly that, hardly more than the inevitable human lapse,—made his happy prayer of peace and thankfulness and tramped out, sure of safety whatever happened.

The devastated place was empty save for the waiting priest and one kneeling figure before the sanctuary, and it was late, well on for ten o'clock. The chaplain had been there since three, but still he sat there in patience.

" Maybe," he thought (in his own words), " he has a little bit of a difficulty in making up his mind. I won't hurry him."

At last the vigil stretched unduly. The priest had to eat before the brief night of rest. The first Mass would be at five o'clock. He got up and went over to the still motionless form. The light of the sanctuary lamp then revealed that the man had grey hair. The priest tapped him on the shoulder.

" Do you want to come to Confession ? "

The other leaped up, showing a lined and ravaged face.

" No."

" That's all right," said the priest soothingly, for the glance flung upon him was wild.

He genuflected and turned to leave the church. The soldier followed him and caught him up in the broken porch.

" Don't you want to speak to me, Father ? "

The chaplain turned. To be always ready with the means of grace without ever uselessly obtruding them, is the secret of his work.

" Why, certainly."

The soldier took a step nearer. They were but voices now to each other, but the priest had not forgotten the vision of the haunted face and the desperate eyes.

" For thirty years," the words broke from an overcharged heart, " I have been trying to do without God."

" Is that so, and how did you get on ? "

The C.F. is accustomed to strange confidences. He may have a murderer at his feet ; and the next instant a child who has never lost his baptismal innocence, who confesses it may be that he has not said his night prayers because he was up till dawn on outpost duty.

" How did you get on ? "

" Oh ! very badly, Father, very badly——"

" I was thinking as much ! "

" I've been—I can never tell you what I've been. There has never been any one so bad ! "

" Maybe, now, not so bad as all that. Come, the night is clear, we'll take a turn up and down here together, and you'll ease yourself by telling me what's on your mind. If you've done murder——"

" Good Lord, Father, not so bad as that ! "

" Well, well, well ! What did I tell you ? There have been worse men than you after all ! "

" Oh, but Father—there's other things——"

Shoulder to shoulder they went out into the night, tramping backwards and forwards through the lightning and thunder of the guns, for they were on the very edge of the forward zone. The grey-haired soldier unburdened his soul to the man who was young enough to be his son, but who by virtue of his holy office was here as his father.

When a long and tragic story had been finished, the priest said—

"Come back into the chapel with me now, and just repeat what you have told me, in the Confessional, and I'll give you absolution; and it'll be all wiped away, done with!"

"Oh, Father, oh, Father!" stammered the man.

"He was," said the priest, when he told us the touching incident, "like one beside himself with joy."

When the ceremony had been accomplished, the chaplain said: "Go up to the altar, kneel down where you were just now, before the little red light, and I'll give you Communion." The Communion of Viaticum; for the boys were going up the line next day, and it was safer not to delay.

"The look on his face, when I saw the light on it again," said the priest, "you wouldn't have known it for the same!"

"There must have been some one praying for you very much," the chaplain said to the penitent, as they once more passed out of the chapel together under the open sky.

"Ah, Father—the best mother ever a man had!"

"And day after day," says our friend, "the poor fellow came back into the little chapel, and he'd kneel there, praying, hours together, with the look—well, 'pon me word, it's true,—the look of rapture in his eyes. 'Tell any one ye like about me, Father, tell them everything'—that's what he said to me. 'I'd like those as it might do good to, to know the way God's dealt with me!'"

"*The best mother ever a man had!*" When the boy who has been a bit of a black sheep comes wistfully back into the fold, you are pretty sure to hit the nail when you say to him: "Some one's been praying for you." And in nine cases out of ten the answer will come: "It's my mother."

During one of our hospital visits this summer an orderly came tearing down to the ward in which we were, crying out that an "R.C. case" was bleeding to death upstairs and would any one get the priest.

By a coincidence, surely providential, the priest was actually in the hospital at the time and, within a very few minutes, was able to minister to the apparently dying lad. Shriven and anointed, we found this latter presently, lying, more like death than life, with the crucifix we gave him between his hands; singularly peaceful in spite of the ghastly symptoms of his mortal danger, which were not yet arrested.

Enlisted at seventeen, he had drifted away from his faith and its practices for the two years of his military career. "I've been neglectin' meself," he whispered, "but me mother's praying for me."

Volumes could not express his soul's drama more clearly than this simple phrase.

Neither doctor nor nurses gave the smallest hope of little McStravich's recovery, and when we left him, we felt oppressed with the sadness of it all, in spite of the immense consolation that had been vouchsafed. Next week, however, when we came

back to the hospital he was sitting propped up with pillows, and turned his pretty girlish face with a radiant smile upon us. And from beside his bed there rose up, curtseying, a small cloaked figure. The toil-worn wrinkled face, the banded grey hair, seemed to belong to one too old to claim as son the little soldier in the bed. Nevertheless, " me mother " it was. Summoned by the kindly hospital authorities, she had made the perilous journey to what she believed was her child's deathbed, and found him recovering.

" Glory be to God, he'll do fine now ! "

There was something almost miraculous about the " good turn " McStravich took, against all probabilities. One is tempted to think that the mother's prayers had obtained healing both for soul and body.

The scent of the turf was all about her ; she was a strange sight in the scrubbed, sophisticated, marshalled English hospital, the soft-voiced, soft-eyed old Irishwoman, blown hither, one may say, from her cabin door on the wind of her great love. It seemed to be with her still, that Irish wind, and its sad strong mild air was in our nostrils as we listened to her.

She wrung her knotted hands, she flung back the wings of her great Hibernian cloak—the cloak that had perhaps been hergran dmother's—with a pleated hood to draw over her head for " the thravelling " (we are sure that head had never worn anything more

modern), she dragged from her capacious pocket the clinking rosary of stone beads (they too must have been an heirloom, for we have never seen anything like them, strung together on a string, with no spacing, only a big bead to mark the Paters), and, clasping it, between tears and smiles she poured out her tale.

Wasn't this the little *bye* she loved better than any of them, and didn't he break her heart by enlisting on her and him not seventeen? Och and och, and him writing home to her all about the grand place England was, and her knowing how the wildness had come on him, and her getting out of bed in the middle of the night and praying for the soul of him on these very beads! Och and och, and how could she ever be grateful enough, and wasn't it Our Blessed Lady done it? But, Ochone and Wirrasthrue, how could she ever forget when the telegram come to her! And what'll I do at all? didn't she cry to herself. And she could never say what way she was, with the power all gone out of her!

"An' didn't His Rivirince come in on me an' he took me by the arm an' shook me, an' says he to me: 'What's the use of you going on this way, Mrs. McStravich? Pull yourself together, woman,' he says; 'what manner of good will ye be to him at all, when you get across the say?'

"An' if it hadn't been for *himself*," the mother goes on, "I never could have got across the say at

all, only for him telling me every minute: 'Ye'll find the little bye alive!' Yes, himself had said that all the time, and hadn't it been thrue for him!"

"Himself" meanwhile sat dumb, motionless, expressionless, like a small statue rather indifferently carved in wood on the other side of the invalid's bed. He wore a stiff suit of madder-brown tweed and a black pot-hat; this last, apparently, an almost religious badge of respectability. No one, to look at him, would have imagined that he could have proved a prop and comfort upon such a traject of agony, as, by his wife's testimony, he had been to her; but there was no doubt that all three were thoroughly content with each other, that August day in the hospital ward.

"I'm off back to-morrow," said Mrs. McStravich, "an' it'll be no time before I have me little bye home again, an' him that's going to be different now altogether, please God."

She turns her mother eyes on him, quivering between those smiles and tears, and he smiles back at her with the most "good-child" expression.

All Mrs. McStravich's confident prophecies have been fulfilled. James's wonderful recovery continued; he was sent back to Ireland and placed in a sanatorium, from which he was soon discharged with the most favourable report. He wrote to one of us the other day that he was going to send his "potho," and that he would like some "cigrattes."

The letter concluded: "I am glad to say I am a good bye, and I remin, your loving frend, James."

Few hospital stories end so happily, though they are often stories of love, beautiful still in tragedy.

Out under the trees on one blazing day this summer we found about a dozen beds, containing some of the worst cases in the hospital. (It is an excellent custom in the hospital and helps to recovery in every way.) Here were, side by side, in their cots, two solemn boys in their teens—one very wan and sad indeed. The cause of his sadness is presently explained by the other.

"Poor chap, he's lost his leg and he dunno how to tell his mother."

"I'm going to tell her I'm quite well," says the white-faced boy, flushing.

"You ain't no right to do that," responds the wise companion, who, shot through the lungs and paralysed in both arms, seems the more dangerously wounded of the two. "You tell him" (addressing the visitor, while the gravity that marks him grows yet deeper). "Tell him it'll be worse for her in the end. Tell him he ain't no call to be telling her anything but the truth. You write and tell her they've took off your leg, sonnie, and you can say, you know, you're doin' fine."

Sonnie was supposed to be doing fine; but the sister in charge, a woman of most splendid courage and capacity, who nearly always gets the bad

cases, shook her head over his wounds. Terrible they were, she said, though she hoped with the rest that "now he would do"; it was obviously with a lingering doubt.

He was the sweetest child, she declared, she had ever had in the ward, and that was saying a great deal. He never complained.

Well, he wrote to mother, and mother came; and it was then apparent that he had a family to whom he was as the light of their eyes. They had a happy meeting and little Reilly seemed to be justifying medical optimism. Mother went back to her northern home, reassured. However she might have mourned over her boy's mutilation, the joy of the thought that she had him at all superabounded.

But one night the dreaded "secondary hæmorrhage" came on, and, as a strange fatality would have it, it was the very night that the head sister was off duty. The nurse left in charge failed to realize the danger of the situation. When the surgeon was roused it was too late. The child died as he had lived, gentle and uncomplaining to the end; holding his crucifix. One of the nurses asked him—we are sure "his own Sister" would not have made this blunder—whether there was any special young lady for whom she could take a farewell message.

Reilly lifted his soft gaze, surprised.

"No—only Mother!"

He asked to have prayers read to him out of his

little book; the last words on his lips were "Jesus —Mary."

All the nurses and sisters cried their eyes out for him. The mother wrote: "I am no scholar, I don't know how to thank you for your kindness to my darling son. It is very hard to think he should be taken in the bloom of his youth, but God's will be done."

The boy who was shot through the lungs has made a good recovery. Thus one is taken and the other left.

Not infrequently the title "Mother" is given to the hard-working wife. You may often see a care-worn stout woman beside the cot of a man who looks young enough to be her son, but of whom she is nevertheless the much-cherished spouse. We do not here wish to touch upon one of the saddest aspects of the war: the flighty wife, the creature who has profited of the moment of her husband's danger and the opportunity of her own independence and affluence, to betray his honour and wreck his home. There are only too many of such instances all about us, but we have never, thank God! come across any in our hospital rounds. The nearest approach to it, perhaps, was in the case of a stalwart middle-aged Irishman who, about to undergo an operation on a shattered arm, seemed much troubled in his mind at the thought of his wife and family in Dublin should he not "come out of it." Words of encouragement, the comforting assurances of the

very small percentage of "accidents," failed to lift the cloud.

"I'm thinking you'd be so kind as to write her a letter about me, herself that's at home," said Sergeant Kelly tentatively.

"I will certainly. I'll make the Sister send me a postcard to-morrow, and the moment I get the news I'll write to your wife at once and tell her you're over the operation and that she needn't have any more anxiety about you."

But the gloom remains immutable; it is clear that we are still far from the root of the matter. The truth has to come out. It is indeed blurted out.

"Well, this is the way of it, ye see. She's too fond of a drop—and I do be lying awake at night thinking of it, not knowing how it would be for the two boys, and meself not there to be looking after them. Now, if ye'll write to her——" he breaks off.

We are willing, but doubtful. Oh, yes, we'll gladly write. What shall we say?

"You wouldn't be saying what I've just been mentioning to you!" he cries in scandalized tones. We hasten to disclaim, equally scandalized. Of course not.

"No," he goes on, marking each word on the bed with a thump of his sound hand. "No!—ye'll write to her and ye'll just say, 'Mind yourself, Mrs. Kelly,' says you—'mind yourself!'"

The reverse of this story was presented by O'Grady; this individual was not popular in the hospital, where he was described, with a contemptuous down-drawing of the lips, as "soft"; the real fact, as we afterwards discovered, being that the man's nerves had been destroyed by drink. He was given to fits of whimpering depression, in which he would declare that he was very bad, so he was; that he wasn't getting on at all, at all; that he'd never have the use of his limbs again; that he doubted, indeed, whether he wasn't done for out and out! Shot through the elbow of his right arm, he had not been able to communicate with his wife and we undertook to write for him to her. A bright, sensible, sturdy body she seems to be, if one can judge by correspondence.

"Dere Miss"—orthography is not our strong point—"I am truly graitful to know John is better, and I take it very kind of you to rite. I am afeard he was very bad from the letters them fellers wrote."

John's improvement continued, one cannot say briskly, but indisputably, in spite of his own dolorous reluctance to admit it. Our interchange of letters with Mrs. O'Grady, on the other hand, became increasingly active and to the point.

"I'd take it very kind of you, dere Miss," she wrote, "to let me know whether them fellers would be bringing John in any drink, for I wouldn't like him to be having that."

"Dear Mrs. O'Grady," we wrote back, "it is

quite impossible for John to have anything in the way of drink brought to him in the hospital. The danger is what is likely to happen afterwards."

"Dere Miss," responded Mrs. O'Grady by return of post, "it wouldn't do to let on to John, and he'd be a very good husbin without them fellers getting hold of him. I'm afeard of they getting hold of him when he comes home. I do be praying night and morning he may be got to give it up, out and out, for it's the horror I have of the drink."

"Dear Mrs. O'Grady, how would it be if we got John to take the pledge?"

"Dere Miss, it ud be the grandest thing in the whole world, and it's the gratful heart I'd have to you all me life, if only John could be got to consent, but it's you have the tac, I'm sure."

Here we passed from words to deeds. The young Irish chaplain was rather bashful when requested to broach the subject to his penitent, so the visitor undertook the preliminaries. It, after all, only required what Mrs. O'Grady herself called "tac."

"You're doing very well now, Mr. O'Grady, aren't you?" Even the gloomy John had to concede the truth of this statement.

"But, you know," pursued the apostle of temperance, unmasking her batteries ruthlessly, "you never would have been so bad if it hadn't been for the drink."

John dropped his head without an attempt at self-defence.

"It's a quare thing now," he remarked after a pause, "ye'd never believe it," he lowered his voice to a whisper. "The docthor, he was saying to me, says he, 'I could tell by the look of these wounds the moment I laid eyes on your leg,' says he, —'your leg *and* your arm,' says he—'that you'd not been altogether a timperate man.' It seems a quare thing, but that's what he said."

The visitor was enchanted to have hit the mark so squarely, with what was after all a fluke shot.

"Aren't you feeling different since you've had to give it up?"—she pursued her advantage.

The Irishman, after the custom of his country, gave an oblique admission. He wouldn't be saying that he wasn't.

"What a pity it would be if you were ever to fall away now! You would be having your wound inflamed again, that is quite certain. And then there's another thing—how pleased and surprised your wife would be if you could tell her when you came home that you'd taken the pledge!"

The great word was launched. O'Grady received it, much as the turkey described by Pet Marjorie took her bereavement, with "surprising cam and didn't say one single dam." He only drooped his long nose a little more and agreed in a weak voice, "Maybe it would!"

On our next visit we found John suffused with the radiance of conscious virtue, sitting on the side of his bed dressed for the first time; while perched

on the edge of an empty cot next to him, the young chaplain jocosely and triumphantly bantered him.

"Look at him now! Would ye know him for the same man? Look at the colour on his cheeks. He's well. I tell you, he's well. And what is it due to? You know what it's due to, O'Grady. It's the advertisement for total abstinence he is! Look at me fine fellow!"

John sat, blushing heavily, a broad smile on his countenance, turned sideways with a coyness that was almost maidenly.

He has gone back to his wife, and she has written that he's delighted with himself for being alive at all, and that as for the other thing—she thus draws a veil of wifely reserve across the delicate topic—she "has the best of hopes, and she never can be grattiful enough!"

We too have the best of hopes; but John's conversion was conducted with such slippery ease that we have a few doubts too. We fear that he will be best described in the native idiom as a "sawney."

A very different stamp of soldier was the Canadian, by whose bed we stopped on our last visiting day. Full of compassion we were when we saw that the poor boy, a noble-looking fellow with the clear-cut chiselled face that one meets with so often in the lads from overseas, had his right arm in an iron extension—an instrument no doubt of use for the

stretching of contracted muscles, nevertheless, as well we know, an instrument of torture.

"Oh," we exclaimed, "we are sorry for you!"

He smiled. There was suffering on that handsome countenance, but there was great placidity too.

"Oh no, don't pity me. I'm a very lucky fellow. I've been wonderfully preserved. I've escaped easy, and I'm grateful."

"Some one's been praying for you."

The old phrase comes of itself at such a moment.

He smiled still more happily, but with a mist over those clear uplifted eyes.

"Some one's been praying for me. That's so."

"Your mother?"

"No," his smile has a radiance now. "My angel wife!"

VIII

The Good Physician

With us there was a doctour of phisyk,
In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk . . .
He knew the cawse of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste or drye,
And where engendered and of what humour;
He was a verry parfit practisonr.

Chaucer.

HE was widely known as the Wizard, because his skill was as incomparable as his diagnosis was unerring. We called him seraph and saint because of the unstinting loving-kindness which accompanied all his ministrations. Perhaps the best name to give him is the simple title that has come down to us from St. Luke—The Good Physician.

Every one knows what a nightmare illness means to most nervous mothers of an only child. No more convincing testimony can be given to the memory of our kind old friend than to say that he robbed life of half its terrors for one of them. The mere thought that it was possible to obtain his advice; that at the hint of danger a summons would bring him hurrying to our doorstep, always on foot

(and thereby hangs a tale) in all weathers, even when he was ill himself—for if he was able to move at all his indomitable spirit would carry him whither he was wanted—was sufficient to sustain courage.

He went on foot : for shortly after we first knew him, he gave up his professional brougham ; and later on, even the assistance of a stray cab or taxi ; the reason being that he had more to spend on the very poor. It is certain that he had in this the eccentricity of a saint, for the little old man was at the very top of his profession and could, if he had chosen, have raked in the guineas as freely as any of his pompous Harley Street confrères. But he was in his soul a lover of poverty, and no earthly persuasion would induce him to accept more than the ridiculous fee he had determined for himself : ten shillings a consultation. If handed a couple of guineas by a new patient, he would elaborately count back the change ; and if the visitor was tactless enough to insist, a severe look over the spectacles would accompany the words, as severely uttered : " I prefer it."

The natural consequence of this austerity was that he was obliged to restrict the number of his patients, and we were among the fortunate few who enjoyed the advantages of his genius to the last. He was ninety-one when he died ; and then, in spite of many long and severe illnesses, his death was the beautiful and natural passage of the soul

from the worn-out body. To the last breath his intellect burned clear as a flame.

Another peculiarity of his was the length of his visits; yet it was not from love of gossip or any natural garrulity that he lingered, chatting or silent, almost an hour sometimes, beside a patient's bed.

"I cannot," he said to us once, in his quaint Early Victorian speech, "decide upon a case in five minutes, with a glance at the tongue, a taking of the pulse. I have to study. I have to collect impressions. There is much to be learnt from a look of the eye, the expression of the countenance; often there is a little emotion when the doctor comes into the room and the patient becomes lively, excited, with colour in the cheek and brightness in the gaze. This after a while subsides, and it is only by quiet watching that the physician can judge of the real hold which the malady has got upon the system."

Some one once asked him how it was that his diagnosis was so marvellous. He was accused, we believe, of something uncanny — of second sight. He scoffed the idea to scorn.

"There is no mystery, I assure you. If my diagnosis is better than other people's, it is because I never judge from one symptom only."

This theory he, on after occasions, expounded to us at some length. If there was one thing for which he had the most scathing contempt, it was for what he called "hospital treatment."

" These fellows, they find a symptom—one symptom !—it is enough for them. Such and such a symptom ; such and such an illness ; such and such a drug. In nine cases out of ten the symptom proceeds from a different cause. The drug is harmful. The patient gets worse, he dies. The illness that has been written up over his bed is put down as the cause of his death, to the satisfaction of all concerned, save, indeed, the poor fellow himself, and he can make no protest. The young doctor finishes his training and brings the methods of the hospital into private practice. It never dawns upon him to discriminate between symptom and disease. Why —certain conditions of ill-health may produce the symptoms of ten different maladies, without any of them being actually present ! When I am called in to a case I collate every symptom, even the most trifling detail. I weigh one against the other. I balance contingencies. I reject contradictions. It is, then, no such difficult matter to arrive at the correct diagnosis ; but it takes time."

Then, dear old man, he would laugh down his nose, after a fashion he had, and declare that the world took him for " a most chattering fellow."

The world, being proverbially a rather short-sighted idiot, may have done so, but any one who had a spark of his own power of luminous observation might have noted, while he sat discoursing on a hundred topics by the bedside, the extraordinary depth and gravity of the gaze fixed watchfully on the sufferer.

As an illustration of his methods, we may here set down one of the many incidents that came within our own experience of him.

A poor girl, a lady's-maid, was sent back to her people in London from a sanatorium near Nice, with the report that she was too far gone in tuberculosis to be treated with any hope of recovery. She came home then to die. Her emaciation and weakness were so extreme that it seemed the end could not be far off. Hearing a piteous account of the mother's distress, we suggested that our doctor might be of a little help and comfort, at least in giving relief where there seemed to be so much suffering. Aware of his unbounded charity, we did not hesitate to request him to call, nor were we disappointed.

"I will go round to-night."

We have never known him delay when it was a case of the poor.

On his next visit to us he announced cheerfully: "That poor girl! I went to see her. She is very ill; but she will recover. It is not consumption. It is a severe case of gastritis. She is dying of inanition. With care and diet she will recover."

The girl did recover, so thoroughly and completely, that she resumed her ordinary life and started work as a dressmaker, her mother not wishing to part from her again. About a year after the first attack, however, she had a recurrence, not of a very serious character, of the complaint; probably

brought on by some imprudence in diet, or by a chill. Her family, instead of again seeking the advice of the wise physician who had saved her life, brought her to a celebrated hospital, where she was instantly admitted ; to be operated upon the next day. Her temperature ran up to 107 on the night of the operation ; and she died on the following morning. The parents were told that the operation had been " exploratory."

When we heard what had happened the child was already buried ! At first we could not understand why we should not have been told in time to request out dear old friend, once again, to exercise his charity and his skill ; but we were young then in the ways of the ignorant poor. The parents thought he had not understood the case. A certain hurt feeling had arisen in their minds : that a complaint which was regarded as mortal by one section of the faculty should have been placed in the less interesting rank of curable by another . . . an old gentleman, too, who came humbly on foot, quite late at night, who stayed a long time and seemed as anxious about a little seamstress as if she had been a duchess ! He had not understood the case. St. Expeditus's Hospital had ; there they had said she never could have recovered, even after " exploration."

" I would have gone to her," said the beloved physician, more distressed than surprised, " any moment of the day or night."

It may be noted that the operation for gall-stones had just been initiated in the surgical world, and every enterprising young sawbones was eager to experiment. This was the reason, no doubt, why not even a couple of days' delay for diagnosis had been granted a patient who had come to the hospital by no means dangerously ill.

When "hospital treatment"—the plunging decision on the strength of a symptom—extends to the knife, the hospital becomes indeed a place of danger to poor humanity; and when the present craze for inoculation is added, it is not surprising that the tragedy described in Bernard Shaw's brilliant satire, "The Doctor's Dilemma," should be repeated again and again. We have known more than one soldier rushed out of life through injections of tuberculine in exactly the conditions described by the dramatist.

So long as the reckless ignorance of the young medico is allowed full play upon the helpless ignorance of the poor, our hospitals will continue to show an appalling percentage of unnecessary deaths.

The Wizard held the sound theory that there was no such thing as a slight operation; and he would tolerate no such extreme measure, unless a cure was unobtainable by treatment, time and patience. None was firmer than he when the ordeal had to be endured, but then he made sure that the conditions should all be perfect for the patient; and the surgeon a man of high character, like himself,

not keen on money or kudos, but solely on the recovery of the subject.

Any one who might imagine, perhaps, that here was an old-fashioned retrograde personality, preferring to dodder on in the safe tested ways, rather than risk a brilliant novelty, would be making a complete mistake. Never was a man more abreast, even ahead of the time than he was. The fame of his genius was so well established in the profession, that new inventions were sure to be forwarded first to him, for his approval, from most quarters of the civilized world. He had one method of dealing with innovations, which never varied. He immediately applied them to himself. Whether it was cocaine (of which he took a teaspoonful on its initial appearance and had, as he himself described it, "a glorious time"—the capricious drug having merely stimulated that already active brain to abnormal activity, never, he assured us, had he accomplished so much work as in those three sleepless nights that followed the experiment); whether it was a new form of anæsthetic (administered to himself by his assistant while he dictated to his wife every grade of sensation, until unconsciousness overcame him); or yet, again, remedies against germs; the newest ferments; concentrated foods —all were subjected to the trial *in corpore vile*, before being passed on or rejected. When it was suggested that this practice was fraught with great danger to himself, he laughed down his nose.

"And do you think I am going to allow any patient of mine to be subjected to a treatment of the effects of which I am not myself aware?"

He was so worn of body and so vast of spirit that, after all, the trial was hardly a fair one. Had it not been so it is not likely that for ninety-one years the earth would have had the privilege of his presence. He had had many illnesses; had been given up, after a hæmorrhage of the lungs, by the best opinion of his day when he was seventeen; an attack of blackwater fever in India, also in the youthful days, had left him a prey to influenza, which fell upon him year after year with the violence of a wild beast; several times his recovery was regarded as impossible. On one occasion the distinguished physician who had hurried to the bedside at the news of his colleague's dangerous condition, stood solemnly over him and said: "It is my duty to inform you that you are very ill, dear friend."

"I am quite aware of that," responded the other from his pillow.

His temperature had daily risen to 105, for a fortnight; he had watched with interest the vain efforts of others to lower it.

"In my opinion," pursued the practitioner sadly, "you will not get over it."

"Is that your opinion? It is not mine. And now that you have treated me—very ably, but unsuccessfully—I will, with your permission, prescribe for myself."

He prescribed for himself a dose of quinine, chlorine and phenacetine which appalled the Harley Street man, but the temperature fell that night, and the "good physician" was staggering about among his patients within a fortnight, giddy with weakness, but indomitable.

On yet another attack, the end seemed, to all about him, so imminent, that he was requested by his family to make certain legal arrangements which would benefit them after his death. He consented; but merely as a concession to their weakness of mind.

"You all think I am going to die. I am not going to die," he coldly stated, after he had signed the deed in question. "When I am going to die, I will myself inform you of the fact."

He was about eighty at the time; and lived nearly twelve years afterwards.

It is true to say that, with the saint's love of poverty, he had also the saint's contempt for his own body, and only watched its different symptoms from the professional point of view. Once an abominable urchin flung a basket into his legs, as he was shuffling along the street absorbed in scientific reflection, and caused him to have so terrible a fall that he fell unconscious. He was conveyed home in a cab by a charitable passer-by who discovered his name on a card. On coming back to himself he was thrilled to find that his heart was beating only twenty strokes to the minute; he sent for

his partner to feel a pulse so interesting, diagnosed, complacently, severe shock to the system; refused any remedy but a cup of tea, with the assurance that the abnormal symptoms would probably continue for a few hours.

We have said that he disclaimed any particular gift of clairvoyance. In spite of which, he has admitted in the course of conversation that he nearly always knew, by his first look at the patient, whether the illness would be fatal or not.

"Nevertheless," he added, "I do not give up hope. I am never satisfied, so long as there is breath left and the inexhaustible resources of science at my hand."

Death was to him a thing against nature, an enemy to be combated to the last; an attitude towards his vocation which did not preclude the most noble belief in, and practice of, Christianity. This indomitability, no doubt, made his career unique. For twenty years he was most specially a ladies' doctor. One would scarcely believe the statement if it had not been from his own lips—fount of most crystal truth—that he had never lost a mother or a child. Yet let it not be imagined that he took credit to himself for his triumphs over disease. He had the saint's humility, in addition to other Franciscan virtues.

If you wanted to see him troubled, even to irritation, you had only to lavish praise upon him.

"Oh, no, no, no, I assure you! Pray do not

say such a thing. I have done nothing. I am nothing."

On one occasion we heard him cry out, striking his breast, while the tears rushed to his eyes: "It distresses me; I assure you! I am an unprofitable servant."

What his religious tenets were, we are not sure. We think that he inclined to the evangelical. If ever there was one who walked with Christ, it was he. Certainly, like his Divine Master, he went about doing good. It was singular and beautiful to see a mind so profoundly cultivated, brilliant, scientific, logical, so childlike and whole-hearted in its acceptance of faith. His belief in the efficacy of prayer, no less than his own unconquerable spirit of resource, were well illustrated by one of the numerous anecdotes which used to escape him during those long conversations by the sickbed of one or other of our household.

He had been summoned in consultation to a desperate case of typhoid. The patient, a young girl, the only daughter of a wealthy Jewish financier, was unconscious when he reached the house. The great physician who was in charge met him on the threshold with a shake of the head.

"No use. I give her a couple of hours, no more."

The height of the temperature had induced congestion of both lungs. The poor child was purple in the face, and was breathing stertorously. The colleague who had requested assistance now fled

from the trying spectacle of the last scene, after the custom of his profession. But our friend lingered, the agony of the parents filling him with compassion. He did not dispute the conclusion of the other doctor, but he thought that his presence might be a comfort.

To continue in his own words: "The father was walking up and down the room, the mother was kneeling beside the bed. Poor souls, they were in the most terrible distress! Then the mother looked up at me, and said, 'Oh! doctor, can you do nothing for my child?' It was a Sunday morning, a most beautiful day, and the bells were ringing for church. I looked at the poor girl on the bed. It seemed that, humanly speaking, everything had been done, and there was no hope. But I said to myself, 'Everything is possible with God,' and I prayed—oh! I prayed very fervently—that I might have an inspiration."

He clasped his dear, knobby old hands and wrung them as he spoke. We could quite well imagine the fervent simplicity of that prayer.

"An idea came to me. I said to the mother, 'I will try one more thing.' I ran down the stairs. I went out of the house and to the chemist round the corner. I made him prepare me a fly-blister, half a yard long and five inches wide. A very strong fly-blister. I came back—the poor girl was in just the same state—and I applied the fly-blister to her spine, beginning at the nape of the neck.

Then I said to the mother, 'If there is any change, call me.' I went downstairs to the library; and there I sat before the clock and waited. Ten minutes passed, a quarter of an hour, twenty minutes; there was no sound. I said to myself, 'I have failed!' Five minutes more, and I heard the mother call me: 'Doctor! Doctor!' I went out of the room. She was hanging over the top of the stairs and I heard a groan from the sick-room. 'Oh! doctor,' she cried, 'come up at once. My daughter is in the most terrible pain.' 'I am coming,' I said. I went as slowly as I could up the stairs. When I came into the bedroom the girl was writhing. She was conscious. 'I am very glad! I am very glad!' I said to the parents. I could have danced with joy. I am sure they thought me the most cruel brute that ever drew breath. I took the fly-blister off. I ordered a cup of egg-flip, strong with brandy, to be administered. The girl was able to partake of it perfectly. I remained with her another hour. The symptoms continued increasingly favourable. When I called back in the evening, the danger was past; the crisis was over. She made a good recovery."

The narrator stopped, laughed down his nose, his grey beard wagging.

"Our Harley Street friend called round the next day, as a mark of sympathy. 'At what hour did the poor young lady pass away?' he inquired at the door. He could not believe the butler. 'What

—still alive?' Still less that she was doing well. And"—the beloved physician concludes his wonderful story triumphantly—"there was only one blister on her back!"

But he will not hear us say what we think of his devotion and skill.

"Oh! not at all. It was prayer. I am a great believer in the power of prayer. I assure you, I had not a single notion in my head when I began to pray."

"I nearly danced with joy." This was no hyperbole. We have seen the darling old man execute *entrechats* in the drawing-room when a threatening illness took a favourable turn—very staggering capers, on account of his years and weakness. "Oh! you have made me very happy. Her temperature has fallen, did you say? If you had given me a thousand pounds you would not have made me so happy."

It was not at all professional to take his patients to his heart as he did, and to make their joys and sorrows a matter of his intimate concern. The ordinary practitioner would tell you that no physician could allow such play to his feelings and carry on his work. Nevertheless, our friend lived to ninety-one, and maintained his labours to the last, with a success that was almost supernatural. It was in the last year of his existence that we consulted him by letter on the case of a poor girl who had puzzled hospital authorities as well as private

medicos. She was very ill; but we thought that in a motor we might perhaps get her to see him. He wrote back: "There is no need. I know what is the matter with the patient. She will require an operation, but in good hands she will get well."

He saw to it that she got into good hands, and his forecast was fulfilled in every particular—though the very able young surgeon who took charge of the case was himself puzzled, and did not venture on the operation until he had kept the girl under observation for a fortnight.

It is not surprising that any one who had the privilege of his care for bodily ailments should have turned to him in the often more insupportable pain of affliction and family trouble.

He has been summoned in the middle of the night to heal the breach between husband and wife; soothe the hysterical agitation of the injured party—("'He shouldn't have said it, doctor, he shouldn't have said it!' Oh! she was in a terrible state, poor lady. He had hurt her feelings!"), and remonstrate with the husband—("A good fellow, but obtuse! I explained to him how sensitive ladies are, the delicacy of their constitution, how easily their nervous systems are upset"). He has been called out in the small hours of a winter's morning because a young mother could not bear to hear the screaming of her sturdy three-months-old baby—("The little fellow has a temper! But I congratulated her upon his excellent condition

of health ! "). His patience with, his tolerance of, human frailty were inexhaustible.

Yet no one must suppose that he belonged to the intolerable legion of *faux bonshommes,* or even of the harmless *bénisseurs*. A character of such undeviating rectitude was bound to be stern when occasion demanded ; and never was doctor more devoid of the odious " bedside manner." His manners were austere. He was extremely undemonstrative. Even when every energy of the intellect, the whole power of feeling of an unusually benevolent man were strained to relieve a complicated case of suffering, we have never heard him utter anything more sentimental than " poor soul ! " He never glossed over symptoms, and—still rarer quality in his profession—he never concealed a patient's danger from his relatives. Above all, he held in abhorrence the custom—too frequent among his colleagues—of sending a doomed mortal away to die, under the plea of change of air ; thus at once avoiding the final responsibility as well as the last painful scenes ; an expedient palatable to the egoism of him who indulges in it, but terribly cruel to those who are subjected to it.

We know of an instance when, summoned in consultation to a dying man and having, in private, recognized, in common with the physician who had treated the case, its complete hopelessness, he heard the latter counsel the wife to take her husband to Bournemouth. The two doctors left the house

together. As the street door closed upon them, our friend said to his companion : " That poor soul has not a fortnight to live. Why do you send him away?"

" My dear fellow," responded the other, with some superiority, " of course, that's just the reason. I don't want him to die on my hands."

The strange being who thought more of his patient than of himself, wheeled round and rang the bell. He was re-introduced into the wife's presence.

" I cannot reconcile it with my conscience," he said to her, " not to tell you that your husband's condition is such that he ought not to undertake a journey. His life cannot be prolonged. It will add enormously to your pain and his, that the event should take place in a hotel."

The poor woman, stricken to the heart as she was, thanked him with tears. It would make a considerable difference that her husband should pass away peacefully in the familiar and sympathetic surroundings of their own home.

From this anecdote it will be seen that the Good Physician never acted on the convention which regards it as unprofessional for one doctor to criticize or oppose the opinion of another. And it is strange, in these circumstances, that he was, so long as his health allowed, one of the men in greatest request for consultations. His knowledge of drugs was admittedly superior to that of any one in England, and his prescriptions were regarded as masterpieces. So wonderful are they, indeed,

that, with those he has left us, we scarcely ever, except perhaps for an undue nervousness, need to call for outside medical advice. And on many occasions, through the perspicacity and large-mindedness of the doctors who have attended us through serious illnesses, we have been treated solely by the legacy of wisdom left us by our dear dead friend.

Persuaded by his relatives and friends to give up his London practice and retire to the suburbs, in the vain hope of ensuring rest for the octogenarian, his activities merely broke out in another field. The double flame of intellect and heart, the intense desire to extend his knowledge of science—and the still more intense wish to apply this knowledge in healing—could only be quenched with life itself. At eighty-five he was requested by a royal personage who had acquaintance with his genius to see if anything could be done to avert an operation on a lady whose years were nearly equal to his own. The surgeon and anæsthetist were already in the room when he appeared, but his diagnosis did not agree with theirs. He maintained that the case was susceptible of treatment, and even of prompt relief by an easy remedy. But for the rather august patronage, he would have been laughed to scorn. As it was, he was permitted to apply his test, and the results were overwhelmingly convincing. "I could not help," said he afterwards, "saying to the surgeons when we left the poor lady, 'The mountain has brought forth a mouse!' They were very angry."

"Do not take that drug. It will do you harm," he wrote to a sister of ours, whose condition he was judging by correspondence. "You have not got the disease in question." She obeyed him, took the medicine prescribed by him, instead of that ordered by a great Northern authority who *had* seen her, and promptly recovered.

Nevertheless, kind and helpful as he was to us, it was essentially as the doctor of the poor that he spent the later years of his life. His charity was not limited to the exercise of healing, nor to the assistance he lavished upon them in their homes. He would take them into his own house—and here again we find him walking in the steps of the saints, along a road, indeed, apt to prove uncomfortable and distasteful for those who had to accompany him. Seeing an elderly man sitting on the steps of a deserted house one evening, on his return from a round, and noticing his air of pallor and illness, he approached and questioned.

"I found," he told us, "that the poor fellow had been a butler, but was out of place; he got into ill-health and poverty, and nobody would employ him, because he did not look strong enough. The world is very unkind! I said to him: 'I cannot give you a large sum of money, nor can I employ you myself, but what I can do for you, I will do. I will take you into my household. You will be well fed. You will be warmed and sheltered. I will attend to your health, and when you are

sufficiently recovered, I will see that you get a good situation.' He was an honest fellow, I saw it at a glance. I took him into my house. Would you believe it? The servants made a rumpus! They objected to sitting down to table with him. 'Is that the case?' I said to them. 'Very well. The man shall sit at my table!'" Here he paused, to laugh down his nose. "The parlourmaid had to wait upon him, as she waited upon me. It was a very good punishment! I have since placed him with a friend. He is doing exceedingly well."

On another occasion he met a lady, whom he knew, in the Underground station near his own home, and was struck by the look of illness in her face. He went up to her, and said: "What are you doing out? You are very unwell."

She answered him that she felt "dreadful," and had been thinking of coming to see him.

"Come back with me now," he said. "You are not fit to be up."

He took her to his own home, being the nearest refuge. There he turned his drawing-room into a bedroom for her, and nursed her day and night, for six weeks, through an illness which but for his promptitude, skill and devotion must have proved fatal. It was from her own lips that we heard these details. Never could she forget, she said, the figure of the dear old man in his grey dressing-gown, hovering about her in the watches of the night!

But were we to attempt to chronicle even a

quarter of what we know personally of his brilliance, his kindness, and his unerring judgment, this chapter would swell to a volume. If, when he passed to his rich reward, those of the poor for whom he had spent himself in spirit and substance all his long life, could have followed him to the grave, the length of England could hardly have contained the procession. We know, for the world is an ungrateful place, that very few of those who might have paid him the last honour did so; but we believe that on the other side his spirit must have been met by clamorous crowds, that their testimony must have outvoiced even the witness of his happy angel. The pronouncement at the dread judgment seat could have had no terrors for one who most certainly could have heard only the promised words: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess ye the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was a stranger and you took me in, naked and you covered me, sick and you visited me. . . ."

We like to think of him, satisfying at last his eager intelligence with the draught of inexhaustible knowledge. We feel that he is somewhere among the patriarchs, the prophets, and the wise elders in the Communion of Saints. We seem to hear him jubilate, as each fresh discovery dawns on his illuminated vision: "Oh, this is very interesting! This is most marvellous and beautiful!"

IX

" Vae Victoribus "

> Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage.

WE have had to come down to the foundation of things, the bedrock upon which our house of life, storey after storey, had been gradually erected : comfortable premises in which we have spent our luxurious days, eating, drinking, and making merry ; philosophizing at our leisure ; prophesying and legislating according to our desires ; looking out through windows of our own fashioning upon a world that had no existence. It all came tumbling about our ears, and we found, thank God, that in spite of everything, we had built upon the rock !

Under the ruin of our homes, then, we beheld the old truths immovable, reaching to the very foundations of England itself. The flood came and the stream beat vehemently upon the house ; but what they have shaken down was only the false edifice erected by greed and self-conceit, hypocrisy and ineptitude. England did not fall with her jerry-built palace of ease ; the under structure was not

so much as cracked. On the contrary, the storm havoc but sufficed to show its indestructibility. Duty, honour, were not mere words to our ears; and in the sacrifice even unto death we were, in spite of many "prophets" and philosophers, strengthened and comforted by the thought of the Cross. The beautiful old lines quoted at the head of this chapter will not be dismissed to-day with a superior smile as a trite expression of sentiment that can have no bearing upon actuality. We know now, that what matters is the spirit. Material life is a thing of small significance compared to the enormous asset of being able to offer that life. "The unseen are at strife," wrote one at the outset of the war. "All true sacrifice is the truest gain—war, blindest and most hideous of evils though it is, brings about a renewal of self, of reality, of spirit and faith."

In the highest sense, therefore, it was not a paradox to say that from the beginning Germany was a beaten nation. And most of all beaten where she most brutally conquered, in Belgium itself.

"My mind to me a kingdom is," many a Fleming and Walloon in his ravaged territory proved the truth of the line. Over that kingdom Albert rules in a greater royalty, a truer power than ever before. Perhaps the country could not have held together, not have remained thus united in endurance and defiance, in scorn and confidence, had it not been for the spirit of its king. Has any land, has any age,

ever had such a king? As brave as Lion Heart of England, wise and good as Louis of France! In those worst days, when in the betrayed city of Antwerp he saw the defences of the last of his great possessions crumbling about his ears under the guns of Austria—Austria who had not even the excuse of her monstrous ally, that *durch-hauen* was a necessity!—it was his heroism that saved his army.

He would leap into the trenches where there was wavering among the men, and catching up a gun from the nearest private, take aim himself, crying out "Why do you fear? See, your king is not afraid!" . . . thereafter, too, remain in the thick of it until the faintest soul had taken flame from his fire.

No wonder that his soldiers adored him! A Belgian friend who did much nursing among the wounded in the early days of the war said to me: "They cannot speak his name without tears!"

An eye-witness has given me a vivid description of a scene after a battle where the Belgian troops, badly led, had suffered terrible and unnecessary losses. "*Il était grand et terrible à voir, notre roi, et il pleurait, il pleurait ses pauvres morts. Et avec ça une colère! Il était comme un Lion!*" He had taken the swords of the leaders who were to blame and was breaking them across his knee!

Those who were present at that midnight conference when Albert of Belgium informed his

ministers of his immortal decision, and asked for their support along the road of honour and tragedy, are never likely to forget the experience. A relative of one taking part tells me of the impression made upon all by the beauty, the pathos, the grandeur of their young sovereign, so great in his calamity. Once again, what wonder that the eyes gazing upon him should have been filled with tears!

Who would not rather have been the subject of Albert than the subject of William? Certainly his own people had no hesitation in the choice. They beheld the German flag fly over the palace of their king with a smile of disdain, that already relegated it to the dust-heap. A gigantic portrait of the Kaiser adorning the railway station was the first thing to greet the traveller returning to his own land. He might turn away his eyes, or fling a passing epithet at it, but it was not the hate of the conquered that moved him; it was the contempt of the unconquerable. Never did invader set himself to break down the spirit of his victims with a fiercer brutality or a more fiendish ingenuity in detail; yet quite in vain. From the "gamin" in the Brussels street, putting a carrot at the top of his cap and dancing backwards before the helmeted Prussian, announcing that he was going to Paris like the Boche, to the oldest, meekest priest of that martyred community, who called out to his people from the pulpit, Sunday after Sunday, to be of good heart, that God would deliver them

from the iniquity of Herod, there was but one cry of defiance through the land ; from Antwerp to La Panne, from the Meuse to the Yser. As in the Spanish domination the Belgic Gaul remained what Cæsar, too, had found him : a dogged foe, biding his time, with set teeth and that long patience which is the mark of the ultimate victor.

If anything could be more amazing than the indomitable resistance which lived in the violated territory for over four years, it was its unshakable optimism. The Germans put up placards announcing disasters to the Allies ; the people read and laughed. (They declined even to believe in real reverses, so much lying intimidation had been practised upon them.) "King Albert is taken with sixty thousand prisoners," announced the German posters one day. Flemings and Walloons came and went unmoved, save for a shrug of the shoulders.

A friend who visited Brussels in the third year of occupation has given us a good deal of first-hand information concerning the conditions under which her patriots laboured, and of the attitude with which they met them.

Here is a typical anecdote. There were practically no carriages and no motor-cars left in any big town, and every one travelled by tram ; enemies and inhabitants alike. Seated opposite our friend one afternoon in the tram was a handsome well-dressed lady, who, upon the descent of the only German from the vehicle, suddenly launched forth. She

proclaimed herself from Ghent—and proudly—just out of prison.

"I was in the greengrocer's, buying my vegetables with my mother," she narrated, "when in came a Boche, an officer, who said to me: 'Would you like to know where your king is now, and what he's doing? I will tell you. He is blacking boots at Berlin!' With that," cried the Ghent lady, "the mustard mounted to my nose! And I said to him just in the same tone: 'Would you like to know where your Kaiser is?' 'My Kaiser!' he cries, 'my Kaiser? He is at the front among his soldiers, encouraging them to victory! That is where my Kaiser is!' 'Not at all,' says I. 'Your Kaiser is in London, *garçon de café.*' And then, madame, he was in a rage, oh! such a rage, and began to scream out every kind of insult on us all; and I answered him back, *ma foi!* I did not care. I was launched. And my poor mother, wringing her hands beside me, and crying, '*Tais toi, donc, mais tais toi, donc!*' All at once, I do not know how it came to me, I found a German word for him; '*Schwein!*' I said, '*Schwein!*' That finished it. He seized me and dragged me off to the *Commandatur*, infuriating me all the way, madame, and making grimaces at me, and menacing me with his fingers, crooked, to show how he would like to tear me in pieces; and as he went he said: 'Do not think you can make any defence; whatever you say you will not be believed. My word will be taken before yours.' Which indeed was what

happened. And now I am just out of prison."

The tram was a great resource to the Belgian, especially the Belgian woman, for it was there she could best display her sentiments towards the foe. To show disdain and disgust of the conqueror was the attitude which high and low chose to adopt; or if not, merely to ignore him. A lady would not voluntarily seat herself beside a German; but if exigencies of space forced her to do so, she would turn her shoulder upon him and drag her skirts away from the contamination of his proximity. No Belgian woman would cross a German in the street without making a marked *détour*. She would not accept the smallest civility from him, preferring to walk rather than take a proffered seat, passing by a tight-gloved hand that was officiously outstretched to assist her into the tram as if the solid owner was but thin air. In spite of, or rather concomitant with, the Hun's systematic persecution of his victims, he was prone to an odious attentiveness where a pretty woman was concerned. But in later days we understand that in spite of occasional outbursts there had been a marked alteration, almost a cringing civility in his general attitude.

Among a thousand military orders, all designed to crush resistance, or render life intolerable, was the absolute prohibition to man, woman and child to wear the Belgian colours. The instant the smallest scrap of the red, black and yellow was perceived in buttonhole or bodice, the procedure was

as follows: the German extended a threatening forefinger, and commanded in his parade voice: "Off with that!" If he were not obeyed, which was of frequent occurrence, the chivalrous conqueror wrenched the token himself from the clothes of his victim and stamped it underfoot, remarking: "All Belgians are Germans now!"

Brussels laughed long over an incident which occurred during our informant's visit. A large, composed-looking lady entered one of the trams and took a seat exactly opposite a fierce military personage, obviously of high rank. Protruding between the buttonholes of her well-cut tailor-made coat was a modest but unmistakable knot of tricolor. The *Herr Oberst* fixed her with a frown formed upon an imperial model, and flung out the expected forefinger: "Throw that away!" he commanded. The lady sat, looking through him with the placidity of a Sphinx. The little bow of ribbon gently moved with the slow heaving of her ample chest. The tram was full of spectators, all Belgians, who looked on with the usual pleasure to see the Boche baited.

"Madame," said the latter in tones of thunder, "I advise you to throw away that rubbish."

The large lady sat, bland, immovable, still gazing as if her eyes could no more perceive than her ears could hear him.

The audience chuckled.

The arm of military law was outflung, the officer clutched the offending decoration and savagely

pulled. The little bow came away in his grasp with a long trail of ribbon after it.

If the Boche had been savage before, it is difficult to find words to describe the frenzy with which he tugged and clawed at ever-lengthening loops of the forbidden colours; the wearer of them remaining immovable and apparently still lost in a serene trance, while the vehicle echoed with the delighted laughter of her fellow travellers. The tram was full of ribbon, when, unable to bear the situation any more, the officer leaped to his feet, rang for a halt, and dashed out. Then and only then did the incomparable woman speak.

"He might have gone on as far as Halle," she remarked with quiet satisfaction. "There are seventy-five yards of it."

In spite of the Hun's proverbial want of humour the Colonel quailed before the thought of bringing this ridiculous tale to the *Commandatur*.

And indeed, although surrounded by evidences of past irredeemable agony and outrage, though living under a menace of further incalculable disaster —the German then threatened not to leave a stone upon a stone in any Belgian city if forced to retreat— and famine haunted the land, systematically drained of its resources—the Belgian continued to have the joke on his side. If there were weeping in secret and much mourning; constant privation and the heart-sickness of hope deferred, he was always able to meet the tormentor with a gay front, and to find

genuine amusement in every new device of his. A form of house-to-house visitation gave wide scope for mockery. Soldiers provided with long pointed instruments pierced mattresses, sofas and all upholstered articles in search of arms or bombs. Parties were also sent to sweep the chimneys for the same purpose.

"Well, that is quite an economy for us!" cried the housewives, shrugging their shoulders. "*Voilà qu'ils sont nos ramoneurs maintenant, les Boches!*"

These rounds of investigation for hidden weapons were of ceaseless occurrence. In the country indeed they afforded the Germans much opportunity for the display of their native ferocity.

In a château not far from Mons the officer in command of a party planted a soldier beside each cot where two babies, children of the daughter of the house, were asleep, with the announcement that the infants' brains were to be blown out if any weapon were discovered on the premises. But in Brussels, purposeless brutality was not regarded as politic, and its citizens found considerable entertainment in making fun of the inquisitors. The Boche was very careful to let nothing escape him.

An officer, visiting a house one day, came across a little ornamental silver hatchet in a case. It had been presented to the lady as a souvenir of the launching of a ship which she had named. This was instantly confiscated.

"Madame, you have no right to this weapon. I

cannot accept any explanation ; you ought to have given it up long ago."

"*Mon Dieu,*" said the lady, "but I have much more dangerous weapons still in the house. You have been searching so thoroughly : is it possible you have not already discovered them ? "

The Boche—it is certain that he is a person of small humour—was both horrified at the thought of so much turpitude and charmed at the confession he had elicited. He ordered her to conduct him instantly to the spot, and deliver up her forbidden hoard.

The mistress of the house had therefore the gratification of leading him to the kitchen and casting on the table before him skewers and larding needles, knives and choppers, accompanying each article with : "Look, how dangerous ! Behold, how deadly ! "

There was no dearer ambition to the heart of the Brussels boy than to be brought up before the *Commandatur* : he would spend his day inventing new insults for the foe, who eventually became tired of pleasantries, and avoided cognizance of them. One spirited lad, aged thirteen—he is of a well-known family—spent a whole day on the different tram lines of Brussels, walking on the toes of German officers, shoving in before them through the sliding doors, making audible comments on their personal appearance and otherwise tormenting them. He came home in the end nearly weeping because of failure.

It must not be imagined that this failure of his argues any good nature, or indeed philosophic indifference, on the part of the enemy; merely that in the Brussels streets, under the eyes of neutral diplomats, the simple expedient of murdering the innocent could not be followed with the same impunity as in a country village, or a refugee train; and the perpetual hauling up of schoolboys before the tribunals became not only absurd but an actual sign of impotence. But the episode does prove the utter failure of German brutality to terrorize even the little ones of a people, free in soul, in spite of the iron heel. And in this connexion it is not without interest to note that the Belgians, whether they were in exile or in their desecrated homeland, had no high-flown epithet of abuse for the aggressor; they did not call him either monster or fiend; he was on their lips, always with a kind of gay disgust, either "*cochon*" or "*sale boche.*" Were they high-born, delicate ladies, were they children or dignified white-haired old aristocrats—it was the same with all.

"*Mon Dieu, madame,*" said a holy priest to the friend to whom I owe these pictures of life as it actually was in Brussels, "to think that for fifty years I have had the law of charity on my tongue; and now but one word keeps falling from it all day long, whichever way I turn, and that is, *Cochon! Cochon!*"

Let it be remembered that *cochon* has not the

relative pleasantness of "pig"—which may be playful, almost affectionate—but is a word banned from polite conversation in the French language.

"*Monsieur*," cries the indignant man to his rival (in a French comic paper), "*vous êtes un cocher ! Je parle à l'infinitif, à cause de la presence des dames.*"

I have a very distinct memory of the horror of a French governess of my childhood, recently arrived at our country home and innocently invited to come round the farm "*voir les cochons.*" Much to our amazement it was explained "*qu'on pouvait à peine dire pourceau*," and that it was much more elegant to refer to these animals by some synonym, such as "*les habillés de soie*," or still more obliquely as "certain useful beasts that shall be nameless."

Belgium found nothing in the whole realm of creation so typical, to her mind, of the invader as the occupant of the stye. *Cochon*, the creature that lives in filth, wallowing, voracious, omniverous, universally recognized as the emblem of uncleanness, grunting, unpleasant, unsavoury object during its lifetime, which only becomes of value to the human race when killed. "*Sale Boche*" is, of course, but another rendering of the same idea.

One of the most distinguished and revered old ladies in Belgian society was walking along the pavements of Brussels, year 2 of the war, with her seventeen-year-old grand-daughter, when there swaggered down upon them a certain German officer well known to both. This "gentleman" had had a

diplomatic appointment to the German Legation just before the war; and, on arriving with a delicate wife, had found the house they had chosen for themselves uninhabitable owing to bad drainage. A close relation of the old Comtesse had instantly offered hospitality; and the young German couple had been cordially and unsuspiciously entertained under her roof for three full months. The *attaché*, a good-looking young man, had been very popular in Brussels society, and had received great attention. He had apparently set himself to charm his new friends. He was almost the first to ride again into the city at the head of his regiment, casting the eye of a conqueror upon his dupes. He then signalized himself—no very easy matter—as odious among the odious, offensive among the offensive, insulting among the insulters of the whole army of occupation towards those to whom he was indebted for constant kindness and openhearted entertainment.

Seventeen is not a very discreet age, and the grand-daughter of the noble old lady had not a little of the indomitable spirit of her race. She drew her skirts together, pulled a pretty lip of disdain, and said audibly to her grandmother, as the brilliant officer bore down upon them, "*Sale Boche!*" He turned upon her with wild beast fury, seized her by the arm, and, the grandmother interfering, both were instantly hauled before the *Commandatur*.

The sentence was six months' imprisonment in

Berlin, whither the delinquents were rushed then and there. When the aged Comtesse, with the child, arrived at the place of detention, her jewels and clothes were literally torn off her, and felon's garb thrust upon her. She was separated from her young companion ; needless to add, the most unendurable of many agonies ! The frail, delicately nurtured woman, advanced in years, was thrown into a cell, with a straw pallet to lie upon, and the prison fare as food. This was so revolting—a soup combining the maximum of nauseousness with the minimum of nourishment—that Comtesse X. refused to partake of it.

Her request to the governor of the jail that she might be allowed to purchase food from outside was acceded to. Nevertheless the conditions of her imprisonment soon brought on a serious illness, and, no doubt out of the fear of the odium which would fall upon Germany by the death in such circumstances of a person of importance, her release was ordered after six weeks. The same mercy was not extended to the dark young criminal, her grandchild. She had fallen ill, too, but less dangerously so ; she was ordered to the infirmary, and had to undergo her full six months' sentence.

My friend tells me that although the child was actually treated with something approaching humanity, her health quite broke down. She returned home pale, wasted, terribly nervous. It is possible that if she met the scintillating *attaché*

again she might not have the spirit to say " *Sale Boche.*" A triumph indeed for the Hun !

It may be mentioned that Comtesse X.'s husband had in days long gone by represented his country at the Court of Berlin. The couple were as rich as they were distinguished, and entertained lavishly ; among the exalted personages who attended their parties he to whom the German was wont to refer in blasphemous servility as the " All-Highest," was, in his salad days, frequent in condescension. Rumour has it that Comtesse X. was then a very fascinating and beautiful woman.

It casts a certain illumination on the case that a few weeks before her outrageous behaviour in defending her young grand-daughter, Comtesse X. had had an altercation with a German official. Insolently refused the small favour of a passport to visit a sick daughter in Holland, she had cried with scornful amusement :

" Do not think you can frighten me with your Kaiser ! I who can remember the day when he was only too much honoured when I permitted him to kiss my hand."

It seems not unlikely that the *Sale Boche* incident afforded an opportunity which had been carefully watched for ; perhaps at the suggestion of that Supreme Authority, without which, as Herr von Bissing declared, even at the request of friendly ambassadors, the death sentence of a single well-guarded Englishwoman cannot be postponed for a day.

Nevertheless it was the conquerors who trembled in Belgium; who walked uneasily, looking over their shoulders; who watched by day and who started by night; armed to the teeth, with prison, military execution and every kind of spy at his service, the German yet went in fear. All those whose houses were occupied by officers will tell you the same tale: that the electric light was kept burning in every room from twilight to daybreak. There was not one of those warriors who dared put his light out and go to sleep in the dark like an honest man. "'Tis conscience that makes cowards . . ."

One of the first districts in Belgium to fall under the complete domination of the enemy was the lovely stretch of country from Verviers to Dinant. This is not surprising, considering that it skirts the German frontier. A gentleman who has estates in that neighbourhood told me that on the morning of the 24th July, 1914, the local postman, whose rounds brought him close to the border, informed him in amazement of an immense concentration of German troops, all fully equipped, massed on the frontier—he had seen himself at least 40,000, he declared. They had literally but to make a step when the order came to invade their unsuspecting neighbour.

In that country some of the happiest hours of my girlhood were spent. There was a hunting lodge built on the top of a wooded height, where for many

successive summers my sister and I were the guests of a very fine old sportsman, whose daughters were our close friends. I hear it has all been razed to the ground. It was a pretty, commodious and well-planned house, with superlative stables, where our host kept a notable stock of hunters, many of them from Ireland. I remember "*Pelale*," "*Gingère*" and "*Brian Broo*" among the number.

The wife of the master of the hounds (who lived at some little distance) was a splendid rider. Of half-Italian extraction, lithe, slender in figure, with pale clear-cut features under raven bands of hair, she never looked so well as in the saddle. I am speaking of days long gone by. The *grand Seigneur* who gave us such kindly hospitality and was a mighty hunter before the Lord, is dead many years —spared, thank God, the sight of his devastated lands! Dead, too, is the master of the hounds, with his trumpeting voice and rubicund, jovial face; but his wife, the *Diane Chasseresse* of my childish recollections, is now an old woman, and she is the central point of this digression.

Her second son, who lived with her and took a beneficent interest in local life and politics, was seized upon by the Germans. They announced with the lighthearted irresponsibility that characterized their early doings in Belgium, that they were going to shoot him; for the crime apparently of being the chief person in the district. They drove away with him, bound, in a farm cart. And along

the baking roads, the unhappy mother, who was then seventy-four, ran after her darling, until between the heat of the August sun and the anguish of her labouring heart, she fell fainting with her grey head in the dust. Conceive the feelings of the prisoner! To the Germans the spectacle of that double agony was doubtless what the harlequinade at the pantomime used to be to the schoolboy of my youth—something really funny.

It was not until three months afterwards that Madame de Z. heard that her son had not been shot. He was confined in a dungeon, just high enough to hold him, not wide enough to allow him to move about, scarcely lighted. This hardy, open-air man was permitted twenty minutes' exercise per day in a yard.

In the meantime his mother was either deserted by or had dismissed her entire household, with the exception of an aged maid (in parenthesis, a German, but of proved fidelity and of the old type). They lived alone in the great rambling house. One day a keeper rushed in with the warning that the Germans were searching for arms. Madame de Z. in haste gathered together her son's fowling-pieces and all the other sporting weapons that accumulate in a country house; the old servant was bidden to bury them in the garden, while her mistress repaired to the hall to gain time in parley with the Germans. The woman faithfully performed her task, and returned to the kitchen, where she dropped down dead.

After this, Madame de Z. remained alone. She would not get any one in from the village, partly in fear perhaps of some indiscretion, partly because she would not expose her poorer neighbours to the increased danger of service with her. She refused to leave the château, even when the enemy took possession of it, believing that her presence was a kind of restraint upon him, and anxious to save her children's patrimony.

Fear, the curse of the workers of iniquity, dogged, so I say, the steps of every Hun in Belgium. The military order, posted all over the country, " *Défense de parler de la Guerre*," was not so much an inept attempt to prevent the heroic little nation from discussing present anguish and future hopes, as an effort to guard against the indiscretion of the Kaiser's own troops. They felt a superstitious depression in the land they were trampling upon. The whole army of occupation quite openly expressed its dislike of its quarters and its sense of approaching misfortune. Even before the absurd placard appeared, officers were forbidden to hold private intercourse with any civilian.

My Belgian friend gave me a curious picture of the extraordinary appearance which the Brussels streets presented at night. While only one in every three *réverbères* was alight, all public buildings occupied by the Germans, beginning with the King's palace, were blazing with light from garret to cellar ;

the kind of illumination usually only seen on great public festivities. The poor city, as in the case of private owners, had to bear the cost of these precautionary night-long displays of electricity. The Hun, a Nero quaking on his throne of oppression, confessed his terrors in a hundred ways; and gave a most conclusive testimony to his own sense of failure in victory. Three small boys beating a tin tray and blowing toy trumpets in a dark alley threw all the military authorities in Brussels into panic one night, and the district where this alarming disturbance occurred was invaded by soldiers and all precautions taken against immediate insurrection with the most ruthless minuteness.

Throughout the land they were always feverishly perfecting lines of retreat: though an attack through Holland was a most unlikely if not impossible contingency, they became not only busy in preparing defences on that side, but actually destroyed a line of railway of paramount importance for the conveyance of foodstuffs.

That artless display of high spirits which characterized the first march of the troops through the country—as it were the gambols of a Teuton "Bottom" metamorphosed into some composite animal, with the brain of an ass and the heart of a tiger—soon became a thing of the past.

It is said that the Germans have no humour. That is a mistake. What should be said is that the Ger-

mans possess an idea of humour not shared by any other nation in the world, but which they highly enjoyed themselves. Here are three examples of its special quality.

In a Belgian village a peasant mother, pursued by two soldiers, who wanted in their playfulness to bayonet her baby, could think of no other way to save the infant than by bending over the mouth of a well, holding it to her breast. Of course the tormentors could easily have got the better of one weak woman, even a mother—but here was an excellent opportunity for indulging in the jocosities of Kultur. The pair had a bet as to who should first succeed, by dint of prods with the bayonet, in making the mother drop the baby. My informant tells me the woman only let the child fall with the passage of her own soul—but no doubt that gave point to the joke.

In another village the women and children were shut into the church, after the usual procedure, while the men were led away with the threat of instant execution. Presently great volleys began to be heard, and here and there a wife or mother among the prisoners in a frenzy of anxiety attempted to get out. Sentries with drawn swords were posted one on each side of the porch, and the fun—the German fun—was to slash at the heads or hands as they appeared in the doorway. Roars of laughter greeted every lucky stroke.

Comtesse de B. happened to be away for the day

from her house in Louvain when the invader's wrath—it was wrath this time, not mere pleasantry —swooped down on the unfortunate town. When she returned she found her house a smoking ruin. So little had Belgium yet gauged the character of her foe, that this young mother had left three little children behind her without any apprehension. These were now nowhere to be traced. Madame de B. ran like a maniac all through the streets, to find her babes at last—this is a true story—sitting close together, quite alone, like three forlorn little birds, on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville. She never knew how they got there or what had happened; the children being too young to give her any clear information.

The mother had then only one idea, to fly from the city, which was rocking and flaming to destruction. She possessed a château a few miles outside the town, and managed to get a lift in a country cart as far as the gates of her own park. Here she found a coquettish Uhlan lieutenant and a piquet in occupation of the lodge. He came out to greet her with exaggerated bows. The two little ones who could walk were clinging to her skirts, the smallest she held in her arms.

"Sir," she said to the man, "I find my house at Louvain burnt to the ground. I come to my other house, but I do not know if you have left me a roof where I can shelter my children."

"Now," cried the Uhlan, "madame, how can

you imagine that we should do harm to your beautiful castle? You ask if your castle is standing—I will do myself the honour of escorting you up to the door this moment that I may see you comfortably installed. You have a charming little château, madame; we admire it very much," he added, as he gallantly stepped beside her. He was full of smiles and courtesy.

The approach led uphill, and from the top of a little eminence there was a fine view of the castle among the trees. There was? There had been. What Madame de B. beheld when she reached the spot was a work of annihilation more complete even than what she had left behind her in Louvain; literally, scarcely a stone upon a stone! A huge column of smoke was still streaming up to the sky.

The two little children at her knee, with a comprehension above their years, burst into wails and hid their faces in her skirts, but the lieutenant was consumed with mirth, and rocked backwards and forwards in exquisite enjoyment of his own pleasantry.

Before she turned and left him he made a further witticism. Of this, it is sufficient to say that the kind of badinage which an officer of Uhlans addresses to an unprotected woman cannot be put in print for English readers.

But that was at the beginning of the war. Germany did not laugh long in Belgium. He laughs

best who laughs last. Slowly it crept in upon the soul of the conqueror—or whatever it may be that animates the carcase of the *Sale Boche*—that there was doom in his very success. *Vae Victoribus !*

" No one," said one of our preachers, " can pray for judgment upon the Germans, with half the force of their own acts. The innocent blood which they have shed cries out to Heaven day and night for vengeance upon them."

The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small. The ear of the German caught the sound of the relentless grinding, and his hatred of being in Belgium, his misery there, and constant apprehension, sprang from the secret knowledge, that through the first and grossest of his crimes retribution awaited him.

Belgium, Serbia, Poland and Montenegro, the massacre of the innocents, the destruction of the small, the humble, the unoffending, the unprotected : if there were any truth in God's own promise, we knew that it was by these deeds that the aggressor should fall. " He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart."

A pastor in Berlin preached from the pulpit that the German race was chosen by God to crucify the world. When the reverend gentleman made that remarkable statement, he seems to have been unaware, in a kind of sublimity of Prussian conceit and stupidity, of the appalling parallel he was drawing for his own country. Did he forget Who it was that

was crucified and Who it was that conquered through the Cross; and how Calvary led to the resurrection? Did he forget the tears which the Divine Victim shed upon Jerusalem, foreseeing what she had brought upon herself?

"Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate. . . . Amen, I say to you, there shall not be left a stone upon a stone that shall not be destroyed."

X

Myself when Young

The air is full of shadows, echoes, calls,
Dire thrills that wake a lonely heart from sleep.
D. G. Rossetti.

IT seems strange, looking back on one's childhood, to be able to say that it was spent in the last century, yet the difference between things as they were then and things as they are now, is such that they seem to belong, not only to another century but to another life.

Before motors; before electric light; when it was only just beginning to be recognized as possible for "a young lady" to drive in a hansom, and when you actually lived in a diocese whose Bishop had forbidden "fast dancing," otherwise polkas and waltzes; the odd thing is that one is oneself so little changed to have witnessed so many alterations!

I have within myself still the heart of the child who made the eager plans, the soul of the child for whom existence itself was all mystery. I have taken, it seems to me, but a few steps along the road of life, and those tentative; and already the journey is three parts accomplished. I am a traveller

who has learnt little by the way, but yet who has passed from one land to another, and is only at home, as it were, in his own mind.

The great social change, which was also a sudden one, came about two years before the war. From one season to another, youth—and, indeed, age too—dropped decorum, donned the jingling garb of folly and rushed about beating bladders. In every great city of the world, license ran riot. The spirit of the "Decameron" was let loose. The wantonness spread downwards. Now the decent shop-keeping class, servants, farm girls, are all infected. There is a certain section of womanhood that was once spoken of with bated breath, guessed at, hardly realized. I defy any one, now, to distinguish between the baker's daughter, the parlourmaid on her "afternoon and evening out," and the professional young person "on the street"; clothes, manners, mind, and I fear, morals, are identical. The exception only proves the rule.

The report of one of the lady commissioners of police recently stated that cases of white slave traffic and kidnapping were now rare, practically non-existent; the reason being that "the girls come of themselves. They want to see life."

In my childhood, in my girlhood, in a big country house in Ireland, full of young servants; where there were footmen in the pantry and grooms in the stable; where outdoor labour was shared between men and women, slips of things in their

teens, as well as older folk ; where the inhabitants of every cottage and every farm were known to us for miles around, and there was indeed a little village on the estate,—I never heard as much as a breath of scandal. I believe, quite certainly, that there was none. Whatever their faults,—and there were plenty, no doubt, lying, thieving, drinking, quarrelling, backbiting and the like,—the one thing which is rampant on every side to-day, was literally not as much as named among us.

There were, of course, fallings-in-love, engagements, and weddings, although, as most people are aware, the custom pertains in Ireland among the agricultural class of *mariage de convenance :* unions arranged by the parents on strictly business lines.

A dairy maid married one of the labourers that helped to milk the cows, and wield the spatter in the giant churn. That was only bucolically becoming. He was called Dim Bowes (of what saint's name Dim was an abbreviation I have never known) and her name was Eliza,—of what patronymic I have forgotten. But I have a distinct recollection of looking out on to the pleasant grassy courtyard—to one side of which ran the low dairy buildings—and seeing Eliza, her sleeves slipped back above the elbows, holding aloft a milk-pail in two stalwart arms ; tilting it so that " Dim " might take a good draught out of the contents. Warm from the cow, clover-scented, foaming, he seemed to be enjoying it very much. That was the only love-passage

that came to my knowledge. The next thing was the wedding.

Eliza moved from the big house up to a little clay-floored cottage in the village on the edge of the estate. She was a great favourite of an elder sister of mine, who became subsequently godmother to the first-born ; a strapping little Dim.

It was a favourite walk of us children to go and visit Eliza Bowes and her baby.

The village—it could hardly be dignified by the name, for it was only a single row of hovels by the side of a country lane—was beautifully situated on the high slope of a hill, overlooking a wild pasture-land, called the deer park ; though never in my experience were any deer kept there, only young horses and sometimes rough herds.

My sister was very particular to impress upon Eliza the necessity of a daily bath for her small godchild. Eliza—I can see her now—had a round, good-tempered face with twinkling eyes, a short nose, a long upper lip, a wide mouth always on the smile. She was fully as good-tempered as she looked, and ever ready to oblige.

" Is it wash him, Miss Mary ? To be sure I do. I'll do it this moment and let ye see for yerself. Come here, ye spalpeen."

The spalpeen, aged about eleven months, was actually staggering about the mud-floor playing with a large knife, " to keep him quiet." He was clad only in a short-waisted, long-skirted frock

of indescribable hue, so that disrobing was a matter of a whisk. His bare legs kicked frantically, he shouted to match, while his mother nipped him under one arm, caught up a bucket with the other hand, dashed out to the duck-pond in front of the cottage, returned triumphantly with a brimming pail of slimy green water, into which, with the same broadly smiling alacrity, she dipped the infant, head foremost. He was then set, convulsively yelling, on her knee, and she proceeded to dry him with her apron.

We children watched these proceedings with gravity; the godmother, indeed, wore an expression so approving that it silenced some misgivings which were struggling in my much more juvenile heart.

"The water was very green on top," said nine-year-old Mary, as we went down the hill again, "but it *is* a great comfort to know he is washed."

A second wedding was that between Shaw, our young bachelor gardener, and a kitchenmaid. This was attended by more dramatic circumstances, for a very elderly, long-faced, plausible maid of my mother had fixed her virgin fancy upon him; and though her years might easily have doubled his, she had succeeded in extracting a declaration of attachment and a blue stone ring from the promising youth—more promising in her case than fulfilling.

She used to stand, gazing out of the window of my mother's bedroom, at his manly form below, busied about the pleasure grounds, in a kind of "dwam" of sentimentality, ostentatiously protrud-

ing the imitation turquoise token, much to my mother's exasperation. How the ill-fated betrothal was finally severed, was never made clear, but McCarthy departed, unwed; and one of the "slips" of little kitchen girls was promoted to the post of fiancée to Mr. Shaw—to the scandalized amazement of the household, where the contrast between an upper servant, with a cottage and high wages, and almost the lowest of the underlings was regarded as a gross mis-alliance.

"Huthen, he might have done better for himself," was the point of view generally expressed. Shaw, however, had his own ideas on the subject, which were not a whit more romantic.

Two days before the wedding my mother paid a visit to the garden cottage to see whether it was in a fit state of preparation for the bride. In the living-room she discovered a mountainous bundle tied up in a soiled sheet.

"What is that, Shaw?" she said. "It doesn't look at all nice. You had better take it away."

"Take it away, is it?" retorted the bridegroom indignantly. "Isn't that me washing? Haven't I been saving it up for herself these three weeks!"

Another matrimonial episode is literally the last of my recollections on the subject. This was not connected with any one on the property, but with the occupants of the two best farms in the district. The owner of one had an elderly daughter and a rooted objection to the idea of marriage for her,

so that it was "as much as anybody's life was worth to mintion the wurrd in his hearing"; the owner of the other was a very respectable steady bachelor who possessed a comfortable property.

After waiting in patience for something like twenty years till "the Da" should come to a different frame of mind (on this plane or another),—the parish priest, the curates and the friendly neighbours all taking a hand in vain in the business of persuasion,—the bride, now considerably over forty, braved the parental curse, with the concurrence of spiritual authority, and made a runaway match.

Her progenitor kept up the curse, and used to stump into the little chapel, kneel on the other side of it opposite his own daughter, and glare steadily at her through the sermon. Perhaps that was why she wore a lace veil so heavily patterned that a bunch of grapes completely obscured one eye.

She had also yellow grapes on a yellow straw bonnet, with mauve ribbons; and a dress of mauve striped silk that filled the little edifice with rustlings. A very grand and pious lady! We, from our japanned wood pew, used to watch her with great interest as the heroine of the most thrilling local romance that had yet come our way.

Other people must have wedded, of course. They were the handsome Condran girls, whose parents actually gave dances of the most select description for them,—to which no one connected with trade was ever admitted.

A certain well-to-do mason, who owned a tidy bit of land besides, was, according to our information, excluded; the taint of "business" being regarded as nullifying other advantages.

Children, at the time when I was one of them, took the world very much for granted. We did not criticize the regulations of grown-up people. We rather regarded them, I believe, as part of the immutable laws of the Universe. In some ways we had a singularly happy childhood; in others, there was a discipline, a certain austerity with which the young generation is quite unacquainted now. But then the whole trend of life was simpler, less self-indulgent.

Our nurseries were great, bare, sunshiny rooms, curtainless and carpetless. Blinds and wooden shutters made a darkness at nights which no one knows in this century. There is—in parenthesis—nothing I lament more than the ruthless fashion in which people have torn down their delightful old shutters; or, in some instances, screwed them up!

Twice a week these nurseries were scrubbed, to our great discomfort. None of us seem to have taken colds from wet boards, in spite of bare legs and little socks, so I suppose due precautions were observed. Indeed, I can remember blazing fires in those vast grates, and the smell of the fresh soap and water steaming to dryness.

Up to the age of seven years old we were, all six of us, clad in white, and every day clean clothes

were given us. You can imagine that the big laundries were kept pretty busy. Nothing that was not washable, except our strapped, white kid shoes, was ever put on us. Even in winter weather our pelisses were made of quilted piqué. Odd garments these were, with deep capes. Our bare legs were covered with gaiters, which, strange as it sounds, were, I think, also made of piqué, with something fleecy inside, buttoned. Our buttoned boots were also white.

I don't suppose it ever dawned upon us that other children of our class ran about in black boots, and didn't have a fresh-washed frock every day; no more than that it was possible for nursery fare to consist of anything besides bread and milk, alternating with porridge, which we called "stirabout," for breakfast and supper.

Personally I detested both these forms of nutriment, and I can remember all the dodges with which a patient nurserymaid used to endeavour to coax me through my bowl of bread and milk. I remember sitting on her knee and being fed, deeply against the grain, while each spoonful was a fish, caught in a white lake, and I was implored not to be so cruel as to shut my mouth against "this little dotey feller!" A further dodge was to start an enthralling fairy tale. "Another bit, Miss Aggie, and sure I'll tell ye what became of me brave Jack!"

"Stirabout" was more interesting, because you could make inland lakes of butter and rivers of milk.

There was an irritating subterfuge practised upon us every morning in the promise of a cup of tea and a bit of bread and butter for the good child who had finished her portion. Of course one was never "able for it." If one advanced as far as the first mouthful, that was difficult to swallow.

We children breakfasted and supped first in the nursery, later on in the schoolroom. The only meal we had in common with our mother was "dinner"—her lunch. Until we were nearly grown up we had no afternoon tea, or rather, tea became our last meal at half-past six. That was a curiously exiguous repast, considering the lavish character of the household, and one can only suppose that it was regarded as more salubrious; large slices of bread, already buttered—in the winter salt butter—and extremely weak tea. The governess had slices of cold meat in addition. I never remember jam, fruit, cake, eggs, or any condiment. Nevertheless in the room where our nurses preferred to sit—it happened to be, for some unexplained reason, a large bathroom—there was always left an immense, hooped, china jug full of milk, in case any of us small things wanted a little sustenance between meals.

The sister next to me was very fond of milk. I hated it. She used to stand on tiptoe and tilt the spout of the jug to her lips; much after the fashion in which Dim Bowes refreshed himself from Eliza's pail.

This sister had a peculiarly fair complexion, which was attributed in the nursery entirely to her favourite drink. The village women were in admiration over her.

"Glory be to God, will ye look at Miss Ellie! Them two beautiful cheeks, as white as curds."

In contradistinction to the spartan simplicity of our suppers and breakfasts, dinner was a notable spread; for, though my mother was a firm believer in the wholesomeness of an alternating diet of leg of mutton, roast chicken and chops, for her growing half-dozen, we had nearly always four glorious sweets: not being attrained to milky pudding like the present generation. Almond cheesecakes as large as saucers, bursting in beautiful frangipani out of their pastry cases, caramelled on the top, piping hot—I recall them with a retrospective greed; monster jellies, of the nourishing calves-foot kind, flavoured with brandy, sherry and lemon; tipsy cakes that *were* tipsy cakes, fretful like the porcupine with large almonds; open tarts (raspberries and currants or plums or peaches), cross-barred with pastry; and that dish, so seldom seen now, sandwich pastry, acclaimed with shouts, for children like amusement when they eat, and this the different kinds of jam, between the layers, provided. There was another dish in its season which I have never tasted, except in those bygone days at our own board: a tart—we called it a pie—made of the thinnings of the muscatel grapes in the vinery.

I recommend it to the gourmet for its strange and delicate flavour. Add to all this, plentiful helpings of cream; rich crinkled yellow cream from our own dairy. Certainly we lived in a land flowing with milk and honey; taking it all, as I have said, after the fashion of our years, as natural products like the leaves on the trees, or the daisies in the turf.

There was a trio of old servants in the house, whom my mother called "the three duchesses": housekeeper, nurse and head housemaid. They were re-christened by our infant lips, Mobie, Shuzzy and Dadgy: their original names being Mrs. O'Brien, Mrs. Hughes and Bridget. I never knew the latter's surname. She was an adorable old woman who might have walked out of a farce; a little quaint creature in a grey lace cap adorned with purple ribbons, from each side of which depended profuse grey ringlets after the fashion of our grandmothers. On Sunday she wore a huge poke bonnet, but for the matter of that, so did the others. It was still supposed to be indelicate for a lady to walk out without a curtain at the back of her bonnet to conceal her hair. Was it not about the time that Miss Yonge, writing "The Daisy Chain," makes Ethel, her heroine, be congratulated because she has not adopted the current immodest fashion of uncovering her brow? When, following a change of fashion, my mother bought a little turban hat, which indeed became her mightily, she regarded the act herself as one of daring.

To come back to Dadgy, she used to flit about the house like a bat. I never remember her without a fluttering duster. She was unmercifully teased by our brothers, but woman-like, infinitely preferred them to us little girls; especially my youngest brother, who, like his mother, had, from his earliest years, the talent of inspiring extraordinary attachments.

Shuzzy, our nurse, who died early in my career, was a very strict old lady, for whom I had a positive dislike, though my mother thought very highly of her. My last memory of her is of penetrating into her room during the course of her fatal illness. I had been strictly forbidden to do so; and though I went in terror of her at the best of times, some spirit of frightened curiosity pushed me to investigate—I think it was partly to reassure myself that nothing dreadful was happening to her, being a highly nervous and abnormally imaginative child. The result was far from reassuring. I beheld a figure in a dressing-gown, crowned with an awful flapping linen cap, after the fashion of those depicted in Dickens as worn by Mrs. Squeers. She turned a grey angry face on me and told me fiercely to begone, for "a bold child"; bold being Irish nursery parlance for naughty.

I was awestruck when she died, and felt acutely the black shadow that had fallen over the house. But there was no mourning for her, as there would have been had Mobie left us: Mobie the first of

the duchesses, and incomparably one of the dearest memories of my childhood. There never was a sweeter picture of old womanhood, a nobler, a more Christian soul. She was tenderness itself to us children, and the linen-room, in which she sat, was a harbour of refuge for us in all our troubles We were all "Alannah" to her. I have never known her rebuke me but once, and that was when, at the age of six, she caught me reading the lines on a small sister's palm. She told me it was forbidden in the Bible and a great sin; I was so deeply discomfited at hearing severe tones from those lips that I howled uncontrollably, until she took me on her capacious lap and consoled me with brown sugar.

The nurse who followed Shuzzy might well have opened my infant eyes to the value of the departed. She was a young woman, of what her own class would term "genteel" appearance, who had taught needlework in the school of which her husband had been schoolmaster. She had been widowed in sad circumstances, as she was fond of narrating to us children.

Her husband, God rest his soul, had had a bit of a cough, though a finer, stronger man you couldn't have met with; and there was a gentleman riding by one day, a "docthor" retired from practice, and he heard the cough on him as he sat by the porch.

"'And that's a terrible cough ye have, Doyle,' says he, 'and what are ye taking for it?'

"And me husband shows him the bottle of mixture he'd got at the infirmary, and the docthor he looks at it, and takes out the cork, and shakes a drop of it on to his finger and tastes it, and says he: 'That's no use to ye at all, at all! I'll give him something that'll do him good, something that'll cut it,' he says. 'Send one of the little lads up to my house for it. Give him a dose in the morning and I'll ride round and see how he is.'"

Michael, the eldest little boy, was duly sent for that mixture, the dose was administered in the morning before John got out of bed, "and no sooner was it down than he cries out that it's burning him terribly." "Good God," he cried out to the wife, "that's a terrible medicine," and after a while—a very little while it was!—a fit of vomiting "come on him, and it nothing but blood. And when the docthor come round: 'How's Doyle?' he cries.

"'Oh! he's real bad, your honour,' says I. 'Whatever was in the medicine at all, it's the sickness of the world come over him.'

"'Oh, that's right, that's right, that shows it's doing him good. That's cut the cold.'

"'Oh, docthor,' cries I, 'shure, it's blood!'

"'Blood?' says he, and snaps the basin from me hand. 'My God, blood it is!' And he sets it down and he says, 'I'm afeard it was too strong for him.'"

Too strong for him indeed; the man died that night.

This tragic tale made, as may well be imagined, a profound impression upon a mind so prone to picture-making as mine. But even then, a characteristic sense of anger at the injustice filled my soul beyond terrors. I used to ask "Doyle"—we never had any pet name for *her*—again and again, how she could have allowed this crime to go unpunished? All my life, to sit down under wrongdoing has been agony to me. Child as I was, not yet seven, I knew that murder could not be committed with impunity even with the best intentions. But the widow had only one answer: The docthor, poor gentleman, had been very much upset himself and had given her twenty pounds, and "sure wasn't it better to take them, since nothing would have brought poor John back to life!"

I have often wondered what drug in the whole Pharmacopeia could have produced such instantaneous and dire results: or whether the schoolmaster died of common or garden lung trouble?

It will be seen from the above reminiscence how unfit our new nurse was to look after children. She was an irritable, indolent woman, whose idea of discipline was to issue ghoulish threats which any youngster with a grain of common sense would have known were impossible of execution.

"If you don't behave, Master Baby," she would say, "I'll cut out your tongue."

The jovial, sturdy child that my youngest brother

was, merely laughed. He would dance at her and mock, just out of reach.

"Wait till I get my scissors," she would cry, and I have known her to brandish those implements at the little boy, without, I must own, making the slightest impression upon him. But far otherwise was it with me. I went in secret agonies for him; and the dreadful terror was increased by a dream, in which I thought I saw him unable to answer me and frothing at the mouth in the effort. The horror of that dream has haunted me all my life. It was to come back to me in full force in those night watches when I knew him, most gallant, exposed to the unnameable dangers of shell-fire.

It is no wonder that when I lay in bed like to die of a dangerous malady—the time always referred to in the family as "Aggie's big illness"—I would start from delirium calling for Baby; the five-year-old had to be lifted out of his cot to pacify me.

Hospital nurses were things unknown then, and my dear mother generally sat by me day and night, on a high chair too, holding my hand over the rail of my cot; for thus only could I find any peace.

One evening she was forced by those about her to lie down; her place was taken by Mrs. Doyle—the only time I was handed over—fortunately for me—to her ministrations. I don't know how such an illness as I had would be treated now, but one of the rules laid down by the country doctor was that I should be allowed nothing to drink save

half a teaspoonful of water every hour. Tortured with pain, literally dried up with fever, I wailed for water steadily through the long hours, and my attendant spent them in scolding me.

That night, I recollect, the pain had concentrated in my left side; and when I mentioned the fact to Mrs. Doyle, she opined to me that my soul was separating from my body.

After the peritonitis I got gastritis. A specialist was sent for from Dublin; none other than the kindly, gentle, cultivated physician, Sir Francis Cruise; learned authority on Thomas à Kempis. He insisted on a trained nurse, the kind of trained nurse one had in Ireland in those days—a large, elderly, gampish-looking woman in a black stuff gown and a greasy black cap. I don't know that she had any particular idea of nursing, beyond not going to sleep when she sat beside my cot in the night. Keeping herself awake conscientiously with prayers in a loud and ghastly whisper, she contrived to keep me awake very successfully too. I remember the exasperation of hearing that maddeningly audible undertone repeat—doubtless between the nods: "In the Name of the Father—In the Name of the Father"—about sixty times in five minutes, without once concluding the prayer!

Not unkindly, she was certainly otherwise of the class of Sairey Gamp and Betsy Prig. The first thing she did on entering the sick chamber was to march straight over to her tiny patient, strip all the

bedclothes off me and contemplate my feet, remarking loudly, " They're not swollen yet ! "—swelling of the feet was, rightly or wrongly, supposed to be an unmistakable symptom of dissolution. And my mother, knowing it, and knowing too that she had brought me round the worst corner, was very indignant.

The old soul was good-natured, though, and used to play cards with me,—that enthralling game, Happy Families,—when I got better. My mother was horrified, one day coming in accidentally, to hear me inquire, in the accents of my Florence Nightingale, whether—

" Mr. Bull the butcher was at home ? " (Bull and butcher to rhyme with dull and Dutch.)

I never told any one of my terrors ; of Doyle's threats ; of the sick-nurse's habit of whispered prayer in the night. I wonder why ? The mere fact of confiding to a grown-up would have done away instantly with the troubles. What is it that seals the lips of the most loved and cared-for child ? Another dream I had, which dogged my sleeping and waking thoughts for over a year. Could I but have breathed it to an elder, the phantom would have melted away like a mist under sunshine. But I didn't ; and I remained in torment. The mischief originated in the fact that we were allowed to read as many fairy tales as we liked ; and my brain teemed with witches and enchantments, cruel queens, murdered princesses and ruthless stepmothers.

I must have been, I suppose, about six, for it was certainly before the "big illness." I dreamt one night that my mother beckoned Mobie into the linen-room and informed her that she had too many children; that therefore the sister next to me, my special Ellie, would have to be sacrificed; that she, Mobie, would have to perform the deed. Mobie was then presented with a large knife, and little Ellie was summoned. The next thing my dream showed me was a small wooden box in which a Dutch doll, clad in red and blue merino, was lying. This, I knew, was all that was left of my beloved little sister.

Now it would seem that it would be impossible for a child who had never known anything but the utmost tenderness from her mother and actual spoiling from the old housekeeper, to become convinced that these two were conspiring to murder their youthful charges, unless she were half-witted, or suffering from some kind of mental aberration. But I was not mad or an idiot, and yet my nightmare became so living a reality to my imagination that I could not see my sister walk away with my mother without breaking into a cold sweat of anguish. I would not let her run into the linen-room alone. My heart used to stop beating when she was called away from me.

The moral is, I suppose, that sensitive children should not be permitted free pasture, even in the fields of Grimm or Hans Andersen.

XI

My Mother when Young

Here with her face doth memory sit
Meanwhile, and wait the day's decline,
Till other eyes shall look from it,
Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,
Even than the old gaze tenderer:
While hopes and aims long lost with her
Stand round her image side by side,
Like tombs of pilgrims that have died
About the Holy Sepulchre.

D. G. Rossetti.

MY mother was the centre of our childhood's existence. She made for us, as the French have it, rain or fair weather. It is not an exaggeration to say that she was the life and light of that big country house. I don't think there ever were children more passionately attached to their mother than we were; and with reason. We thought her the most beautiful, the most perfect of human beings. She entered into all our pleasures with a zest which I look back on now with amazement, but which is partly explained by the fact that she kept to the last day of her long life an inexhaustible spring of youth, and that, by nature, her love was turned to the small, helpless things of this world—babies and birds and dogs.

Widowed while still in the thirties, by the untimely death of a husband to whom she was devotedly attached, she was left with six children, three properties, and a large country establishment entirely dependent on her management. It was only in after life that any of us realized the incomparable energy and the noble courage of the woman who was our mother. Except for her family—small in years though not in numbers: the eldest was under twelve—she was utterly alone in the world. She had lost father, mother and both brothers before her second child was born.

She shouldered her burthen with a determination that never faltered. It must have been all the harder for her that, up to this, she had been so sheltered, so peculiarly petted and taken care of. The only daughter of rich parents, the only child of a second marriage, her brothers called her their little queen and vied with each other in spoiling her. Her father early came to regard her as the sole heiress of his house and heart ; for one brother died when she was a child and the other concentrated his affections upon her so deeply that this tender fraternal tie became paramount and he never seems to have contemplated the forming of another.

On the day of her marriage and her joyous departure with the man of her choice, he turned from the window through which he had watched the driving away of her bridal coach, and said to the trusted servant of the house, who stood beside him—no

other than our own Mobie—" This is the bitterest hour of my life." He did not long survive it.

In spite of her grief for these losses, the first years of our mother's marriage were full to the brim with happiness and prosperity. She was rich, beloved, indulged; she had a swift and clever mind, singularly open to the beauty and interest of the world wherever she found it. Her natural taste in art was the surest of any one I have ever known; she was herself a brilliant musician, her singing and piano playing being above the average, even of our present standard.

She travelled a good deal and in great state, after the custom of the time, with courier, maids and, later, her first-born son and the redoubtable " Shuzzie "; the baby (a very beautiful child, black-haired and blue-eyed) was—in white satin and feathers—the admired of all beholders. When he was carried out in state with his retinue behind him, Italian soldiers had been known to present arms to him. I wonder what has become of a Harlequin satin ball with which a Queen of Holland presented him? We children used to gaze at it with rather awestruck eyes—Royalty never came *our* nursery way except in name! We were not allowed to play with it. It wouldn't have bounced, anyhow, as it was stuffed with cotton-wool.

My mother was a daring horsewoman and always rode when she had the chance. A very happy, healthy, opulent, good existence she seems to have

led, with all her dresses from Paris, and nothing to do but to say her prayers, gaze at the wonders of the world, make music, and cuddle her baby!

But children came quickly, and the purchase of, and settling down in, a large country place was an amusing, if more laborious experience. She was hardly established in her new home before the clouds gathered across the bright sky. My father developed symptoms of that insidious disease which is the peculiar danger of athletic lives. My mother, who rarely spoke of what she most felt, did, nevertheless, once tell us of a consultation—early in the days of the menace—with a noted Dublin physician, and of seeing tears in that good man's eyes as he contemplated her husband's splendid and apparently vigorous figure: one, it would seem, in the prime of life and strength, already doomed! Beholding those tears, the young wife caught an initial glimpse of the tragedy awaiting her.

My father was ordered, after the enlightenment of the time, to pass his days like an invalid, more or less by the fireside; to give up all violent exercise; to go wrapped from chills and sit guarded from draughts. He would not buy two more years—that was all they gave him—at such a price. He hunted till he could no longer sit in the saddle. And in that rare burst of confidence I have mentioned, our mother told us also how she had stood on the porch of our home one day—one bright, sun-steeped, mild-breathed, sweet-scented autumn

day—and seen him ride away on his fine horse, looking so handsome in his red coat ; watched the elastic swing of his figure ; seen him turn in the saddle at the gate that led from the pleasure ground into the park and wave his hand, smiling, in all the vivid autumn light ; and known that he rode with death ; that literally his days were numbered. The sword of sorrow then pierced her heart.

He died away from home. One of my earliest recollections is being brought by my godmother—a cousin of my father's and the nearest creature my mother had then to turn to—into the great green bed-chamber where the bereaved life was henceforth to be taken up alone.

My young mother, a most unfamiliar figure, weighted with crape, wearing the overwhelming white cap, then the fashion, was sitting in an arm-chair, wiping her streaming eyes with a towel. It is this last fact which remains imprinted on my mind. No handkerchief could suffice for the flood of the widow's grief !

Another recollection—they are like little pictures flung on a screen out of the darkness of oblivion—is of my mother still in the engulfing black, with the cap, to which we were already now accustomed, visiting us in our schoolroom : there seemed to be such a physical weakness upon her that she helped herself from chair to table with grasping hands. These are the only two pictures of break-down I remember in connexion with her

She devoured her bitter sorrow in secret: she never let the shadow of it fall on our young brightness. I have said that all her life she hid her deepest emotions. Perhaps the only way in which she was able to get along at all was by rigidly forbidding them expression. She swept out of sight every token of her dead beloved. Even we children had not a portrait of our father in any room. For years his name never crossed her lips: except in those daily prayers said in common with such faithfulness.

If ever there was a valiant woman it was she! She took up her life with a courage which fills me with admiration now that I know what it must have cost.

It may seem a singular statement, but it is, nevertheless, true, that save for those two vivid mental pictures of uttermost woe, I have hardly any recollections of her during my childhood that are not tinged with her warm and genial mirth. I have never known any one with such a fund of high spirits, so apt to seize the ridiculous side of things, so ready to catch the passing enjoyment. Beneath this buoyancy there was stern foundation, for, indulgent to extravagant petting towards us, our mother observed a certain austerity in her own life, the austerity of the Christian woman who places service of God first; makes of obedience to His commandments the very pavement to her feet. It was, no doubt, her perfect resignation to the Divine will in her sorrow that enabled her to take up her

cross as she did. I think, reflecting now upon the memory, that her extraordinary gaiety of spirit arose from the rectitude of conscience which was the mainspring of all her actions.

Later, the multitudinous anxieties which every large family must bring to a mother's heart, something, too, of its sweet and piteous jealousies at the inevitable loss of the supreme place, made my dear mother's moods of joyousness more and more interrupted by depression; until, indeed, they became rather the exceptions. Notwithstanding this, however, to the last day of her long life she loved a laugh and a joke. She could be made happy by the smallest trifle. The intelligence or the prettiness of a caged canary would cheer her for a day. All she asked of life, indeed, was to have us all about her. To the end, the sight of our faces round her bed was the sum of her happiness.

In the big, sunny, nobly proportioned Georgian country house which was the home of my early years there was an oratory where Mass was said frequently; and where, every afternoon, all the children and servants assembled for rosary. For our Sunday Mass we drove to a little chapel-of-ease: a poor, sad, damp place to bear so romantic a name as that of Ratheniska. A heated curate would ride the five long Irish miles from the county town; and we and the neighbouring farmers and peasants formed the crowded congregation. So successfully did Cromwell's persecution destroy churches and

chapels in the Island of Saints; so determinedly, up to comparatively recent times, did English rule crush all the efforts of the predominant Catholic population to restore its worship, that to this day in Ireland, Catholics seem less well provided with missions than in the land of Protestantism. Five miles is certainly an average distance for the poor to walk to their obligatory Sunday Mass. In wild places, less populous than ours, peasants have been known to tramp, carrying their boots in their hands, eight or ten Irish miles in every weather and on any kind of road, for the privilege of attending the supreme sacrifice.

Our Irish cook tells us how her mother, the wife of a well-to-do farmer in a Catholic corner of "the black North," would take up her post in the porch of her home, with pails of warm water to wash the travel-worn feet of the pilgrims.

The light of an early Christian fervour shone bright in the Ireland of those days. The Ireland of to-day shouts a great deal about her past grievances, but, in spite of complete religious emancipation and wide financial support, has she not lost much that made her rare and lovely?—the burning fidelity of her poor, the austere rectitude of her home life, the matchless modesty of her women.

To come back to our Sundays. There was no second service in desolate Ratheniska, and every Sunday afternoon my young mother would ring the oratory bell and summon nursery, schoolroom

and household, when she would herself read out a sermon.

These sermons were of a rigid, Early Victorian type of piety, in which sinfulness and justice were more insisted upon, perhaps, than mercy and confidence. I was so small that my legs stuck out straight in front of me when seated by that sweet lay-preacher—she always had the youngest by her side. The long words in her solemn voice made a deep impression on my infant mind ; I must confess, a gloomy, terrifying impression. Such considerations as The Last Judgment ; the soul brought face to face with its crimes ; the immeasurable responsibility incurred when even an idle word would have to be accounted for—rang in my small brain like the tolling of a bell. I was oppressed with the consciousness of guilt.

Curiously enough, although a succession of ignorant nursemaids regaled my ears with tales of devils and damnation that might have emanated from the most fanatic era of puritanism, it was never the punishments of crime that alarmed me, but the dread of crime itself. I was perpetually imagining myself guilty of unpardonable sin, and would crawl about the house loaded with inner chains of remorse, which an unconquerable timidity prevented my ever unlocking, even under the seal of confession. Our kindly white-haired old priest was certainly the last person to inspire panic. He had, indeed, a way of interrupting our lists of

peccadilloes with a good-humoured "That'll do, me dear, that'll do!" which ought to have reassured the most sensitive; his opinion being that too much zeal was not to be encouraged, even in the polishing of consciences. His wholesome, breezy sanctity; my mother's eminently sane and large-minded theories of religion—in spite of Dr. Murray's sermons—ought to have blown away the cobwebs that obscured and distorted my juvenile outlook, but I was shut off in a child's inviolable world. I could not break out of it. I would have died rather than try, poor atom! I wonder if other nicely washed and brushed little children, coming down, shyly smiling, to be presented to visitors, hide away such mysterious deeps of misery in the bosom of their starched frocks. Besides the sickly terrors of my conscience, I was, no doubt, a prey to what—I must use the German word—can only be described as *Weltschmerz*. I remember sitting on a sofa, still too young to bend my knees over its edge, listening to my mother playing Chopin, while waves and waves of the most intense melancholy poured over me. I can truly say, knowing what the sorrow of life can be, that I have seldom had a more tragic hour! Perhaps a good deal of a child's self-tormenting reticencies arise from the sense of its inarticulateness. The child of my period, moreover, had a humble opinion of itself. It was desperately afraid of being laughed at. It is not an inconvenience which the present generation suffers from.

Like most mistresses of a large country house in a lonely district, my mother was dispenser of advice, charity, and medicine to all who came to seek it, whether they were under her own jurisdiction or only of the tramping beggar class. When there was an accident in the hayfield, or yet when a quarrel passed beyond the bounds of vituperation, " the misthress " was instantly summoned. When the lad with the varicose veins had a hæmorrhage, she hurried to the spot to superintend the bandaging. When a frenzied young harvester attacked the worker next to him, a girl, with a reaping hook and made a large gash in her leg, " the misthress " again appeared on the scene to administer succour and justice with equal unhesitancy. I happened to be a terrified little witness of the drama, and I have not forgotten the sobbing girl, the clamouring crowd, each giving his or her own account of the incident, the sullen, abashed criminal. Neither have I forgotten my mother's ringing tones of denunciation. She rated him up and down, and turned him off the premises, then and there ; discharging him from all future service on the property. I do not suppose the injury was severe, or the youth could not have escaped so lightly.

What strikes me now was the utter fearlessness of the unprotected mistress of the large estate ; her absolute dominion over a community so excitable and undisciplined. I may here cite another instance of her personal courage. One night, about a week

after the arrival of a new, highly recommended, elderly butler, she was roused by strange sounds. She lit her candle, got up, put on her dressing-gown, and sallied forth herself to discover their origin. One might have thought that she would at least have summoned some member of the numerous household to accompany her, but the idea never seems to have dawned upon her. It being summer-time, my mother wore a voluminous, white, washing dressing-gown, and always, then and in later years, a charming little white lawn nightcap, trimmed with delicate lace and tied under her chin with narrow strings of the same. It was vastly becoming to her. With a large, silver, flat candlestick in her hand, she must have looked a quaintly domestic avenging angel as she descended into the stone kitchen regions from whence the clamour rose. In a kind of box-room she found Hamilton, the new pantry autocrat, indulging in a solitary night orgy, in the middle of half-unpacked, newly arrived cases of wine. The place was littered with straw and broken bottles. He was chanting and dancing, holding a flat candlestick—similar to that in my mother's hand, only of tin—upside down, the tallow from its flaming candle guttering over the litter of straw. Need it be added that he was roaring drunk?

My mother wrested the candlestick from his grasp, put it in safety, proceeded to arouse one of the footmen, and delivered the reveller into his charge. Any one who has had anything to do with Irish

people can realize the good-will with which this youth marshalled his superior to his bedroom. I wonder whether in all his domestic life, afterwards, he ever tasted again such a moment of ecstasy as that in which he was able to kick the butler. My mother went calmly back to bed without disturbing any other inmate of the house. She was very indignant next morning; amused, too, but not in the least aware that she had run any personal danger or displayed unwonted bravery for her sex.

Yet if the drunkard, instead of being musical and maudlin, had had what the French call "*le vin mauvais*," how would it have been? My mother's physical strength was by no means equal to her spirit. She was a creature of the most delicate constitution. Her satin-white skin would bruise, we children declared, with a look. Her health never recovered the shattering effects of her early grief. I always remember her fragile, walking slowly, with frequent rests, in some ways leading the life of an invalid, with breakfast in bed, and the like precautions. Yet her vitality dominated her surroundings, always, so long as she lived.

In the wide, bright passage between her own room and the oratory, there was a cupboard which contained shelves full of sensible and homely remedies: castor oil, black draught, iodine, packets of senna tea, and other drastic and admired drugs; rolls of bandages made out of old linen, the ointment of the period, whatever it was; arnica, too, of course, of

which free use was made for bruises, apparently in ignorance of its danger in certain cases. There were also (to us brats a spectacle of intense horror and interest mixed) two large jars of leeches. To apply leeches, sometimes as many as three or four, was a panacea more practised and believed in, in my extreme youth, than would be perhaps credited now. A cut, symptoms of congestion after a bad fall, an inflamed eye, a contusion, a swelling of any kind, was preferably treated by leeches, always applied by the ladies of the household. I remember very well gazing awestricken into the linen-room to behold our squat, rufous, freckled, whiskered coachman, Coss, sitting in the armchair by the window, groaning heavily in the hands of Mobie. He had a large gash in his forehead after a fall from a horse; and Mobie, without a shadow on her apple-blossom countenance, was calmly applying leeches to the neighbourhood of the wound; the theory apparently being that the patient having shed a certain quantity of blood, you were to assist nature by enabling him to lose some more.

When any of us had to undergo the leech cure, we invariably howled over it, though I cannot remember even the initial nibble causing the least suffering. The rest of us made a thrilled semi-circle of observation. From the moment when the slimy objects were applied, to the moment when they dropped off—satiated or induced to relinquish their hold by the application of a pinch of salt—

we were enthralled. Once there was a terrible scare when a jarful of leeches was upset and no trace of them could be found. I don't think they were ever found. Our lives were haunted by fears of the bloodsuckers in the dark. Horrible idea! to wake up and find something hanging to your foot.

The smell of that medicine cupboard is in my nostrils yet: a concentrated atmosphere of chemist's shop.

Never a day passed but some hunched figure, wrapped in mud-coloured rags, would come stealing up the lime-tree avenue, flit shamefacedly round the front of the house to ring at the back door. My mother would produce the necessary drug from her pharmacopœia if it was a case of illness, food and clothing if it was one of poverty. She made it a rule seldom or never to give money to the ambulant beggar, and I remember once a tattered, elderly, bearded mendicant dancing with fury on the hunch of bread and substantial slices of meat which had been pressed upon him, declaring in a falsetto of rage the while, "It's your money I want, an' not your vittles!"

On another occasion the sister next to me, aged about six at the time, allowed a specious person, also of the male persuasion, to walk away with four red flannel petticoats, the elaborate stitching of which was our nursery share of the Xmas charities. He fled down the avenue with his booty before the elders could intervene, and, no doubt, got the price of

many a drink out of their substantial scarlet breadths.

Yet another time, there was a more poignant drama. In the absence of my mother and the rest of us, my elder brother happened to be the only member of the family left in the house to receive the plaint of a groaning old lady, highly dilapidated both as to garments and body, who demanded "in the name of God a drop of spirits to ease the terrible pain in her in'ards!" The schoolboy was laughed at by butler and cook, to whom he applied for the stimulant. The Irish servant is very hard-hearted to the Irish beggar. But the sufferer would not take a refusal. Was there nothing his honour could give her out of a bottle? Sure, God help her, a drop of anything out of a bottle was all she asked! Thus goaded, he produced the only fluid he could lay his hands on. This was turpentine in a large black jar.

"I'm afraid it won't be any use to you," he began, but she, seeing the flagon, clawed at it, and raining praises on Heaven and blessings on him, fell upon it. The first gulp produced, as might have been expected, a revulsion of feeling. The beldame first began to curse with even more energy than she had blessed, then fell to rocking herself backwards and forwards on the doorstep, screaming lustily that she was poisoned.

Thus it was that returning from our walk we found them, my brother plaintively explaining that he had warned her he didn't think it *would* "agree with her."

Here was a situation where my mother's sense of humour was certain to overcome her. I believe half-a-crown prevented the beggar woman's instant dissolution ; but it remained a standing joke against the son of the house.

It was very necessary for the " Lady of the Coort " (as she was known in the district) to intervene in cases of sickness among the peasantry, for the remedies in vogue in the Ireland of the day were as peculiar as they were pernicious. Passing three times under a donkey and then pricking the " bad place " with a gooseberry thorn was a favourite treatment for a stye in the eye. Hammering a nail into an aching tooth was another mediæval practice. Applying cobwebs on a wound is popular to this day in all parts of the United Kingdom, we believe.

A sister of mine, dangerously ill with scarlet fever, was given the stale contents of all the holy-water fonts in the house as a really certain specific, by Dadgie, the housemaid, who was wounded to the depths of her pious soul by my mother's subsequent indignation.

Moreover, we were five Irish miles from the nearest town, so that some home doctoring was necessary. Every spring a certain wile was practised upon us, quite superfluously as it happened, to make us partake of a medicament which was considered highly beneficial. A large jar of mixed black treacle and sulphur was placed at the corner of the table, with a spoon invitingly stuck in the compound ;

and we were strictly forbidden to partake of it, with the result that the contents promptly disappeared. I believe this remedy can be no other than Mrs. Squeers' Brimstone and Treacle, to which the pupils at Dotheboys Hall so strenuously objected. I recollect it as a most agreeable mixture.

Far otherwise was it with the weekly cup of senna, made, with the mistaken idea that it would thereby prove more palatable, exactly like real tea, with milk and sugar, and brought to us steaming hot, by Mobie, with unflinching regularity.

"Hold your nose, now, Alanna, and drink it down and you won't taste it a bit."

But that, even, was better than castor oil, given, of all horrible ways, on brandy. It is fitting to draw a veil over reminiscences so acutely disagreeable, and to return to those others, all of sweetness and family love, which circle round our mother. There were the evenings in the library, when she would read to us—she had a lovely voice and a perfect method of reading aloud—the entrancing novels of Walter Scott. Her own thorough enjoyment of the stories added zest to ours. I remember with what fits of laughter she rendered the tipsy jocosities of Roger Wildrake, and of the extra point given to her merriment by the interjections of a mild, mooney old maid who happened to be staying with us at the time: "The naasty, naasty man!" —she had a very flat brogue—"To think of their being like that, even in those days!" There were

the long pottering walks round the farm and the stables; my mother had the eye of a master for every detail, and the heart of a most compassionate woman for every sign of suffering in the dumb stock. I remember her flame of wrath when the bloodhound watch-dog was found without water. "Tanner" was a creature whom no one dared approach except herself, a stable-man and the head washerwoman, who adored him. She brought him the water herself, and stood patting and fondling him while he fawned upon her little hand.

I remember her passing in review a long line of sleek dairy cows in their stalls, and pausing before one who was coughing, declaring the animal was very ill; a statement which was received with a respectful scoff by the dairyman.

"Ah! sure, not at all, me lady, me'am. It's a fly in her throat the creature's got. God bless her!"

But my mother insisted. The steward was sent for—a functionary known in England as the bailiff, I believe—and upon examination my mother's diagnosis was found only too correct. The cow had inflammation of the lungs, and had to have a bottle of brandy poured down her throat to save her life.

No wonder that her folk respected her, that the word of the mistress was law in her own realm! Just, kind, eminently unsentimental, she was the most individual woman I have ever met. There was never any one less influenced in her opinions than she. She formed them swiftly and unalter-

ably: a rigid Catholic, a strong Tory, she was a type of an Early Victorian gentlewoman that has almost passed away. But while she shared, no doubt, with many of her class, certain theories and sentiments, what was entirely her own was her charm, her spontaneity, her ready wit, her appreciation of beauty in all its manifestations, whether in art or feeling.

In the latter part of her life, long after she had given up her beautiful country home for a banal London house, she sought solace and recreation chiefly in music. She then made acquaintance with one of the greatest artists of the day; and their mutual friendship was, it is not too much to say, the chief interest and pleasure of her declining years. He had for her an affection half filial, half romantic, that was altogether charming. Surrounded by the sycophantic adulation of multitudes as he was, it was singular to see what a few words of appreciation from her lips meant for him. She was not a demonstrative woman, but a look of her great blue-grey eyes, and the phrase *"Ah, comme c'était beau!"* in her pretty, half-timid French, would transport him.

"How exquisite she is!" he would cry, turning round to us, her children. "Listen to Maman! How she has said that!"

When failing health confined her altogether to bed, he, on a brief visit to London, prepared a surprise for her, with the zest of a child and the devotion of a son. He hired a small piano, carefully

chosen by himself, had it transported with infinite precautions to the landing outside her bedroom, and there, with the door open between them, sat and played to her alone, as only he could play.

The beloved woman was delighted and listened in smiling ecstasy; though she was not perhaps so overwhelmed and surprised as were her family. She took the attentions of others with a kind of queenly amenity, as her due.

She said to a daughter, when he had gone, "I shall never see him again," and she was right.

It was very shortly afterwards that she went out of life, with the same dignity that she had always shown. A man who, also, had been to her as a son, who loved her with the curious strength of attachment she had the power of inspiring, said: "She left us as gracefully as she did everything."

She was eighty-five when she died. Her hearing, her sight, were perfect. She kept to the end the rose-leaf freshness of her complexion, the satiny whiteness of her hands, the brilliant gaze of her eyes, the row of white teeth like that of a young girl. Her smile of welcome was, always, a thing of beauty. It marked her countenance in her last sleep so singularly and so touchingly that the final memory of her links back to that of my childhood, and is all, as far as she is concerned, of joy.

XII

The Garden of my Youth

. . . In life's first hour
God crowned with benefits my childish head.
Flower after flower, I plucked them ; flower by flower
Cast them behind me, ruined, withered, dead.

R. L. Stevenson.

WHEN you stood upon the step of the Ionic granite porch in the front of my old Irish home, you looked down a sweep of gravel to a broad stretch of lawn, velvet turf of a deep emerald green compared to which the grass plots of my Villino on the sandy height become pathetic and ludicrous spectacles. In the centre of this curve of sward was a fountain where green-bronze herons with bent necks and joining wings were grouped. On either side great half-moon beds were filled with azaleas. Beyond the lawn was a sunk fence. The park swept away, with here and there stately clumps of trees to the distant belt of woodland that girdled the boundary walls. One of my surprises, on my first visit to England, was to find quite fine properties enclosed by nothing better than fencing or hedges. The sense of rounding up and dignity given by a high boundary wall seems to me still the

necessary finish to an estate. Nevertheless it is, I am well aware by my mother's account books, one of those counsels of perfection that spell heavy expense. Beyond the dark woods, then, was the lovely view of hills against the horizon; hills high enough to be purple and blue, to be noble in rise and fall, but not high enough to rank as mountains.

If you went down from the porch and turned to the left, and then again to the left by the north bow of the house, you passed a shrubbery slope—there was a weeping willow on it which made a fascinating green fairy-house for us children—and you went up steps and, through a narrow doorway set in a great wall, into the walk that led to the garden; a narrow, dark wall it was, with bushes of syringa and snowberry tree on either side. I have always hated the snowberry tree because of its delusiveness. You felt you ought to like it. Nurses and governesses drew your attention to it as something peculiarly apt to entrance the infant mind. I was a docile child. I used to try to admire, to think squashing its fruits fun. The result was infinite boredom: I have banned it from the garden of my age.

The way towards the garden was uphill till you reached a space entirely overshadowed by an immense yew-tree. No matter how fierce the sun, it was always black under those layers of branches, and our governesses and nurses were fond, on hot days, of sitting on the rustic bench that encircled its massive trunk. We did not like it. Children

hate gloom. It was also supposed to be haunted by Lady Tidd, the former owner of the property, as vouched for by one of our gardeners, whose hat, he declared, "riz off his head at the spectacle" —though what the spectacle was, was not defined. Besides which we were strictly warned that the small squashy red berries of the yew were deadly poison and, after the fashion of juvenile Eves and Adams, could never resist surreptitiously tasting them on the sly; afterwards anxiously awaiting symptoms, which, as we were careful only to nibble, never appeared.

The one thing that was charming in the circle of Cimmerian shade was the view through the tall, narrow iron gate into the lovely many-hued brightness of the garden beyond.

That garden wall must have been about ten feet high. The gate was always locked, but the governess had a key. I can see still in mental vision two or three of us clinging to the rungs together and kicking violently, impatient to be admitted. I don't remember loving the garden for its beauty, yet it must have been the unconscious satisfaction produced on my undeveloped mind by the spaciousness, the order, the colour and glory that makes my memory of it to-day so full of sweetness. Over each side of the narrow gate as you went in were large myrtles, and just behind one of them was a tap; scene of our most vehement struggles with authority. The person in charge, if she was wary,

would make a clutch at the small boy's shoulder, and steer him past. But it was often he managed evasion, and snatched instants of perilous joy, accompanied by drenched clothes,—for it was a very explosive tap. Beyond the tap, against the wall, were big bushes of Corchorus Japonica ; its blossom we despised, then, because we were allowed to pluck it as much as we liked, but I love it now, not only for its associations but for itself.

It is a plant with two names ; and a niece of mine declares that she has never gone into a nursery and asked its owner for Corchorus Japonica that he has not met her request with a broad stare of incomprehension ; nor, on the attributes of the article being described, has he ever failed to exclaim with the lip and accents of scorn, " Oh, Kerry-er, you mean." Whether the scorn were for her ignorance or for the paltriness of the bush remains obscure.

A gravel walk ran through the middle of this lower garden, which sloped decidedly upward. Each side of this walk, my mother, early in my recollections, established her rose garden. I have such struggles with my own rose garden that I look back as upon a fairy tale to that vision of green turf and beautifully foliaged trees, constellated with blossoms. Did they never have black spot, mildew, nor yet blight ? But, besides the shelter provided by high walls round a wide sunny slope, no doubt the possession of a very superior gardener

and a good many underlings considerably facilitated the approaches to perfection.

Flannigan, the autocrat in the Garden of my Youth, was a bearded personage of whom we went in considerable awe. The prizes he won at the big county flower shows testified to his skill. Of course, as every one knows, the gardener's excellence of those days consisted chiefly in his successes in bedding out, as well as in the opulent show of the conservatories. Herbaceous borders were mere accidents; with us they were relegated to the kitchen garden; of which more anon.

There was one very fine old conservatory. It was Georgian in style, with a centre dome and two long wings, like the orangery at Osterly Park. The central erection was filled by a mass of glow and fragrance which almost took your breath away when you entered: staged to the roof, tier upon tier, in the most vivid colouring: calceolarias, geraniums, fuchsias, lilies, heliotrope, begonias; that is one recollection! There is another, of the spring parade: hyacinths, azalea-indica, lily of the valley, cytisus, arums; quantities of primula, cineraria in the old crude colourings. Is it only the magnifying property of childish impressions, or were these greenhouse treasures altogether finer than what one gets now-a-days? Certainly the primulas were, and I think the hyacinths; huge waxen spikes, almost too sweet. The musk of my youth, too, is a lost gem; its fragrance has

evaporated into the past, as, the master of the Villino declares, has the scent of the sweet-briar of his boyhood's first recollections.

There was a climber, a kind of begonia, I suppose, that had bunches of blossoms the colour and shape of cooked lobster claws. I remember when it was a new and rare thing ; and my mother's interest in its first bloom. I know nothing by experience of hot-house cultivation, the two little Villino greenhouses being entirely devoted to seedlings, cuttings, and the forcing of a few hardy flowering plants for the house ; it is, however, not " sour grapes " that makes me say that a conservatory kept up for show in the middle of a big walled garden is rather waste of energy. My dream is to have a succession of loveliness indoors. There is a house I know in Dorsetshire where, in pre-war days, in a golden drawing-room, great gilt baskets full of scarlet begonias used to be placed at the foot of the pillars that divide the beautiful room. It is a room that possesses furniture of the unattainable type ; one Indian cabinet being literally set with emeralds on a gold inlay ; the kind of room which, a sister of mine declares, makes one recall one's own hitherto cherished surroundings, and feel like a worm. Hothouse plants are almost demanded by the dignity of such an apartment ; but the last time I saw it, it contrived to look very effectively adorned by masses of evening primroses in the big gilt receptacles.

The rose gardens established by my mother were no doubt a great improvement, nevertheless I have a memory of an earlier time when the beds on both sides of the long walk were set with breeder tulips; tulips nearly as tall as myself. When I bent the stems towards me, I could just look over the rim into the chalice. I have had a special love for tulips always, perhaps because of this baby rapture—such glorious things as they were to me, with the sun shining through their striped petals, glowing carmine and purple, bronze and green, black and orange, or yet the colour of sugar stick! I have striven in vain, ever since I had a garden of my own, to recapture those superb giants. They were late-flowering, and grew out of a carpet of what, I think, was pink saponaria.

The kitchen garden was our real playground. It was divided from the more pompous purlieus by a bisecting wall, erected no doubt for the fruit trees which were trained against it. You entered it through a narrow gate up two steps, and right before you was the middle walk with the herbaceous borders, filled with flowers which we children might pluck as much as we liked; and which, in consequence, we despised. With what rapture would I not hail such a possession now!—a long gravel walk, steadily uphill, box-bordered, as were all the beds in the garden; to right and left about six feet deep of rich brown earth up to espalier apple-trees, filled to overflowing with every kind of old-world flower;

damask roses and pompom roses, and what is called the common blush; immense clumps of (perennial) snapdragon, deep crimson, red and white, and yellow; turk's cap lilies, darling little creatures, black, orange and scarlet, and even the white; "globed peonies," the seeds of which entered largely into our games, as did, by the way, the flowers of snapdragon—we used to run at each other, making them bite; sweet williams; the uninteresting phlox of the day. In spring these borders were two dazzling lines of the white narcissi. We could gather sheaves of them and make no impression. The May altar of the little chapel at Ratheniska, which it was our yearly excitement to arrange, was one throne of pheasant-eye and bluebell down to the ground; the incense of it would greet one from the blue-washed porch of the poor place where I never remember any other incense.

There was a plot of polyantha primroses between the currant bushes and the cabbages; spread for no reason save that we children might pluck the flowers. The polyantha of that day were hardly larger than cowslips; all dull oranges and toneless blacks and browns, like some people's eyes, the opacity of which conceals all expression. There used to be great enthusiasm when the first blossoms appeared, but I think that in our hearts we hated them; perhaps because there were so much more entrancing flowers we might not pull: crocuses, to wit, in the beds in front of the house. I am perhaps

exaggerating the perverseness of our characters, for the primroses which sheeted the dell were always a delirium of joy, and so were the snowdrops which pushed up everywhere through the shrubberies and walks. The first snowdrop! I have not forgotten being set to pluck it, with little fingers stiff with cold in knitted gloves; fingers still so small that the said gloves consisted of a bag and a thumb! What infinite precautions one had to take to pluck a delicate little creature like a snowdrop! And, short as four years old may be, stooping is not so easy when one is buckled up in gaiters and woolly drawers and armoured in a caped pelisse. The sense of constriction was increased by the white satin rosettes over each ear, appertaining to the strings which tied the white beaver hat under the chin. The same tired woman who writes to-day was the funny, bunchy little girl who trotted along the frozen paths and pulled the head off the snowdrop to hand it solemnly to the smiling, adored Mamma!

On winter days we were usually turned into the garden—followed by one governess, if not two, a nurse, and perhaps a nursemaid—to play with our hoops; nevertheless my chief memories of the place are of autumn. When I think back on it, it is always as of a mild October dreaminess; a yellow and grey day, with honey rifts in the early sunset clouds—and the smell of the apples and burning weeds, and dead leaves; the fragrance of the violets; a robin singing somewhere, bitter

sweet. Yet it must have been loveliest in the late spring, with the huge lilac trees (which Shaw, the false lover, cut down to our fury); with apple-blossom and narcissus-riot; with tulips and peony; crown imperial and jonquil.

Shaw was a whiskered young man, with free and easy manners; a poor substitute for the magnificent Flannigan. Once coming across him dropping slugs into a large pail of salt and watching with some disquietude their effervescent dissolution, I remarked, in self-reassurance, "I don't suppose those kind of creatures suffer."

"Quite the contrary, miss," he responded, at the same time dropping a particularly juicy monster into the compound; "they have their little feelings, *just* as we have."

I do not think now that, as the owner of a garden, I would ever waste a pang over a slug; and I wish I had the courage to tear a wasp negligently in two, as Shaw was wont to do. He would perform this feat in the course of the conversation, in an unconscious kind of way, as one may knock ash off a cigarette.

A sad turn of the wheel of fate brought about the desertion of the home of my childhood. The house was shut up, the property farmed out, the garden—the Garden of my Youth—was turned into a potato field. There was at last even a question that the estate might be sold. The condition of Ireland did not make of Irish land a particularly

attractive asset for the soldier who eventually inherited it. But my brother went to see the old place. He sat on the granite steps of the porch. The grass had grown up to them, and was waving to his knee above the gravel sweep that had been kept in such perfect trim under my mother's rule. The azaleas had spread into a wild tangle. The bent necks of the herons rose above the rough herbage which hid the rim of the marble basin from sight. He looked across the rolling parkland to the dark embrace of the woods, and beyond that to the purple line of hills against the tender Irish sky. The beauty and peace of it all entered into his soul. His own place! He would not give it up, he could not.

Every lover of Ireland knows the poetic qualities of the country; how memories, exquisite and melancholy, seem to be hovering in the air. The land broods upon a past far distant from sordid party strife. She was the Island of Saints. From her, light came out into the darkness; she was as the star of the northern hemisphere in the sky of Christendom when the clouds of Paganism obscured the world. It seems to me that if you listen you can still hear the bells of her cathedrals; the chant of her monks and nuns; perhaps, too, rumours from that lost cycle of glory when Tara was a wonder and a splendour, and her chieftains went in silver armour and cloaks of crimson dye; when her Druids knew the secrets of Nature and had a power

that was not evil, but which sprang from some communion with Divine Wisdom vouchsafed to a pure and noble race.

The spell of Ireland that lies upon the spirit with an indescribable sweetness, it fell upon the soldier's soul, intensified by the appeal of early memories, the cry of the soil to its own. At that moment he had but one thought; to get back to his own again; somehow! As a little child, not old enough to speak articulately, he had had an invariable answer to the question which children are so fond of putting to each other: "What will you be when you grow up?"—"A cunky gentleman!"

When the war should be over, that dream must be realized. Never was innocent wish more ardently cherished, more eagerly worked for! Plans and estimates for the first necessary repairs were always in his hands; the things he thought of and talked of even in the midst of preparations for the long, long journey. Beside the swift and awful waters of the Tigris, on those desolate mud flats, burning by day and freezing by night, we know that the point of rest in his uncomplaining soul was the thought of his home.

Our soldiers do not fight the less well, but rather the more nobly, because of their passionate yearning for their own; for the grey sky and the moist soft wind of a hunting morning; the sight of the green fields; the long good hours in the saddle, with the fire on the hearth to come back to.

The home of my childhood had always, to my earliest recollection, something of sadness in its beauty. The long hauntings that pursued my baby soul in its corridors; that wailed in the music and fell on me in the watches of the night; the breath out of the woods that sometimes made a blackness even of a primrose dell in the full glory of the sunshine; those hauntings have been fulfilled. Yet the place is all the dearer for them, and for the presence that must always be there for us now, as a passionate regret.

The old place has come into the charge of the one whom the soldier most loved on earth. In these days when life and death are as comrades clasping hands on a dark night; when youth and gallantry and splendour go down in waves into the valley of shadow, may one not feel as if one could pierce the mist and see the dear faces shining in the light of the hill-top? They cannot be very far from us, our best and dearest, who have given themselves and their cherished dreams and their unfulfilled lives without so much as a complaining thought. From that happier home, that achieved peace, those green pastures, does not our soldier turn a serene gaze of blessing upon the haunt of his childhood's best memories: his manhood's unrealized dreams?

XIII

October, 1918

> You are the storm that mocks
> Yourselves: you are the rocks
> Of your own doubt.
>
> *Crashaw.*

PEACE, like the star of the morning, has begun to shine, a steady gleam in our dark night. We know that the dawn must yet come, and the sun rise, before the new day. But the star is there for all to see, hanging in the firmament. The proverb, "It is always darkest before the dawn," has justified itself as such catchwords of popular wisdom have a way of doing.

None of us are ever likely to forget the black hours of the retreat of March, the fall of Kemmel, the drive on the Marne. Nevertheless, many there were who kept their indomitable hopefulness through it all.

"I thought better of you!" said a wounded soldier severely to us. "You've no call to be upsetting yourself. What if we 'ave gone back? If we'd gone back twice as far again, I wouldn't think nothing of it! Why, I 'elped to dig them there trenches before Amiens myself. It's what we

expected, and we're holding them up. What d'you want more ? Very good news I call it ! "

" I am surprised," said a Canadian chaplain on leave, in much the same tone of rebuke, " at the long faces I see about me in England. We're not like that at the front. Even the peasants from the evacuated villages are all smiles as they come along the roads. They know what's being got ready for the Germans. They know it won't be for long ! "

Was it the inspiration of the good cause, some supernatural grace of confidence, or the impression of Foch's genius, combined with magnified stories of the reserves then under his control ? It is hard to say, but here were exhausted troops, a devastated country, the worst months of long years of appalling warfare, and the certainty of victory never stood so high in France. Explain it as you like ; but it seems to us that if you eliminate the manifestations of Divine protection during this war, you find yourself confronted with inexplicable problems.

In one of those first months of 1914, when the soul was so buffeted by the evil tempest which ran shrieking and destroying over the world that it was little wonder it seemed to be lost in chaos, Father Bernard Vaughan said these remarkable words : " The soldiers who go forward in a righteous cause, already carry the flame of victory on their foreheads." The thousands and thousands of our soldiers who carried this flame of victory on brows

already shining, too, with the first radiance of the Light Eternal, as surely bought the triumph of righteousness for the world in their blood, as the martyrs the triumph of the faith. There are those who declare that the fact of such a war being permitted demonstrates the non-existence of God, but there is another way of looking at it. It is that this war has proved that there is no limit to the degeneration of humanity, once it has set itself to live without God. You might as well, it seems to us, deny all good, all justice, all mercy, because we have seen them brutally abused. Does not the very horror and indignation we feel at the violation of the Christian mandate prove its existence? These are times for solemn thought; to the believer they are times of revelation. He will see written, as on a monster blackboard, the great essential lessons of faith, law and morals. Here is the logical outcome of the philosophy that denied the Divinity of Christ, and *ipso facto*, the principles of Christianity. Here is the result of the apotheosis of might, the Nietzschean theory of the superman, the Darwinian theory of the survival of the fittest. The weak must go, because they are weak. The strong must triumph, because they are strong. There is no such thing as evil in the exercise of might, it is not merely a law of nature, it is a counsel of perfection.

Doubters forget that the Founder of Christianity warned His disciples from the beginning what they

were to expect. They look to One Who said: "Take up thy cross and follow Me." Who said: "My kingdom is not of this world." One Who said, too: "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against you"; and also: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill," and "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Now, from the very beginning, if Christ taught anything, He taught that from defeat and disaster, from sacrifice and death, spring life and glory; that the humble of the world shall confound the proud and rich; that if there is one spirit abhorrent to Him and to His Heavenly Father, one manifestation of human error certain to draw down visible vengeance, it is Pride, the gross pride of material might. The history of the world has shown us the tragedy which awaits every conqueror. Ruthless power has never sat in comfort on its ill-gotten throne. From Hannibal deserted in the plains of Italy; Cæsar weltering in his blood in the forum; Nero in the Cloaca, lacking courage to commit suicide; Napoleon at St. Helena—to Bismarck, dismissed by the royalty he had committed crime to serve, the end of the tyrant is surely humiliation. Charles V saved himself by voluntary abnegation, and Charlemagne saw with dying eyes, in prophetic vision, the advance of the Barbarian horde which was to overthrow all his labours.

What a series of startling illustrations of the

Christian tenet, the most obnoxious to rebellious humanity, yet the most sternly insisted upon: "He that exalteth himself shall be humbled!" Its corollary, that the poor and the simple should confound the superb, is written on that blackboard too, set up before our eyes to-day, in great strokes —trampled and betrayed Belgium; she has been as the net round the foot of the conqueror, even as Serbia, throttled by the predatory hand of Austria, that country that was to be exterminated, blotted from the map, is now knocking at the gates of a doomed empire! The scrap of paper is the death warrant of the Hohenzollern. The seed of the contemptible little army has broken the Hindenburg line. The contemptible little army itself saved the world. The murdered children, the helpless women, the robbed and plundered poor, even to the little orchard closes, the humble village churches, the defenceless cathedrals, what power they have this day, out of their destruction, to destroy in their turn! Every manifestation of German brutality has been as a hammer stroke in the chain that is to bind her henceforth. There is not a martyred, tortured native in her Colonies that does not share in the welding of it.

This day on which we are writing, the 28th of October, 1918, there is in *The Times* an account of the condition in which the German U-boat officers left a charming artistic house in Bruges. "It is not human work," says the eye-witness, "it is in

precisely the state in which a troop of Barbary apes would leave a mansion after four years' tenancy."

Add to this the damage which is deliberate, scientific ; that what has not been defiled and destroyed in drunken orgies has been methodically laid waste with hammer and chisel. Yet the German is the perfection of the human animal ; the superman, as produced by the light of his own trained intelligence. First Christ and His ideals were obliterated from minds so superior ; then these minds started a system of kultur—Heaven save the mark ! the word stinks in the nostrils—which was to be implanted by force upon the whole world. Admire the development of the natural intellect, ye philosophers, behold the doctrine of evolution in practice ; " Barbary Apes ! " or, as one of their own non-commissioned officers exclaimed, when he crossed the threshold of this particular house on its surrender before the evacuation : " *Schweinerei !* "

Let us turn our thoughts to the English soldier as we know him. These chronicles of the Villino, written in the year of Victory, run very much to the panegyric of the soldier. Yet it is not bias. Ask the nurse of any big hospital throughout the kingdom, and she will tell you what she thinks of the simple lads, the quiet, thoughtful men under her care.

" They are so nice. They have such extraordinary refined feelings. They are so easy to nurse, so grateful, so uncomplaining, such perfect gentlemen."

And nearly always, if she who is speaking to you is one who makes of her profession a vocation, not merely an opportunity for herself, you will find oddly enough in this conjunction a unanimous expression of feeling: "We would far rather nurse the men than the officers."

See our soldiers with a little dog, or any helpless thing, in their arms. Watch their expression when they look at a child. These are rough, uncultivated men, they have never heard of the Higher Criticism. The spread of education has not reached them. Their untrained minds have not been dazzled with the brilliant intellectual fireworks of Mr. Wells. Many of them, indeed, can hardly spell at all. But they have souls unpoisoned by the miasma of unbelief. The inherited traditions of Christianity still colour every thought. You know they have been heroic beyond words in the front of danger. You find them nobly resigned, heroes still, mutilated and suffering in the hospital beds. War has not demoralized them. It has, on the contrary, brought out the most incredible splendour of the spirit. Such men fling the Christian gauntlet in the face of Unbelief, the face that wears many masks, all specious, but which, if you pluck from it its disguises, will meet you in the end with the grin of the ape.

By the time this book is printed, perhaps, peace will be signed, and the Utopian Vision of the League of Nations become something more tangible than

the mirage on the Atlantic horizon. The best security for the world would be a return to plain Christianity, and we hope some inspired apostle of zeal will attempt the re-conversion of Germany from the appalling cult of scientific monkeydom. We want a little conversion at home, too. We want a great deal.

If the emancipation, the new power given to women, are to benefit the human race, women themselves must develop on the lines of womanhood. They may claim, with justice, equal pay for equal work ; an equal voice in the management of affairs which their minds are as capable of understanding as those of men ; equal rights of citizenship, since they contribute to the citizen burden, but let them beware how they put into practice equality in license, in the sowing of wild oats, in the indulgence given to the baser instincts. Unhappy the day—and it is unfortunately already broadly glaring upon us—when womanhood steps down from that superior place she has always occupied in a Christian country, to fling herself, and all she means of home and ideal, of help and inspiration, to the more strongly tempted and coarser-fibred man, into that lower circle where evil sports under the names of Freedom and Pleasure !

Woman must not give up her most precious attribute, purity, and the modesty which was its bloom. She must bring a chaste mind, a high conception of the possibilities of human nature, to her new

task. She must protect the sanctity of the home as the first jewel in her crown ; she must relentlessly stamp out the pandering to the baser instincts which drives a too easy trade in newspapers, cinemas and books. It should not be to assist in the relaxation of all the wholesome austerities imposed by the Christian ideal, that she has come to power. It should be, on the contrary, to uphold them, and to set the Ten Commandments as her code. The security of home life, the education of children, the protection of the young girl, the blotting out of our social system of those hellish industries which work against the health of body and mind, here is her true mission !

The manhood of England has come through the four years' conflict refined as silver in the furnace. The womanhood seems, on the contrary, to have suffered an appalling degeneration. Certainly the dross has risen to the top of the cauldron, and the pure metal sunk out of sight. The first task, therefore, of the woman thinker is to drag her own sex out of the mire in which it is disporting itself in the mad belief that it is something delectable. It would be a thousand pities if the trend of female influence in legislation were to be wholly material. We want clean and comfortable homes for the working classes ; but we want as much a clean spirit in those homes. It is tremendously important that children should have good and sustaining food ; but it is more important still that they should have the

best nourishment for their souls. We want the working mother's life to be made happy; but she should be encouraged to find her happiness in her home, and discouraged to seek it in the cinema and the dancing hall. The modern wife and mother of the poorer class buys wretched tinned food for her family to save the cooking; spends her money on silk stockings and sports coats, and trails her wretched infants along the promenades and the shops in perambulators, on the look-out for pleasures. Trivial, futile pleasures, when they are not worse. I know of a case where the husband is at the front, the mother lives in a good house and home. She has plenty of money through munition works and allowances. Her sister-in-law has come to live with her. There are three little children. Every evening the two women go out to public-houses and places of entertainment, and leave the little children locked up in the house. The women are nearly always drunk when they come in.

There is a theory abroad that poverty is the source of crime, and that with a large wage and superior dwelling-places the working population will become a model of all the virtues. While, no doubt, extreme destitution lowers the moral standard, and much of the degradation of the sweated labouring class is produced by their material conditions, the sudden prosperity which has come to this very class by war conditions has not improved their standard of conduct; far from it. While, therefore, it is advis-

able and salutary to insist on better conditions all round, it is evident that there is another and far more serious problem to tackle. We risk the attacks of a worse enemy than the Germans; we are likely to be conquered by a far more insidious foe: the real danger is from within. We are slowly but inevitably becoming unchristianed. For many years a deadly propaganda has been at work; and, from the theories of Mr. Wells that God does not require from us morality of conduct, to the doctrines of Ferrer, so popular in certain parts of Manchester, that the great enemies of mankind are belief in God, in justice and in patriotism, there is a most terrifying negation of spirit in the youth of the manufacturing classes.

We have seen what materialism in high places, backed up by the highest intelligence of which the human brain is capable, has produced in Germany; we have seen what materialism under the control of the wicked and the ignorant can become, in the suddenly emancipated Russia: the first act of the Bolshevist was to deny all law, religious and civil. If there is to be a new England, a new era of the world, new hopes for the poor and new ideals for the rich, let them be carried out in the name of that law at once so mild and so austere, so generous and so rigid, so comforting and so exacting, the law of Christ.

Women are passing through transition days, and there is nothing more difficult for the mature mind

than the adjusting of preconceived standards to modern developments. The young person who had a blushing cheek is a thing of the past. "She blushed, she knew not why." The new-time damsel knows everything that is to be known, and blushes at nothing. There is much, no doubt, for which no blushes are needed. Ignorance is not innocence. A frank acquaintance with, and acceptance of, the facts of life need not—God forbid that it should be so!—perturb a pure mind. Only with this new emancipation of the maiden spirit, there is, alas! a corresponding unnecessary and unholy emancipation from the moral code. Phyllis in knickers and top-boots, with sufficient skirts to her coat, is quite a wholesome pleasant figure on the landscape, but the thing—often not more than sixteen—that swarms about the cinemas, the portals of the soldiers' clubs, the railway stations, the entrances to the camp; that has cheeks raddled with paint and a dreadful sophistication in its eye; the product of the new cultivation; the tare that has crept in among the wheat, threatens to spoil the whole crop.

Perhaps we elders look back with regret to the days when our daughters were kept unspotted from the world, protected even from the winds of reality. We may think that they did not make the less good wives or mothers because of their youth of angelic innocence; but it ought not to prevent us from recognizing other qualities which have been developed by the changed dispensation. By all

means let the new girlhood grow up frank, fearless, clear-eyed and independent of spirit, much on the lives of the boyhood of the nation—there is no being more simply honourable and healthily clean-minded than the good English boy. It is the appalling mixture of precocious feminine perversity with the sudden flinging off of all the restrictions hitherto deemed necessary to modesty, which has made chaos of so many poor children's souls.

There is in the whole world nothing more likely to lead inexperienced youth of both sexes astray than bad comradeship. The goats are mixed in with the sheep, or rather I should say, the black kids are mixed in with the white lambs now-a-days, with a serene disregard of consequences. Girls don't lose their characters, they "have a good time"; those others who are kept back from the plunge into indiscriminate excitement are just the silly little fools who don't know how to enjoy themselves! And some women who are already coming forth as lawmakers are actually preparing a legislation not for the remedy, but for the furthering of so vital an abuse. One of the pleas set forth for the facilitation and cheapening of divorce is that so many marriages have been contracted during the war "just for the fun of the thing," that it would be a cruel hardship were they to be regarded as permanent.

If this is the way in which women are to use their right to legislate, then the franchise will have

brought confusion worse confounded to a distracted world. License is to be facilitated by further license, the solemn sacrament of marriage has been abused: happy thought, do away with it; substitute a farcical contract of the kind most appreciated by Palais Royal audiences! The statistics of illegitimacy are appallingly on the increase: the best thing, apparently, is to make it rather a useful practice under State patronage. The case of the hard-working, respectable soldier's wife who could not obtain her separation allowance because it was officially granted to the woman who had supplanted her, broken up her home, and taken her husband away, is, we are quite sure, no isolated instance.

If our Government is not Christian; if our rulers continue to be swayed by opportunism; standing on no principle save the shifting sands of popular approval, then, in the name of God, let women unite and save the country! They can save the country; the power has been given to them. Once again—it is impossible too often to repeat it—there will be no prosperity, no happiness, no wholesome expansion, no healthy home life; no promise in the young, no peace for the old, unless it be under the law of Christ. Womanhood at its best has always stood for the Christian ideal; now she can enforce it. What a vocation; to be the turning-point of a nation's life, to bring an afflicted people back to their God, to look forward and see already the fulfilment of the promise given of old to those who shall

" have arisen and gone up to Zion " ! . . . " And they shall flow together to the good things of the Lord, for the corn and wine and oil and the increase of cattle and herds. And their soul shall be as a watered garden : and they shall be hungry no more. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, the young men and old men together : and I will turn their mourning into joy and will comfort them and make them joyful after their sorrow."

November 28th

A little while ago the people who said the war would be over by Christmas were regarded with the pitying contempt born of the long failure of the optimist. Now the peace bells have actually rung. It was a very poor tinkle down here, if the truth must be told, and so far the only other rejoicings that have come to our knowledge have been the senseless destruction of the camp shops by mafficking soldiers. It has been much the same in London.

The real note of gladness has been absent. We can all remember out of our nursery times those hours when, seized by some spirit of idle silliness, we made a great noise, shouting with laughter and grimacing, knowing in our hearts that we were not enjoying ourselves, but only trying to be naughty. Thus did a section of London make merry upon so great a deliverance. Higher in the social scale, a kindred section is now dancing and decking itself " over the graves of the dead."

And yet, as we set down these words, we are minded that we are wrong. There were other thanksgivings down here; as no doubt elsewhere.

From the moment the news of the armistice was known, the little R.C. camp chapel, so dear and familiar a spot to us, became crowded with soldiers. They filled the building; they were kneeling right out into the open on the muddy waste. The movement was entirely spontaneous; but when the chaplains saw it, they entered into it, exposed the Blessed Sacrament, and gave Benediction every hour to the crowds that succeeded each other.

Our great London churches, the new Cathedral and the Oratory, must have been a wonderful sight on the afternoon of that strange day.

There, and there only, could the overcharged heart relieve itself. So many who wanted to weep unnoticed for the beloved that no victory could restore to them; others, holding a joy scarcely yet divided from agony over the preservation of the ineffably dear, the pathetically young; some again, not daring to draw a breath or utter the prayer of gratitude, lest even at this last moment the life that trembled in the balance should have been snatched away; and those who will through all their days lead a blind man; those who will see their noble sons go mutilated; those who do not yet know if they are for ever bereft, and how, or if, they can venture to hope; those haunted by the hell shadows of the German prison; and the poor blessed gallant lads

themselves, on crutches, with the hanging sleeve, the bandaged head, the patched-up face. . . . Ah no, it is not a time for laughter! The sound of it would be as the thorns crackling under the pot. It is a time for prayer.

Suffering has gone too deep, the wounds are yet unhealed. The soul is still too profoundly steeped in the bitterness of dark night watches, too dismayed yet by its initiation into the cruelties of evil. There is only one place where we can find ourselves in the rightful spirit: before the Tabernacle. It is an infinite pity that we feel for such as have not got this refuge; who in a scarcely realizable relief from pain have no thought but to shout and dance in the street; or who, with sorrow waking up afresh, want to creep away like animals to their holes in blind pain.

Te Deum laudamus, Te Dominum confitemur. . . . In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.

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Little hours in great days		1