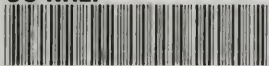
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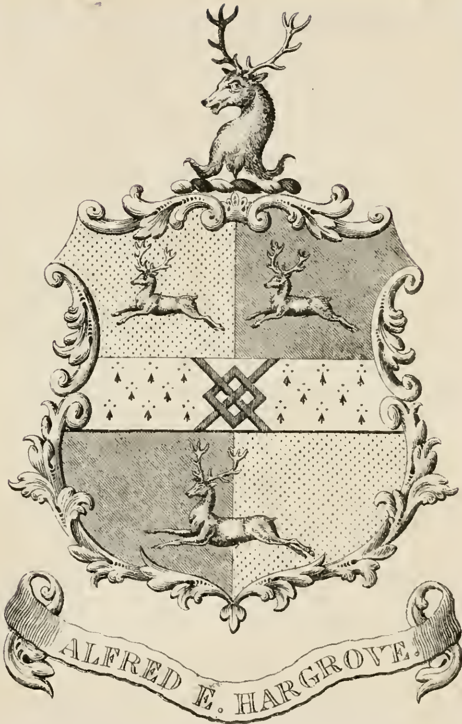

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THE CHRONICLES OF THE CRUTCH.

BY

BLANCHARD JERROLD.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE AND REMAINS OF DOUGLAS JERROLD;"
"IMPERIAL PARIS;" "THE FRENCH UNDER ARMS;"
ETC., ETC.

LONDON:
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DEDICATION.

THESE CHRONICLES ARE INSCRIBED

TO

ALDERMAN W. A. MATTHEWS

(OF SHEFFIELD),

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

OF HIS

GRACEFUL HOSPITALITY, AND HIS

CORDIAL SERVICES;

BY HIS FRIEND,

B. J.

038

PRELIMINARY WORD.

Nearly all the papers included in these "Chronicles" have appeared in the pages of "Household Words;" while some are printed for the first time. For those not hitherto printed, the author ventures to bespeak the indulgence with which his "Household Words" papers have been received.

October, 1860.

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CHRONICLES OF THE CRUTCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE BRETHREN OF THE CRUTCH.

The Brethren of the Crutch were tired of the lagging hours. Wearily to them the sun passed over the heavens. Sitting in the cool cloisters, on summer afternoons, they puffed the blue fumes of their bird's-eye into the air; and dozed and yawned. They were each familiar with the other. Every experience of the world (still humming without, careless of their withdrawal, and still preparing new brothers for the coming years) had been told over and over again. There was not a rent in a brother's garment upon which the feeble eyes of his comrades had not rested. No brother had a relation whose name and fortune were not familiar to the minds of the rest. In this asylum for the vanquished soldiers of the world—this "chapel of ease for all men's wearied miseries"—there was a pervading, unbroken quiet, that befitted, it was said, the ante-room to the sepulchre. These vanquished soldiers were here gathered together—waiting for their sentence. The world gave them the needful crust and the comforting pipe—as the French lately gave caporal and wine to the captured Austrians.

Vast, solidly-built—capable of giving comfort to rheumatic limbs—was the venerable Crutch. The lichen had greyed its walls, the weather had rounded its gables: the rolling years had well nigh filled its little cemetery. Some few kings had reigned sinçe masons were busy in the foundations, under the list slippers of these weary brothers into whose company we have crept. There was ivy, and enough, over the wall-ends when the first Charles suffered at Whitehall. This roomy refectory was musical with wooden platters when the Virgin Queen, of the shadowless face, was expecting the Spanish Armada. We never cut wood solidly now, nor hammer iron roughly, as these beams are cut and these bolts are hammered. They are of a more muscular age than ours. There is dust in the chinks of the cloister pavement, we make bold to assert, from the boots of Sir Walter Raleigh. The windows through which the brothers look out upon the fading sky, are diamond panes. There are leather stoups in the master's room: and in the great, dark hall may be seen the place where the rude brothers of the good old times lit their fire, and consumed the smoke thereof. No better place than this could be found for tired man to fill up the list of his years. Gentle Charity spreads her wings over it, and her smile is there to warm the blood of torpid age. The need of rest presses upon the man who has done his fifty years of work:—

> " The sunne, that measures heaven all day long,
> At nighte doth baite his steedes the ocean waves emong."

But there are vanquished workmen, who bear their scars lightly as ribbons. There remains a hearty kernel in the split shell, sometimes. Weary then were the monotonous hours to the old men whose eyes beamed still, and who

had not had enough of the world. The unbroken round of morning chapel, afternoon dinners, and early supper; the irksome gowning; the inevitable silence, fell heavily upon them. And still they sate at their little doors under the cloisters, and wearily blew their bird's-eye smoke into the air; and, as they dipped their fingers into the hot pipe-bowl from time to time, sighed faintly.

One summer's evening, while the cloisters were fragrant with the smoke from the Brethren's pipes, the sundown bell tolled. Every brother took his pipe from his mouth at the first stroke. Some drew their hands to their ears to catch the sound; others raised themselves and turned towards the belfry: but all muttered, "One! two! three!" and so on, while the bell tolled. When it stopped, the Brothers looked at one another.

"Twenty-one only!—only twenty-one!" passed from lip to lip. There were twenty-two Brothers yesterday—and the bell calls the number of the aged men whose silver heads the Crutch protects! There was a stir in the cloisters—the pipes were laid aside—and "Peace be with him!" said the old men. Brother Creighton had passed away, in the night.

Brother Lebord was elected in the dead man's stead, and took up his quarters in the late Brother Creighton's rooms. In this way every Brother stood in dead men's shoes.

Lebord was a very brisk brother. He was as spare as a hop-pole; and when he went to church of mornings, in his rusty black velvet gown, the folds of it hung wofully about him. But he had sparkling grey eyes, deep sunk under his skull and behind his high cheek-bones—but sparkling, we repeat. He smoked cigarettes; and he chattered as he made them, with a freshness that gave new

life to the brotherhood. Now, under the cloisters, there were a few merry laughs, and a little animation. Brother Lebord was indeed a welcome addition to the circle.

He had seen much. He had paid Louis Philippe his allowance (before 1830): he had spoken to the hero of Austerlitz. Talleyrand had bowed to him. He had been head cashier in a great Paris bank, till the Revolution of July broke out; when he took his savings to Brussels, where he lost them in the turmoil which gave Leopold a throne. This turmoil was indeed an unfortunate one for him; for it not only beggared him, but it cost him also a bayonet wound in the back. To be wounded is unpleasant under any circumstances; but to be probed in the back! This wound was not only a source of perpetual pain to poor Lebord—it was, in addition, a subject on which his comrades would rally him by the hour together. He bore both the pain and the pleasantry with grace. He had all the polish of the old French school. His bow to a lady was one of those graceful movements of dignified respect, which look almost grotesque, in these rough days, when a man addresses a lady with his hat on. Lebord looked down with contempt upon the fast manners which marked his latter day. He had bowed his way, under the elder Bourbons, through the most exclusive *salons* of the Faubourg St. Germain. Could he then look patiently upon the young sprig of 1855, who told his sister that he was "tol-lol," and described an invitation to pass a quiet evening in the company of honest and accomplished women, as "a slow tea-fight?" Brother Horrocks laughed, with a laugh as loud as the roar of a bull, at Lebord's ceremonious ways; and Lebord put down the old sailor with a winning smile, and dominated him by his superior courtesy.

Lebord was, in many things, a benefactor to the Crutch. He taught his companions how to make coffee; and he believed to his dying day that he, among all men on the earth, knew how to make perfect mustard. He was an epicure in his humble way, and was at considerable pains to humour his educated palate. The old gentleman was a little inclined to light stories, and thought very poorly of the reputation of Josephine. He treasured a little greasy almanac, which appeared in the birth-year of Napoleon and Wellington. He had an odd volume of the writings of Charles Nodier, the leaves of which he kept together by the clumsy application of a gutta-percha back. He had also heaps of very worn documents, which included the story of a horrible mystery. This mystery was connected with the ruin of his father; and, somehow, the Prince Regent was mixed up with the said mystery, and appears to have played a shabby part in it.

Many winter evenings did Brother Lebord beguile over these yellow documents, and many stories did they suggest to him; indeed, they became relics so interesting to all the brothers, that one or two—as Brother Horrocks and Brother Hartopp (a very sour brother as a rule)—begged that Lebord would set forth explanations of them upon paper.

"But why should *I* take all this trouble, Brother Hartopp? You, who have travelled all over the world, and have spun us yarns (I think that is the nautical phrase) by the hour together, don't appear anxious to rub your silver spectacles, and set a quire or two of blank paper before you! There's the doctor again—mild, kind Babbycomb—he has been in hundreds of houses of mourning: wailing and gnashing of teeth have been household sounds to him—yet, devil a word does he write! Hartopp and

Phœnix have stories behind them; but they only smoke, and look languidly at the clock. Even Seesaw hasn't enough speculation in him to tempt a publisher with some account of the castles in the air he has built in his time. Then why should *I* dip my fingers in ink, and strain my poor eyes?"

A laugh was Brother Horrocks' answer—a laugh, and a prodigious puff of smoke.

"Somebody must begin," quoth Hartopp, who was great in platitudes.

"I've an idea," said Brother Seesaw, who had not spoken up to this time—"yes, I've an idea."

Brother Seesaw had had many ideas—in his time. He had been the boldest speculator of his day; and he was at his boldest flights when his pockets were light. The railway panic was his end; and from Capel-court he repaired direct to the Crutch, in which he obtained rooms through the kind influence of a friend whose fortune he had made. Here he had beguiled the weary hours planning a joint-stock company, for life assurance on a new principle—the principle being that the premiums were paid by the company, and that not one farthing was to be drawn from the pockets of the policy-holders. He was hard at work upon the very original tables by which he intended to prove that his principle of gratuitous policies would return twenty per cent. per annum, clear of income-tax, to the shareholders, when the new idea dawned upon him.

"Let us have it!" cried Brother Horrocks.

"Are you all ready?" The Brothers nodded, and smiled.

"Well, neither Lebord nor Horrocks shall have it all to themselves. Let each of us write about something that we have seen. We can meet now and then, as the fit takes us, and read the results to one another."

" Capital! and I'll begin with ——" cried Babbycomb, starting up.

" Wait a minute," Seesaw interrupted; " I've not quite finished yet. I propose that we collect our papers, and sell them to a publisher."

" Ay, ay, mate," Horrocks chimed in—" and give the money to the Greenwich pensioners."

" The Consumption Hospital, I should respectfully submit," simpered Brother Babbycomb."

" Or, say we pay the national debt with it," called out a Brother—and then a roar of laughter.

CHAPTER II.

There were now busy days and evenings in the Crutch. The old porter wondered what the Brothers could be about. Every old gentleman returned home with quills protruding from his pocket, or with a book under his arm. Brother Lebord borrowed his inkstand: Brother Horrocks had been heard discharging broadsides of oaths over Bath post, in his quarters.

But the porter's wonder was brought to a painful intensity when, on a certain November night, lights were ordered by the master, in the sombre hall; and the great fire was stirred, and there was a report among the female servants that hot ale was to be spiced at eight o'clock.

The master of the Crutch—a man who was blessed with the kindest face upon which our eyes have ever rested—sank upon the black leather cushion of the high-backed oak chair, at the end of the table, and the Brothers took their seats around him.

"Gentlemen," said the good master; and the Brothers smiled. How blessed is the man who, when he rises among his fellows, and having said "Gentlemen," has already warmed their hearts! "Gentlemen," said the master, "do me the honor to try this tobacco: I am told it is very fine. If it is too mild for Brother Horrocks, I think I can suit him from another pocket."

A brown leather pouch of comfortable proportions, and a cake of Cavendish tobacco, were pushed along the table. The master whispered the porter when to bring the ale,

and then called upon Brother Lebord to address the gentlemen.

The Brother rose to make a few remarks before he began his reading. He was proud to know that his companions had chosen him to open their readings. He would do his best; but he must warn them that nearly all his experiences had France or Belgium for their scene. He must ask their kind consideration if he read slowly, for the wound in his back affected him when he exerted his voice much.

Before he launched, however, into the curious story which he had prepared, and which related to Paris of the present day, he might perhaps be permitted to draw their attention to a quaint little book which he held in his hand, and which an old friend of his (whom he used to meet at the Café de la Regence, in 1817 and 1818) had sent him. It was nothing less curious than a History of the Old Methods of Lighting Paris, and was written by M. Edouard Fournier. He would, with their permission, (here the master bowed and smiled) make a few observations on it, where he had marked it.

"I anticipated," the Brother began, "from the first title of M. Fournier's book, a vivid street-view of the First Revolution—a terrible list of impromptu executions carried out by the grandfathers of our present allies, under the exciting influences of a popular revolt. But fear was unnecessary. M. Fournier has nothing to say about the revolutionary episodes enacted under the old lanterns of Paris. He deals with the real history of Paris by night. He even glances at the endeavours of the ancients to contrive substitutes for the sun. Diogenes is not too far off to escape the searching eye of the author. The result is, gentlemen, an amusing, if not a very useful, book.

"The author arrives at Paris, after having glanced at Caligula's illumination of Rome—at the nocturnal fêtes in honor of Minerva, applauded by Tacitus, as tending to preserve public morals—at the night-fires burned in the open places of Antioch—and at the facetious essay on the origin of lanterns, published by Dreux du Rudier, in 1755. He halts in Paris in the fourteenth century, to find the good city still one of impenetrable gloom at night. His description of Paris streets, after sunset, at this epoch, is vivid." Here the Brother translated the passage:—

'When the bells of Saint-Merry or of Sainte-Opportune, or of the Sorbonne, which, according to Villon—

Toujours a neuf heures sonne,

have announced the evening angelus, and the same strokes have given the signal of the *couvre-feu* or *gare-fou*, Paris falls into complete darkness. The shops are shut, the lights disappear from behind the leaden windows; from that, large and ornamented, which is placed above the roof of the shop, to that, narrow and long, which peers down like a cyclop's eye from a high and black gable end. If all lights in the street are put out, nothing burns in the houses. The great city, the horrible paving of which makes its streets positive sewers of pestilent mud, becomes from this hour the immense domain of cut-throats. The benighted man runs the double chance of being imbedded in mud and assassinated. Sometimes he has just got out of a quagmire when he finds himself in the hands of some of those eternal bandits, whom we shall discover—even three centuries later—marauding by favour of the darkness. Frightened—but not driven away—at first by the lanterns, then by the *reverbères*, and at last by gas, they long carried on their nocturnal industry with impunity. But at the time to which we now refer, these robbers often waited long for their prey. The quagmire was a solitude, the cut-throat's domain had become a desert. Nobody ventured out. After the disappearance of the hawkers, who, at nightfall, hastened through the streets, some crying *oublies*, others common candles, (which they carried in packets, piled up upon baskets), pressing forward to the distant sound of the *gare-fou*, the streets became silent solitudes. The great city, hushed to rest by the last cries of the *oblayer*, awoke only to the shrill cries of the *bran-devinier*, who, at the break of day, began to move in the direction of the Halles and the Grand-Châtelet. At long intervals some accidental noise might break upon this silent night—some rapid rays of light flicker through this gloom. Here came the watchman of the dead, whose white

robe, ornamented with skulls and crossbones, Saint-Armand cursed in the seventeenth century, ringing and crying aloud—

> Réveillez-vous, gens qui dormez,
> Priez Dieu pour les trèspassès.

Then came the chevalier of the watch, followed by his archers. They marched with a great display of torches and halberds; but their prudence—their caution—almost resembled fear. The bandits, however, went in strong bodies, so that the gentlemen of the guard, buried in all this mud, would have found it difficult to be brave. Still they did their business as well as they were able; and strutted noisily on their way, seeming to say to the good *bourgeois*—'Here we are: be at rest.' But they did not conceal from one another that they themselves were far from tranquil.'

"Of these watchmen, M. Fournier has some pleasant anecdotes. Especially ridiculous is the story of Gaulthier Tallart, chevalier of the watch in 1418, who added some musicians to his troop, that the bandits might get out of the way of his steel. But the Parisians were not the dupes of this artifice; and the pleasantries of the people he pretended to protect, made at his expense, soon compelled him to send away his artists. I shall not follow the historian of Paris lanterns through the Middle Ages and all subsequent epochs down to the present hour. Still his pictures of Paris lighted by the religious bodies of the capital in the Middle Ages—of the expiatory candles which criminals were compelled to burn on the spot where they had committed a crime—have a certain interest. The subject is perhaps not important in itself; but its study may be of use to men who deal with historical points of greater moment. Elaborate historical treatises have been written on pastry—on boots and shoes—not of importance in themselves, perhaps, but, I repeat, presenting useful matter for the historical picture-painter. It may not be of great use to know the exact form of pastry consumed by Henry the Fourth; but in a general picture of his reign—in a description of a banquet given in his time—such a point might fall into the narrative with effect. In the same way, the 'History of Lanterns,' although not, I repeat, an important work, may be useful to historical painters and writers, for the minuteness of its details."

Here Brother Lebord put the odd volume upon the table; adding that it was at the service of any gentleman who might wish to read it.

He then lifted his paper, and firmly adjusted his spectacles. Short nervous coughs echoed through the old hall. The manuscript was neatly arranged, and tied at one corner with a white riband—spotless, said the old gentleman, as the *fleur-de-lis.* The master begged the Brothers not to spare his tobacco pouch; asked whether they were all quite comfortable; bade the porter stir the blazing fire, and draw the heavy screen more comfortably for Captain Horrocks—then, gently tapping the table with the bowl of his pipe, nodded benignly to Brother Lebord.

"Here," said the Brother, "is a story which happened to a brother of mine. I make him tell it, as he told it to me. I call it—

A DINNER WITH A MYSTERY.

"Even in Normandy, where the sunny valleys, dear to high-capped girls, are bounded by richly-wooded hills; and where the gentle curves of dancing streams break the rigid outlines of cultivated fields—yes, even here, a journey in a diligence was no enviable pastime. The jarring cries of the driver, the monotonous jingle of the bells upon the horses, the parching dust, the interminable rows of poplars, and the plaintive whine of the roadside beggars in their ragged blue—all tended to depress you. The convulsive heaving of the lumbering vehicle only served to deepen your melancholy. Strange that up to the very time when the first French railway was opened, our neighbours had travelled in these moveable houses—that they remained always strangers to the light and swift stage-coach.

Well, we were once rolling towards Paris, having started from Caen, in one of these bright yellow diligences, capped by a huge and dusty *banquette*, and we were fortunate in our travelling companion. He was not a lively, but he was a most sensible and pleasant gentleman. We talked

of the crops that lay ripening under the powerful rays of the sun on either side of us; we touched upon many topics of the time; we passed verdicts, all too lightly, on public men, 'sipping the foam of many lives,' as Emerson has it. And we grew very intimate. Two or three cigars ripen a travelling friendship wonderfully. We exchanged weeds, and described the knowing dodges by which we had respectively procured unapproachable havannahs at unheard-of prices. So that, on the evening after our departure from Caen, when we drew up in a long, straggling village, before a huge whitewashed house, from the windows of which a strong odour of cabbage-soup and onions stole to our nostrils, we were almost ready to *tutoyer* each other. I clambered down from my elevated position in the *banquette*, aided by the vigorous arm of the conductor, and called to my companion to follow me. Only half an hour was allowed for dinner; and I, for one, was not inclined to lose a single second of the time. But my new friend declined, and pleasantly compared himself to a hermit, as he expressed his determination to eat some bread and chocolate where he was. I had invited him to be my guest: his refusal was gracefully but steadily given. I could tell by his voice that time would be completely lost in pressing him; so I turned at once into the post-house, and drank my scalding soup in silence.

When I returned to my seat in the *banquette*, I found my travelling companion asleep. The conductor, as he gained his perch near us, threw a light upon the sleeper's face. There was a fretful expression upon it. We started onward, and the noise produced by a whip-thong and the yell of a French driver, the rumble of his vehicle, the clatter of his dingy horses' hoofs, and the jingling of the bells upon the animals' harness—a noise only too familiar to the ears of travellers in the departments of France—woke my friend. He rose quietly to his seat, gave me a pleasant look of recognition, and planting a cigar in his mouth, settled himself in the heavy folds of his cloak. I saw that, now and then, when his head was turned towards the road, and away from me, his eyes wandered round and stole a look at me. I remarked that the conductor, who

was a jolly fellow by nature, answered my companion's questions very coldly. I noticed that when my new friend took the said conductor's cigar, for a light, the conductor, although his cigar was not half consumed, threw it away on its return to him. My friend saw this sacrifice, and a cloud of anger passed swiftly over his features. Still we fell into a gossiping mood once more, and I was pleased, as I had been throughout the morning, with my companion's shrewd remarks on passing events, and the serious, not to say sad, view he took of most things. There was, really and truly, a charm in the man's melancholy. The time ran on. We no longer noticed the clatter of the stablemen (with their lanterns flitting round the dark and bulky vehicle) who changed the horses at the post-stations; we became deaf even to the shrill piping of the driver, and to the bells of the horses. And so chattering, we saw at last, twinkling far off, in a capacious valley, like a great nest of glow-worms, the wondrous city where we and our plunging horses were to rest.

I had got up a real interest in my fellow-traveller; and as we swept down the winding road to the Barrière, I took out my card-case, gave him my name and address, and begged that he would call upon me. To my surprise and mortification he abstained from returning the compliment; and when we turned into the courtyard of the Messageries, in the Rue St. Honoré, or thereabouts, he hastily collected his cap and cloak and a little bag, and was, I believe, the first man to jump from the vehicle. He had disappeared in a moment. I said to myself, as I went towards my hotel, there is a secret locked up in that man's heart. On the morrow the sights and pleasures of Paris drove his figure from my memory. Fellow-travellers and the dead are soon forgotten.

Like most men fresh from the provinces, I found myself always on the Boulevards. When I had examined every brooch in the Palais Royal, when I had seen all the notable equipages of the Champs Elysées, when I had spent some hours in the Louvre, or had penetrated to the more modest attractions of the Luxembourg—I still found myself turning with an elastic step towards the Boulevards.

The dramas of the Gymnase and the curious pleasantries of the Palais Royal Theatre had effaced the figure of my mysterious friend from me altogether; and I should have forgotten his opinions and his manners for ever had they not been forcibly recalled to me, one afternoon, as I sat before the Café Veron, cooling myself, in anticipation of dinner, with a *soda*. A strange-looking man, neither well nor ill-dressed, crossed the pavement and hurriedly took up his position at a corner table, apart from the rest of the company. I should not have noticed him but that I felt, I cannot tell why, an eye fixed upon me. It was that of a man I had seen before, and had known. But where? For the life of me I could not remember. So completely had I forgotten the mysterious consumer of bread and chocolate, that his image never rose to my mind. Still I had certainly known this man, and he had known me. He drank his beer rapidly, and moved off just as I was moving. At this moment he lifted his broad-brimmed hat from over his eyes, and I recognised my companion of the *banquette*. He passed me without appearing to notice me, till I seized him by the arm and recalled myself to his mind.

I could perceive that he had recognised me before, and it was this conviction that had urged me to accost him; for I was curious to learn the mystery that encompassed him. He appeared pleased to see me, but almost distressed when I insisted that he should dine with me. He had twenty excuses, but I overruled them all. Every word he spoke deepened my curiosity. He saw that he could not escape, and assented, on two conditions—namely, that I would listen to his story, in the first place; and then, if I still wished him to be my guest, I should allow him to choose the restaurant, in the second place. I was too generous to hear his story first; but it was only after violent protestations on my part, that the man consented to tell it to me over our dessert.

We now turned out of the Boulevards, in the direction of the Rue Montorgueil; but I abstain from disclosing the sign of the house which my companion entered, bidding me to follow. He enquired for a private room; they

were all engaged. I saw that my guest was greatly mortified, and fretted under the landlady's suggestion that we should be almost alone in the great *salon*, where three or four students were all the company—and they were about to leave. I persuaded my friend, however, to accept this accommodation; and we entered the *salon*, where some young fellows were laughing and telling anecdotes of their student life, over the remains of their dessert. My companion marched straight across the room and took his seat in a dark corner, where the gas had been turned down, because all the diners had left. The waiter was about to cast a flood of light upon us, when my guest, apologising to me for the inconvenience, hoped that I would let him dine in the shade—the gas invariably gave him a violent headache.

I ordered the dinner, offering him the *Patrie* to read while it was being served. He appeared glad to bury himself behind it. I had remarked that there was one young man in the group of revellers in the light corner of the room, who, when we entered, was leading the conversation. His companions were appealing to him on several points, and it was to him alone that the waiter spoke, as to the sole person in authority. Once or twice my friend glanced over the edge of the paper at the young man. Having fairly dismissed the waiter from our table with the *menu* of our repast, and having left my mysterious guest to devour the evening's news, I turned once more in the direction of the students' table, struck by the sudden change of the young men from noisy conversation to absolute silence. The chief of the party—who was dressed in the widest of wide trousers, and over whose head was suspended, upon a peg against the wall, the fluffiest of fluffy hats—was as pale as death ; and was endeavouring to conceal his emotion by cutting the peel of an apple into infinitesimal morsels. He had evidently alarmed his young companions ; only one venturing, as it appeared to me, to banter him on his small capacity as a wine consumer.

The soup was served to us.

I made my guest drop the *Patrie*, and gave him some

Julienne. He would drink nothing beyond ordinary Bordeaux. We talked very little, and had soon finished the soup—the opposite table keeping up a faint hum of conversation the while. As we flirted with our radishes and sardines, the waiter appeared, bearing a flaming bowl of punch, which he deposited in the midst of the students. The effect was irresistible. The younger men raised a shout, and called upon their chief to ladle out the intoxicating liquid. He obeyed with ill-feigned alacrity. The poor fellow was obviously sick at heart.

The meat was placed before us.

I helped my friend in silence, for he seemed disinclined to talk. Even the noise of our young neighbours, and the blue flame of their punch, that gave a perfectly ghastly hue to the features of their chief, as he stood over it ladling it out, failed to attract his attention. We talked, by snatches, on indifferent subjects. The opposite table, the punch once served out, became quiet again. I was attracted presently by the hissing whispers of the revellers. The young men had their heads inclined to a common centre—the mouth of their chief—who was telling them something of the most serious import. But my curiosity was mightily intensified when I saw that from time to time, as the young man proceeded, one listener, then another, turned round and snatched a look at us! Surely they were talking about us!

My friend ate his dinner soberly, and never appeared to interest himself in the others' table. When they were whispering, he was intent upon the dissection of a fowl that lay temptingly before him upon a bed of young water-cresses.

The sweets and dessert lay before us.

My guest ate rapidly, and talked on all kinds of subjects; I thought somewhat incoherently. The waiter was summoned to the students' table; and he was drawn close up, that he might receive a communication in a whisper. There was evidently some mystery in the room. The words 'such company,' 'we'll never come again,' rose above the undertones of the youths, as they addressed the waiter. I glanced at my friend, but he was

quietly eating his Gruyère. There was a fixed expression upon his face, however, of profound seriousness.

The coffee and brandy were laid before us.

The punch was having its effect upon the opposite table; and, as the conversation grew once more animated, fierce glances were levelled at us. It was evident that we were seriously objected to.

There were side-glances and shrugs of the shoulders, meant to indicate the scorn in which we were held. I began to feel my anger rising; but I said nothing.

I paid my bill.

As the waiter was retiring with the amount, he was detained by the leader of the young men, who, now grown desperate and ungovernable with the punch, hiccupped out something that sounded to me like the word 'executioner.' I caught the eye of my guest at this moment. There was a wondrously complicated expression in it. He rose; took down his hat from its peg; and, with a firm step, walked direct to the students' table. I expected to hear a very proper and timely moral lecture.

'Your companion is right,' said my guest; and his voice vibrated strangely. 'I am the executor of the *hautes œuvres*'—the executioner of Caen. He knows me well, for he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and exposure in the town of the department in which I officiate. He (and my guest levelled his finger at the young chief) is a *forçat.* Beware, young men, of the company you keep. You have known him, I can see, but a few hours; well, button up your pockets."

My guest then bowed to the young men; and, having paid me a similar honour, disappeared from my astonished sight.

I literally reeled into the streets. And now, when I am alone on winter nights, I often—too often—see my friend the executioner."

"Thank you, Brother Lebord," said the master.

"When did your brother make the acquaintance of his mysterious fellow-traveller?" asked Brother Horrocks.

"Some three-and-twenty years ago."

"Ay, things have changed since then," was Hartopp's profound observation. Brother Lebord sighed. He knew nothing of France of the present time. Hartopp, however, was determined to back his platitude. As they were on French affairs, he would just give them some passages from a letter he had received. The writer was a nephew of his—a shrewd observer, and a well-informed person, as they would see. He began with Louis Napoleon.

"Naturally suggested by Lebord's mysterious friend," said Brother Babbycomb mildly, looking amiably round the table for a thankful recognition of his sagacity.

"We will hear you with pleasure," said the urbane master, "while I fill your glasses."

The hot ale (I think apples were bobbing, in a lively manner, about the bowl) had just been put upon the table by the porter.

Hartopp loved an audience. His companions knew his weakness, and, sly old boys, winked at one another as the proud uncle held his papers at arm's length, and selected choice passages for the enjoyment of the company.

"Let me premise, said Brother Hartopp, "that I had asked the boy for some of his impressions of France and the French. He has lived seven years in Paris, and was educated at Boulogne—so he ought to know something. Well, he begins at Boulogne. He says—

"I was a boy at school when Louis Napoleon—amid the laughter of Europe—was securely locked up by a few ill-armed National Guards in the castle of Boulogne-sur-Mer. I was among the crowd of idle youngsters who braved the angry words of the sentries before the castle gates, and looked steadily up at that little barred window where, from time to time, the dark, calm face of the prisoner might be seen. My elbows were as vigorous as those of any other English boy—in those days when our

contempt for the youth of France was undisguised—when this same stern prisoner was carried off in a close carriage, surrounded by a regiment of dragoons. I remember how all the boys were secretly disappointed to know that an attempt to fan the good town into a state of revolution had failed. Our sympathies were with the stern prisoner; and not a few of us envied him his perilous position, as he rumbled across the narrow street where Lesage died, towards the Porte de Paris. But we soon forgot both him and his adventure; and, probably, had Louis Philippe cut his head off, the fact would not have reached the obscurity of our schoolroom. Our master's share in the affair, however, was highly popular, and was described every night, with considerable additions due to the vigorous imaginations of youth, in the various dormitories of our establishment. You may remember, dear uncle, that Louis Napoleon reached Boulogne early in the morning; and that by six o'clock a.m. this valiant fishing-port was in a state of alarm. The colonel of the National Guard rushed through the streets of the upper town, and under our windows, shouting, '*Aux Armes!*' Some National Guards heard the voice of their commander, while others became suddenly deaf. Among the gentlemen inclined to live and fight another day, was our master. We heard this from a glazier, who came one day to mend windows, and who happened to be a National Guard of M. Soubise's company. Soubise was our master's name. How welcome was that glazier when he assured us that M. Soubise was laughed at everywhere as a coward! I am not certain that even at this moment the pleasure I feel in recalling the memorable descent of his Imperial Majesty, is not mainly due to the impression left by the glazier in our schoolroom. The big boys made stern resolves to be cuffed no more by the sneak Soubise; the little boys contented themselves with imaginary pictures of Soubise suffering ignominious castigation at the hands of somebody 'half his size.'

I heard no more of Louis Napoleon for many a day, till, on that memorable morning when the Chartists proposed to ride from Kennington-common to disperse the

House of Commons and the House of Peers, the name of the hero captured at Boulogne came once more under my eyes. That stern face—which I remembered framed between prison bars—had overawed the seditious of Jermyn-street.

I was fairly interested in the silent, sombre exile; the friend of D'Orsay and Lady Blessington; the man possessed with one great, all-absorbing idea! I read the story of his imprisonment; and I wondered how sentries who had seen that figure once, failed to recognise it, even disguised under the blue linen of a workman. Other stories of the Ham imprisonment, which have not been printed, have reached me. One, connected Louis Philippe's prisoner with the female servant of the prison, and pointed to results in the shape of several urchins crawling about, with the blood of Queen Hortense, at all events, in their veins. I caught rumours floating about society, of the fidelity with which the escaped prisoner kept his eyes steadily fixed upon the French cliffs; and how he owed money, and accepted bills, and had mistresses in England—to be paid when he should be governor of France. Then many of us heard that account of his conversation with an eminent diplomatist, in which he said that it was his destiny to become Emperor of France; that, in the course of his life he would be, for some days, master of London; and that in the end he would be murdered in the Tuileries. Part of the prophecy has been accomplished. The stern face I saw through the bars of Boulogne castle, I have since seen, bowing through the windows of the Tuileries. Glorious was the scene on that day when the revived Imperial Guard sunned their glittering accoutrements for the first time under the windows of the Pavilion de l'Horloge! Even amid the silent crowds, who laughed at the new guard, there was a grim contentment written upon that calm face, not to be mistaken. The talisman, wrenched by his uncle from the tomb of Charlemange, was still safe under his waistcoat. Fire at him, Pianoris; while he wears that talisman (and cuirass) your bullets shall be harmless! Well, seen in any light, the man's story has its grandeur. You may laugh at Strasbourg; you may be

merry over the eagle of Boulogne; you may recall the old steamer that carried him, rotting in the port, under the savage eyes of the custom-house officers, who seemed to see sedition even in her ragged rigging. Still, you shall consider his final flight to power, and be compelled to recognise behind that iron mask he wears upon his shoulders, the light of a commanding genius. He governs Europe. He has Frenchmen under his foot. A few writhe and squeal; but the many are content, and cry '*Vive l'Empereur!*'

A word about his voice. When he speaks, his words are iron words, and they shoot from his lips like so many cannon-balls. You have not heard that voice, uncle? Well, I have. And I can tell you that it is an awful voice. The man—a spare, small biped—stands some hundreds of yards off, in his pale blue coat and scarlet trousers, his talisman kept warm under the riband of the garter, and the voices of the servitors about him tinkle like weak, cracked bells, upon my ear; but presently the spare figure moves forward, and a sound comes forth, that seems to issue from lips close to my ear. It is the voice—let us fairly allow it—of a strong man. The words are those of one who reads his age sagaciously. That voice was certain to command, before it was extinguished. At last, it *does* command.

But his cousin! The man's bearing and character are the laughing-stock of Paris. No man laughs—even in his sleeve—at the Emperor. I will give you a touch or two that will help you to draw a figure of great Plon-Plon of the Palais Royal.

Here Brother Hartopp sipped his beer; while Brother Lebord muttered something against the crew that lived in the palaces of the elder Bourbon.

"Antoine, who is at my elbow"—my nephew's name, Brother Hartopp proudly interposed—"vows that it cost me an effort not to follow the examples presented to my imagination; but, as I have already declared, Antoine is a very lukewarm Plon-Plonist. I saw Plon-Plon, not long

since, blowing his cloud through the public streets, and the people dotted along the kerb-stone to watch him. Magnificent sight! I asked Antoine, when the spectacle had passed, and he was covered again, whether he could now realize a picture of a blighted porpoise? He could not—I could. Had Monseigneur been taken by his country's enemies, I am afraid, sadly afraid, that, with the unscrupulous nature of barbarians, they would have turned him to account in the popular shape of dips! But I fear that, placed even in such favorable circumstances, no light would have been got out of him. The paternal Plon-Plon must be very proud of him, especially when he carries that useless black portfolio under his arm, and to all around him displays the most finished want of manners of any gentleman in Europe. Has Antoine ever told you about his row with the celebrated upholsterer? Yes, Monseigneur had a row, a public row, with an upholsterer. It appears that this upholsterer, in the heat of his commercial zeal for the 'powers that be' over the water, undertook to furnish splendidly a sitting-room and boudoir for his great master and mistress at a certain show of general luxury. He performed his task 'to the perfect content of his powerful patrons. Tapestry glowed from the walls, gold sparkled on the tortuous arms and legs of the chairs. Time ran on serenely till nearly the close of the show, when it occurred to Monseigneur that the boudoir and sitting-room were ugly. He expressed this opinion as loudly as that queer voice would allow him; whereupon, the bold upholsterer gave orders to shut the doors, and refuse admittance to all applicants, except his august master and mistress. Monseigneur stormed when he heard of this order, and summoned the adventurous tradesman into his awful presence. He proceeded to question him before his servitors. The tradesman calmly but very firmly intimated to his great questioner, that the rooms were not Monseigneur's, and that he, the upholsterer, had a perfect right to exercise his own will as to the admittance of the public. I am told that Monseigneur banged his fist upon the table, and screeched his orders to the little man, his secretary, to have a paragraph inserted

in the Plon-Plon organ, telling the public that they would be admitted to the boudoir as usual. Whereupon the tradesman replied that he should lock the rooms up, and put articles in the foreign journals describing the position in which he had been placed. He added, I believe, that if Monseigneur himself asked admittance, he would be refused. The rooms were arranged for the illustrious occupants of the throne, and for nobody else; and, since their majesties had felt perfectly satisfied with the arrangement, he, the upholsterer, did not really care for the opinion of any third party. If it had not been for him, their majesties would not have had a-place to rest in, after their visits to the luxuries of Europe.

Monseigneur had the worst of it, and the upholsterer went off to chirp about the affair, no doubt, among his friends.

Still, in spite of these odd conflicts with all kinds of people, Monseigneur contrives to pass the greater part of his time gaily enough. He may be sad just now, seeing that a dear friend of his is dead. But this dear friend never dipped her tragic fingers into her travelling-bag (price £120, was it not, Mr. Mechi?) let us hope, without thinking of the valiant soldier by whose connivance it was smuggled from the gathering of the luxuries of all nations, at the time when the said valiant soldier was arresting other vendors of luxuries, against the rules of the estalishment.

I am really afraid, however, that Monseigneur Plon-Plon is an unfortunate man. Somehow, he never touches anything without making a flaw in it. He is invited to a public entertainment. Well, it turns out to be the most brutal gathering of men ever brought about. The results are, carpets hidden under lobster-shells and bread-crusts; drunken gendarmes dancing in the midst of the company they should keep in order; and jellies kindly emptied into the coat-tail pockets of the more favoured guests. Did the founders of the feast purposely introduce these features to make their illustrious guest at home? Antoine says that this suggestion is too bad. Why, I ask a question simply! I am not saying that Plon-Plon the First

indulges in drinking-bouts and coarse conversation with his aide-de-camps, that he is not indifferent to the charms of dramatic talent displayed in petticoats, and that he maintains the brutality of the *corps de garde* without displaying the courage of its occupants. To say all this of so illustrious a person—to pull aside the green velvet curtain, and begging the English people to disregard the golden bees shimmering over its broad expanse—to point into a dark hole behind, where a burlesque copy of a great conqueror is swilling and smoking—to do all this would be to perform a most ungracious act, seeing that the British lion now loves to greet a swarm of these bees buzzing a friendly greeting about his nose.

Understand, acute uncle, that I am not quarrelling with the bees, for they are very well behaved, indeed—most valiant and chivalrous bees. But because I have a love for the little bodies that mine bravely in the cups of flowers, am I to be the friend of every bumpkin who eats honey? The family quarrels of the Plon-Plons are no business of mine perhaps; Antoine says they are the business of every thinking man. If this were true, I might enlarge on the state of discord in which the Plon-Plons are said to live; I might slily point to rare visits of Monseigneur Plon-Plon to the rooms of the great cousin into whose shoes he hopes to find his way, sooner or later; I might give currency to rumours as to the coldness of the terms on which the ladies of the great family jog on. But I abhor and detest scandal."

"I'll not trouble you with any more," said the merciful uncle. "But my nephew writes a pretty letter, it seems to me."

"Capital! capital!" This came from the beaming master, of course. Everything was capital to this man's happy nature. When the rain was falling, his eye was fixed on the flowers it burst from the seed—not upon the mud it created on his path.

"Shall we say another pipe, gentlemen, and then bed?" he asked; his face smiling round the table.

One pipe more was had over gossip about the executioner of Caen, and the Boulogne expedition of Louis Napoleon. Strong opinions were expressed by Brothers Horrocks and Lebord; and Babbycomb would have divided his views of every part of every subject into three heads, if the company could have mustered patience to listen to him.

But all parted merrily, and were eager to fix a second night.

"It shall be soon, gentlemen," said the master. "Good night. God be with you all."

CHAPTER III.

"BROTHER Creighton has left a paper behind him—with directions for its publication," said the master, when next the Brothers were assembled to spend a reading evening. "It is a sad, but, unfortunately, a common story. There are tear-spots upon the paper. The heroine, I believe—as I have reason to believe—was connected with poor Creighton. Shall I read it?"

"Ay, let's hear of poor old Creighton's youth," said Brother Horrocks.

"It's only respect to the late deceased," was the delightfully-conventional answer of Brother Hartopp.

Then, in a sweet, vibrating voice, the master read the story of

THE WORLD'S COMMON VERDICT.

"There is a happy, quiet village embosomed in the dense foliage of a Kentish valley—not sixty miles from busy London. This village shall be called Dewberry. The woful story that now clouds many a bright face there, must be told without dragging the sufferers into the glare of public light. Though it may be useful to publish the facts, a veil shall be thrown before the mourners, who ask only to grieve alone and unregarded.

In 184—, Dewberry was a happy, prosperous spot. London was as strange a place to many of its inhabitants as Canton or Hyderabad. The seasons were marked by the bursting of the buds, the shooting corn, the ripened ears, the sunburnt apple, and autumn 'laying, here and there, a fiery finger on the leaves;' not by the closing of

theatres, the breaking up of Parliament, or the opening of the Session. These latter events were not very interesting to people who seldom journeyed beyond the nearest market-town, and who were engrossed throughout the year, in agricultural pursuits. The maidens of Dewberry ruled in the poultry-yard and the dairy; the men turned the fruitful soil to the sun; gathered in the ripened harvests, and wore out the short days of frost and snow, upon the threshing-floor. The tide of time ran on with scarce a ripple.

To Dame Marsden was entrusted the task of educating the peasant children. At eight o'clock, daily, ruddy urchins, with polished cheeks, and dirty, well-thumbed books, lifted her latch and ranged themselves upon benches in her little parlour. Mary Marsden, more than her mother, perhaps, contributed to the instruction of her little neighbours. Her learning, goodness to her mother, and charity to the poor, were constant themes of praise. Critically, she was not beautiful. Her nose was decidedly not Grecian—almost the reverse; her mouth was rather large; and her complexion was, beyond dispute, tarnished by the sun; yet from this homely face there beamed an expression—a soul—that won more hearts than her neighbour, Martha Maxwell, with her finely-cut mouth and exquisite nose, could boast of having caught. Mary's face was a mirror—faithful to the last—of her heart. Her manners, not polished, in the drawing-room sense of the word, were still pleasing—too truly modest to be noticed for their modesty. In short, she was one of those warm-hearted, simple creatures, who are never intrusive in their goodness; but who are content to track 'the even tenor of their way' without an eye to mark the sustaining virtue which guides and protects them. Thus Mary daily toiled through the alphabet with the rustic youth of Dewberry; was ready to be called to a neighbour's sick-bed at any time; bore the temper of an erratic mother; entered into the little grievances of children, and interposed when the parental rod was about to fall upon a truant's back. She was not the belle of Dewberry—she was too quiet and unpretending to take so prominent a

place. But in the hearts of the old, rather than the young, she held her seat, without knowing it. Her father had been dead many years; she had but the faintest memory of him. Of the world she knew nothing. If she believed in evil deeds, her belief was dimmed by the distance at which they ever appeared to be from her. In the people about her, she had never met with instances of criminal behaviour; although many, of course, were only remarkable for that negative morality which keeps clear of the law. She had never fallen in love; for she had never met with a nature sufficiently refined, in the moral sense of the word, to awaken her heart from the peace of its daily beating.

In 184—, the date when her story opens, an unusual abundance of game attracted a party of sporting gentlemen to a shooting-box situated about a mile from Dewberry. Among these was a man of superior intelligence, whose frank and cordial greetings were gratefully welcomed by the village folk. His companions treated the villagers with disdain: this made his urbanity the more remarkable. He strolled about the village in the twilight; chatted with the farmers who assembled at the village inn; and told ghost-stories to the peasant children. One afternoon he sauntered into the village school-room, and found Mary Marsden correcting the errors of incipient Cockers. His manner, when he addressed Mary, was polite—even deferential. He excused the liberty of his intrusion, patted some of the children, and begged leave to cross-question one or two of them. He made innumerable inquiries as to the rapidity of their progress; gave, apologetically, an opinion as to the best system of tuition; and, on taking his departure, very politely shook Mary's hand.

The eyes that wandered after him as he passed through the garden-gate, had an unusual expression in them. Pausing here, the sentimentalist might pertinently write a disquisition, citing innumerable corroborative instances, on love at first sight. In the capacity of historian, however, it is only necessary to place facts logically—to hold the balance between truth and falsehood; therefore it

may be declared, without preface, that the young sportsman made a particular impression upon poor Mary's heart, at once. His easy manners had effectually destroyed that sense of superior fortune which chills, in people of low degree, the sympathies that rise suddenly, and without bidding, between persons meeting for the first time, and on equal ground. It was not love that she felt at first; it was only the tremor that marks its quickening. Had Robert Hassell never lifted her mother's latch again, Mary Marsden would have probably forgotten him in the course of a few months. But he came again and again. One day he brought a huge humming-top for her first scholar; on another occasion he had plums to throw among the children, for a scramble. Mary welcomed him, each time, with a satisfaction as frank as innocence. If he talked to her, it was only about her scholastic labours; if he still lingered after the children had left for their respective homes, it was only to look over their copy-books. Even the minutest details of the little village seminary interested him, and Dame Marsden was not a little proud of the gentleman's high-flown compliments. He pronounced her homely teachings to be based on a profound knowledge of the infant mind; Mary's hand-writing shamed Smart, and her definitions of words were infinitely more vivid than the lumbering explanations of Dr. Johnson. All this was said, and again and again repeated. There was not one touch of malice —not one glimmer of sarcasm perceptible in the words or expression of Robert Hassell. He was frankness itself. His learning was imparted without ostentation, as it was worn without pride. He talked always of elevating influences—of the subtle thoughts which give a keenness to the moral sense—of the harmonies of nature—of the things which humble arrogance to the dust. Mary listened, as the penitent to her priest. Had she read the mighty laws which rule the heavenly bodies? No. Step forth, then. The sun has passed below the horizon, and from the deepening blue the stars peep forth one by one. The Milky Way creeps like a silver film athwart the mystic dome; the moon peeps above a neighbouring

hill. Robert Hassell read the glorious page with scientific precision, and with the music of a minstrel. The feet of the village maiden hardly pressed the sod. As the wondrous tale grew from the vivid brain of her companion, she crept unconsciously—but with the awful fascination that with a magnetic influence drags the pilgrim's feet to the edge of the precipice—nearer to her teacher. Still his solemn lesson went on, and she rose with him to heights which only the young and guileless dare. Every word penetrated her soul. To her he was a prophet;—she was in his leading-strings. Almost unconsciously his hand enclosed hers, as they wandered back to the cottage: at the wicket he bade her adieu with a tender yet a solemn voice—but no word of love passed his lips. Mary walked into her home, entranced. In a minute the quick, grey eye of her mother fixed its penetrating glance upon her. Mary awoke from her glorious dream—woke, and burst into a flood of tears.

'Mary, you have been a long time; neighbour Marshall tells me I had better look after you and that young man.'

The fall was too sudden—too abrupt; Mary could make no reply. She felt that an infinite space separated her and her companion from the poor village people, among whom she was doomed to live; even her poor mother on that night was, to her, a common, narrow-minded, pitiable old woman. She was shocked at the coarseness of her neighbour's warning, as well as at the unconcern with which her mother repeated it. How little could they understand the sublime truths which formed the link—the only link of sympathy—between Robert Hassell and herself! What a vain task would it be to attempt any explanation!

'What have you been about, Mary? You look confused and stupid! Crazy like!'

Confused and stupid! She who had been lifted from the earth to look with rapture upon the machinery of the heavens—she who had never felt the purity of life before! How the grandeur of the scene was rolling away before the coarse human thoughts which were thrust in upon

her! Yet the memory of his voice, the majesty (of her investiture) which encompassed his steps, the lofty purity which made her own innocence seem impure—how could these fade away!

Again he came: again he bade her penetrate the mysteries of nature. With him she learned the wondrous story that lay in every pebble at her feet; with him she unravelled the curious chemical machinery that pumped the sustaining juices from the bosom of the earth into the veins of plants. He talked of these things first, enchained her irrevocably; then, and only then, he faltered syllables of a human sympathy—spoke of love. The miser knew his wealth—knew that within his grasp lay a heart over which he was autocrat. He had but to command; his slave was ready. Dame Marsden heard the news of her daughter's betrothal with pride. Her child would be a lady. Robert Hassell's companions might laugh and point at Mary when they passed her gate, but soon she would be as good as the best of them.

Let the truth be told of Mary. Here, while we may, let us mark the purity that elevated her love; the purity that made her defenceless. It was enough to know that Robert Hassell loved her; enough for her that in his noble heart she had a share. His superior fortune did not separate them; so united, so sympathetic were their aspirations. Did she wander about alone with him? This question was often asked by the prudent matrons of the village. Her virgin pride was a little wounded at this implied construction of the relations which existed between her and her lover. Still farther did she feel herself removed from her neighbours; she pitied their forlorn ignorance; she was sad when she thought that her good mother felt nothing of that grandeur which filled herself. She clung more passionately to her teacher as the magic of his lessons fastened upon her soul. She entered into the heaven of her love with all the rapture of a novice. Persuaded that she was soaring, she followed, blindfold, the footsteps of her cherished guide. From the height to which he led her fevered imagination, he gradually began to point out to her the littleness of human dealings, the

paltry considerations by which men were governed—the slavery of custom in which people existed. He surveyed the dealings of his fellow-creatures, and contrasted their littleness with the grandeur of the spirituality to which he had raised her. And thus entranced, thus weaned from her peaceful home by the power of the very virtues which once adorned it, he led her, by the waves of his wand, to his lair.

* * * *

To tell how, when she awoke from her dream, he soothed her troubled heart; how he allayed the wounds which gathered in her; how that potent spell which first lured her to the precipice was once more evoked to soothe the smarts of the fallen creature; how her mother came to comfort her and reprove him; how she believed his story and remained to soothe the pangs of his remorse; how she believed that, in the eye of her God she was his wife; how she clung to him, and dared the world—still worshipping, with a woman's whole soul, the author of her shame; and how, at last, maternal anguish was borne without a murmur—would be to reiterate an old, old story, told again and again, in every journal that is laid upon the breakfast-table.

* * * *

A pale, poor creature is wandering near the little cottage—the old school—of Dewberry. The windows are closed; not the faintest light streams from any casement. The old weathercock creaks under the pressure of the wind; the moon is smeared at frequent intervals by the scudding clouds. The leaves of autumn rustle along the high-road. A year has elapsed since the shooting-party inhabited the box that can be faintly traced upon the brow of a neighbouring hill. In the eyes of the poor wasted creature, who is wandering fitfully about, there is a serene, heavenly light, when they are raised heavenwards. With what a rapt expression is that pale face turned to the stars! What history can that poor creature read in the mystic highway? She is not in distress, for her face is calm as a child's in sleep: is it not calmer? Is there not in that bosom a heavenly hope—is there not in

that fevered brain a resolution that has vanquished fear? What tempts so young a creature to brave the night, with a child in its earliest swaddling-clothes? A pleasant river murmurs not far off; thither she is driven. By whom? The world must answer. A lingering look at the darkened cottage, a few steps, and the mother and child are—where? The statute-book will tell us.

* * * * * *

Solemn men gather about the door of the Dewberry Arms. There is not a smile upon the face of one of them. The parlour of the inn is arranged with scrupulous neatness; there is not a footprint upon its sanded floor. Presently, one or two country gentlemen arrive, call for a little brandy, and wonder how long they are likely to be detained.

'Rather a serious case, sir, I am told,' said one gentleman, addressing a young man near him. 'Yes, so I hear. It's hanged inconvenient for me—I was going to the Snobblebury Meet this morning.'

'Ho!—here's the coroner!' the first speaker interrupted.

The official in question jumped from his gig, and went direct to the parlour. Having gone through the usual preliminary formalities, he suggested that 'the gentlemen of the jury' should at once proceed to view the bodies.

'It's not far off, I hear,' the official continued. 'I'll ask where Mrs. Marsden's cottage is?'

Having received the necessary direction, the gentlemen, headed by the county coroner, walked slowly down the High-street of Dewberry. There was a solemnity in the perfect stillness that reigned throughout the village. Every shutter was closed—every matron paused from her daily labours.

Dame Marsden's cottage, however, was the spot to which the grieving villagers plodded their way, to offer, in blunt and uncouth language, their sense of the loss which the poor old woman had sustained. In the village school-room lay the bodies of Mary Marsden and her child. There, in the scene of her daily labours—where she had endeavoured, to the best of her ability, to

strengthen the moral sense of her neighbours' children—lay the tragic end of her own weakness. How those eyes are sunk! how the cheek is blanched and wrinkled! how the hand has faded to a trellis-work of bone and muscle! The child, with its pulpy lips, its dimpled arms, its cherub smile, lies at the maternal side; defrauded—and by whom?—of its life, at the threshold of its existence.

With this hapless wreck the law proceeds to deal. Let us stand back, and learn the sentence to be pronounced upon Mary Marsden and her child. The coroner, followed by the gentlemen of the jury, enter the village school-room, inquire whether there are any marks about the persons of either of the deceased; exclaim, 'Poor things!' and retire to the village inn. From the jury-room, the following report goes forth to the world:—

'Coroner's Inquest.—Mr. ———, coroner for the County, assembled a highly respectable jury at the Dewberry Arms, Dewberry, to inquire into the circumstances of the death of Mary Marsden and her child, who were found drowned, in the river, on the ——— instant. It appeared from the evidence of the young woman's mother, that her daughter had formed an attachment for a gentleman of fortune, who visited Dewberry last shooting season. Suddenly the young woman who had previously borne an irreproachable character, disappeared from her home. It appeared that the gentleman who accompanied her (Robert Hassell, Esq., in the service of the East India Company) told her that he considered her as his wife, and that the only reason for his delay in taking her to the altar was that he feared the anger of his mother, from whom he had large expectations. After the birth of a child, however, the gentleman suddenly disappeared, and wrote a letter to the young woman, informing her that he was on his way to India to join his regiment and his wife. The evidence of various witnesses went to show that the young woman was in the habit of walking out with Mr. Hassell, after dark; that when last seen she was calm, and, to all appearances, was in the enjoyment of her reasoning faculties. Under these circumstances, the jury, after a short deliberation, returned a verdict of Wilful Murder of the child, and of *Felo-de-se;* and ordered the remains of the young woman to be interred at night, without the customary religious service.'

How then stands the case between Mary Marsden, Robert Hassell, and the world? Robert Hassell is liable to be sued for damages 'for loss of service:' he pays the money, and is acquitted of his sin towards society. He is still 'an officer and a gentleman.' Had he robbed Mary Marsden of a penny-piece, he would have been sentenced

to a practical lesson in rotatory motion at a certain Brixton school; but, inasmuch as he robbed her of all that makes life estimable and honourable, he was, so the law tells us, indiscreet only, and must open his purse to the parents of his victim. Yet how great were the odds throughout against poor Mary Marsden! All his learning—all the refinement with which it is possible to mask treachery—all the holy powers entrusted to man to win over and elevate woman—were brought to bear upon a sensitive creature, whose purity and sensibility made her only an apter victim.

She falls! How stands her account with the world now? The scorn with which she is levelled to the dust is known too well. Her child—innocent as it came from the hand of God—is branded. On all sides she sees only averted faces. She has a heavy load of shame to bear. She is polluted—set aside from the immaculate society that shrinks from the contamination of her touch.

The inheritance of her babe is infamy; she bears the penalty of her frailty with a courageous heart awhile. The baby has its father's features—features dear to the mother even now. How mighty is the vengeance, and how irrevocable! See, she sinks beneath the withering touch of her immaculate fellow-creatures. She lives in so pure an age, that she must not now raise her eyes from the ground; she is made at length to loathe herself. Her brain becomes disjointed. Surely there is more lenient judgment for her in another world. This thought fastens itself on her soul: it pervades her being—it follows her in her sleep. It conquers at last!

Yet the vengeance of the world does not die out with her death. That burning love that made even the maniac mother clasp her child to her heart, and take it with her, in her fear of the shame to which the world had doomed it, is 'Wilful Murder'—her mad destruction, infamous!

The torch-bearers gather about her mother's home. They bear her body slowly, silently to its grave. That religion, the spirit of which is charity, forgiveness, and love, is not for her. Not only was her life judged, and her earthly career degraded, but twelve men declare that

she is lost, and may not be prayed for. A Christian jury prejudges her before her God. Let not a clergyman commend her spirit to her Maker, for twelve country gentlemen know that the intercession is useless. As the world has tracked her with the scent of a bloodhound, so shall vengeance follow her hereafter.

Turning from this true history, how soothing is it to welcome the outpouring of a heart truly human—to follow pensively this Christian lesson:—

> 'Cross her hands humbly,
> As if praying devoutly,
> Over her breast!
> Owning her weakness,
> Her evil behaviour,
> And leaving, with meekness,
> Her sins to her Saviour!'

And how shall it fare with Robert Hassell? He is on his way to India—to a career of glory, to be closed, in due time, by an officiating priest. Well, will there not be, after all, more reason for prayer over the grave of Robert Hassell, than over the body of poor Mary Marsden?"

"Ay, ay, true enough, Hassell's the white-livered rascal to pray for," said Brother Horrocks. "But, while I prayed for him, wouldn't I lay a rope's-end about him, if I could get a grip of him."

"That story explains much to me, in poor Creighton, that I could never understand. In the first place—"

"Order!" cried the master, gently—to the relief of the company, who feared the three heads of Babbycomb—to the last speaker. "We have another paper for this evening."

"Something lively, I hope," said Lebord; "or we shall dream of poor Mary Marsden."

"Well—yes; I think I may say it is lively, may I not, Mr. Sands?"

All eyes were turned upon little Brother Sands; a timid, old man, with laughing eyes, and an imploring expression, that melted your heart whenever you looked at him. "Would the gentlemen really do him the honour to listen to his humble effort? In the presence of such distinguished—"

"Never mind all that palaver, Sands," roared Horrocks —"out with it, like a man."

Brother Sands pulled out his papers. His "little contribution" was written upon the backs of notes; and it took the nervous little reader full ten minutes before he could begin.

At last, he said: "My little paper, gentlemen, is—ha! ha!—a mere trifle—a few answers, in point of fact, to the great question—

WHAT IS LIFE?

I will, then, with your kind permission, begin."

"The prosiest of men, as well as the most imaginative —the lonely weaver at his monotonous labour, and the spent dandy in his sickly morning—the hot-eyed sempstress, and the gorgeous lady—the dullest book-keeper, and the grandest poet—have asked themselves, in various moods, one question—'What is life?' The answers to this universal query would fill volumes. In each reply there is a view of the respondent's life. Let us glance at a few of them.

The first gentleman who undertakes to define life for us is not of the most amiable cast of mind; decidedly not the gentleman with whom we should be inclined to make a voyage round the world. He begs to inform us that life is a desolate journey, beset at every step by briars. Not at all an encouraging prospect to young people, flushed with hope, who are starting on the voyage—who are just about to put their first finger upon the treacherous thorns. This gentleman we recognise as of that peculiar

class who put mourning upon brides—reminding them, just by way of damping their present happiness, that the morrow may find their lover in his grave. Not quite a reasonable course this, in our opinion. We all know that death is inevitable, and not a few of us, let us hope, do something as we proceed in life, to fortify us for the approach of the enemy when he advances upon us. But why be sniffing continually at the door of the charnel-house?

Another individual approaches with a definition. He is a solemn man, not to be lightly approached by any one. He is not to be trifled with on any occasion. We should say he did not smile on his wedding-day. Life, he tells us, is but a journey to the grave; therefore, men are to pucker their faces into the most serious expression, and live near an undertaker. This is a most melancholy gentleman, who wears his sadness as other men wear holiday looks—who is, in fact, very proud of his solemn aspect. He shines at funerals; and perhaps the proudest moment of his life was when, as chief mourner, he followed his father to the grave, between rows of staring strangers.

And now comes a jovial, reckless fellow. He is a little worn, we think, and the brightness of his eye suggests the use of artificial stimulants. He is a thoroughly careless man. Careless of dress, careless as a husband, careless as a father, particularly careless in business—and careful only to imbibe his proper, or rather improper, quantity of spirits before going to bed. Yet he, with all his *laissez faire* logic, has his definition of life. He brings it out patly enough, ask him when you may—to him life is a farce. He is, at bottom, a hapless individual, with very little faith in the social virtues; inclined to laugh at heroism and to palliate ruffianism; yet, himself, a thoroughly good-hearted fellow.

A pretty girl now trips towards us with her definition. She is of the sentimental school; we see that at once. She has a white rose in her hair; her cheek is pale, and she sighs frequently. 'Life,' she says, 'is a flower—to-day, bright and beautiful; and to-morrow, nipt by the frost.' We thought so; exactly the definition we expected.

She is a young lady who, possessing much natural sense, and having one day opened an odd volume of philosophy, conceives that she has an insight not vouchsafed to common mortals—that she is etherealised, and that all her thoughts must be conveyed to the outer world in metaphors. She is passionately fond of flowers, adores the megatherium, and has much to say (out of an elementary geological work) on the tertiary formation. She informs her partner, in the course of a quadrille, that experience teaches her she exists as a tangible reality, but philosophy tells her that she only exists in her imagination. Many readers have met the young lady. The last we heard of her was, that she had adopted the Bloomer costume, and expected a cornetcy in one of her Majesty's household regiments.

[Here the Brothers laughed loudly—possibly to encourage Brother Sands.]

And now we are to observe a very sallow young gentleman, buried in the muslin and gauze of a dozen young ladies, who are listening with open mouths. We remark that the young gentleman's hair is worn extremely long, and parted down the middle of his head. The world is allowed to see much of this young gentleman's neck, we also perceive. A glance at his shirt-collar—completing the solemn picture—we recognise the unacknowledged poet; the injured individual who haunts the coteries of Islington to while away time, till posterity pronounces a final and triumphant verdict on his poems, entitled, 'Sarah Anne, and other Verses.' Here he is, an infinitely condescending Apollo, and the young ladies, not without trepidation, hint that they have blank leaves in their albums. To one he gives an impromptu written on the summit of Mont Blanc; to another favored lady he presents his lines on the decease of a faithful spaniel; and, to a third, he offers an answer to the great question. Here it is: 'Life is a rapid river, flowing into a mysterious sea.' This definition, according to the poet's confidential friend, is true poetry, for 'it leaves plenty to the

imagination.' Our poet deals in the vague and mysterious exclusively; and dandles Death through his verses with that sportive activity which, according to himself, only truly great minds can comprehend. He plays at football with the destinies, and terrifies young ladies by the levity with which he alludes to all that is solemn in life, and terrible in death. This is pitiful; he would have made a capital banker's clerk. But, luckily, one of his circle has the hardihood to rebuke the presumption of his verse; to advise the cutting of his hair, and to point out the danger in which his exposed neck runs. This bold friend is a lady, who, if she have any pride, is proud of the gentleman she 'sits under.' She is an uneasy maiden female of five-and-thirty, who thinks that jewellers should be indicted for openly displaying wedding-rings in their shop-windows. Her coffin is continually before her eyes. She has the profoundest conviction of the uncertainty of things, and is known to have rebuked a jovial party for appointing a future pic-nic, without reflecting that they might all be in their graves before the day arrived. She tells her friends that life is a thread, snapt in an instant. She has lately advertised for a situation as a cheerful companion to a nervous or hypochondriacal person.

And now let us stop another passenger in the great thoroughfare of the world. Care has tattooed his face terribly; lines intersect every inch of his forehead; his eyes lie back from the daylight, under his puckered brow; coarse lines ramble about his mouth—we linger no longer over the picture: he has fought a great, stern battle with the world, and has lost. The honey of his young nature has turned to gall. He has not a smile left for any of us. Well, not a few of these stern men pace our London streets, with sixty years upon their shoulders, and empty purses in their pockets. They are men who have prospered in the beginning, and failed in the end. And they whisper in the ears of the flushed youths who hasten past them in the great struggle, words of sad import—syllables that slacken the vigour of young blood often. Life, our tattooed friend declares, is a hideous nightmare. Toil,

and fret, and woe, encompassing us all, at every step we advance, only bid us farewell when the sexton takes us in hand.

Not by any two of us, in short—not by the bride and bridegroom at God's altar—is the question answerable in the same phrase. We have a letter from an old-fashioned friend of ours, who has adopted an answer to the question under discussion, as his seal. A vessel (whether brig or schooner the engraver has not allowed us to determine) is rolling tremendously upon a red cornelian sea, so that it is evident to the most inexperienced spectator she cannot keep above water, or above cornelian, many minutes. Under this terrible picture are these words—'Such is life!' Life, to a vast number of persons, is a path of various widths: to the very serious it is the narrowest of paths; to the jocose, it is a broad and pleasant highway; to the young, it is a green lane, hedged with flowers, and arched over with the 'crescent promise' of the rainbow; to the sceptical, it is a maze. To another crowd of individuals, life presents itself in various spaces of time: to thousands it is a brief hour, and, to the particularly philosophic, a second, and no more. An impetuous friend interposes with his definition, and as it represents, in some way, the class of answers we should receive from the numbers who go through life, panting all the way with the speed of their progress, we give it. Life, says our impetuous friend, is a flash of lightning.

The vexed question has, in truth, so many answers, that they might fill thick octavo volumes. Every poet, every statesman, every essayist, every philosopher, has had his epigrammatic reply to our question. Mr. Carlyle starts forward with one—

> 'What is life? A thawing ice-board
> On a sea with sunny shore—
> Gay we sail—it melts beneath us,
> We are sunk, and seen no more.'

Generally, to assure us of its rapid extinction, have poets written types of life. According to one poet it is 'a sweet delusion;' while another plaintively asks—

'Oh, Life! is *all* thy song
Endure, and—die?'

Surely, not in any sense can life be so interpreted; for, if it were so, in vain would the poet's song be, and all unnoticed the mid-day lark might make the heavens musical to us! Other poetical friends approach with definitions:—

'Our life is an idle boat,
Along a winding river.'

Here a gleam of philosophy lights the burden. Idle the boat is, generally, compared with its capacity for navigation, and little often do we accomplish of the mighty sum of labour that lies in the hands of the weakest of us; but not altogether contemptible are our realisations, and it is hardly for us, with all our weakness of purpose, to cry aloud woe and sadness, and let the boat float errandless and empty out to sea.

I am fairly besieged with definitions—now. Life is a boat, an iceberg, a muddy stream, a pellucid river, a game at chess, the toss of a coin; a bubble, a comedy, a tragedy, a burlesque, a poem to the end, a dull passage of prose, an ebbing tide, a sandbank, a dream, a fitful fever, &c., &c., &c. It is interpreted by a thousand images, because it has its thousand phases—because it is supportable or insupportable, according to the realisations of each individual. It is a dream to those who wander through the world with their hands in their pockets, as Longfellow infers:—

'Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream;
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.'

To the heated speculator, busy with the rise and fall of funds, it is the toss of a coin; to the indifferent it is a comedy; to few, indeed, let us hope, is it a dull passage of prose; and to fewer still may it be a tragedy! But may many say with Longfellow again—

'Life is real—life is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.'

And now we must close our chapter of definitions. Not to doleful music would we give our own particular definition; but rather to a cheerful measure, full of harmony, a touch of tenderness here and there, always a thoroughly correct and earnest accompaniment, and happy light airs treading upon the mournful burdens, to relieve the whole."

Brother Sands threw his irregular manuscript upon the table, saying, that "it was a hasty production, unworthy of the subject—but," he added, modestly, "to quote Jean Paul, 'I have crumbled bread into a famous soup for you, and leave you sitting with the spoon.'"

"Capitally said, Brother Sands," said the master, tapping the table with his heavy pipe. Sands was confused with the compliment, and tittered like a young lady, as he sipped his hot ale.

"We have still half-an-hour, gentlemen," said the master; "and, if you will allow me, I will read you some notes I made the other day, of my recent visit to the pipe manufactory, when I bought the exquisite straws I trust you are enjoying."

"That's it—capital! Silence for the master," roared Horrocks.

"Silence, gentlemen! silence!" echoed round the table.

"Well—I'll begin at once," said the master.

"I have an eccentric friend, whom I meet occasionally. He cannot be said to have an inquiring turn of mind, or usually to busy himself with the science of industrial economy. Babbage is an unknown writer to him; and he has not yet contrived to 'get up' any interest in the recent Reports on Her Majesty's Customs. In fact, I

should not be surprised if he never opened the interesting volumes in question. He is a man with an active mind, nevertheless; but this activity is expended, as a rule, in eccentric pursuits. He has one confirmed antipathy—he hates a purpose. Since he heard that I had taken an interest in the wrongs of factory children, he has treated me with marked coolness. Yet he is a man with an excellent heart. Let me at once give the key to his character. Most people have one serious object in life, therefore he is opposed to all serious objects. Lately, I met him walking briskly on his way homeward, and I consented to accompany him. Suddenly, he remembered he must make a call before he entered his chambers.

This call led us out of a great thoroughfare, through two or three narrow and dark streets, to the door of a dingy house. As we paused on the threshold, my companion asked me if I had ever seen a tobacco-pipe manufactory. I expressed my inexperience; and, having been cautioned against sermons on what I was about to see, followed my eccentric friend down a dark passage, which terminated in a very dirty and a very dark warehouse. A few samples of tobacco-pipes lay upon a counter, and one side of the warehouse was skirted with drawers full of "yards of clay"—my eccentric friend's ordinary expression when alluding to his pipes. In a dark corner, a strong man was savagely punching huge blocks of clay with a heavy wooden bar; in another corner lay a prodigious pile of clay blocks in a rough state—apparently a heap of dirt, of little use to anybody. A mild woman—the wife of the manufacturer—showed us about, with a cheerful manner. My friend, who took an evident interest in all the processes we witnessed, still contrived to maintain his eccentric habit, by continually expressing his unconcern. As we watched the skilful action of the workmen's fingers, my friend allowed that they played the fiddle well, but added that they could *only* play the fiddle. However, I left him to pursue his eccentric way, and wandered about, myself, with unfeigned curiosity.

Turning from the muscular fellow who was beating the rough clay with the wooden bar, and moistening it, that

it might yield to the pressure of the mould, I suddenly saw a black, gaping mouth before me, that seemed to be in the agony of swallowing a dense stack of tobacco pipes; this, I learned, was the pipe-kiln. The pipes are arranged in exact rows, and in vast quantities. I ventured to express my astonishment at the number of pipes in the capacious kiln; whereupon the clay-beater paused from his labour, and, with a smile that expressed pity for my ignorance, declared that there was a mere handful on the premises. 'There are a few still, up there,' he added, pointing to the roof of the warehouse.

I followed the direction of his finger, and saw above me a roof of tobacco-pipes piled in regular rows, upon brackets. The number appeared incalculable, but the clay-beater contemptuously pronounced it insignificant. He informed me that I might see 'a few more,' if I would have the goodness to go upstairs.

My troublesome friend vowed that the trouble was excessive—that our business was with the pipes when they had tobacco in them, and not with the people who made them; and, as he remarked (having had a sharp pecuniary altercation with the manufacturer's wife), who took particular care to charge a remunerative price. But he mounted the stairs, in spite of his objections, and followed me into the room, where the battered clay of the beater below was undergoing other processes. Here and there men seemed to be printing off pipes—the action of their arms, and the movement of their presses nearly resembling those of hand-printing. A pale woman sate in the centre of the room with a counter before her, and two or three delicate tools; but we went past her at once to the man who had a mound of soft grey clay before him. He was working briskly. He first seized two lumps of clay, each of the average size of an apple, and having carelessly kneaded them with his fingers, seemed to throw them contemptuously upon the board before him. Then, with the palms of his hands, he rolled them sharply out on the board, leaving one end of each lump very thick; and producing, altogether, two clay tadpoles of a large size. These he took up, and placed with others in a row, all pressed and sticking together.

The apparent unconcern and indifference with which the entire operation was performed struck us particularly. When we had sufficiently noticed the manufacture of gigantic tadpoles, we crossed the room to an opposite bench where a man was working rapidly. Here we found a confused heap of clay tadpoles, ready to be run through and burnt into seemly pipes. We watched the operations of the second skilled labourer with intense interest. First, with a weary air he took up a bundle of limp clay tadpoles, and threw them down close beside him. He then took a fine steel rod in his left hand, and seizing a tadpole, drew its long slender tail on to the rod. This operation was so dexterously performed, that the rod never protruded the least to the right or to the left, but was kept, by the fine touch of the right-hand fingers, exactly in the centre of the tube. The spitted tadpole was then laid flat in the lower half of the metal pipe-mould, the upper part was pulled down over it, and then pressed. On lifting the mould from the press, the workman quickly cut away the superfluous clay that stood up beyond the bowl, opened the mould, and disclosed, to the undisguised admiration even of my eccentric friend, the graceful flow of his usual 'yard of clay.' But it was not yet ready for smoking—very far from it.

It was still a damp, leaden grey pipe, with two broad seams of clay projecting from it, throughout its length. It was ragged, also. On these difficulties my friend began to offer a few pungent remarks; when the workman interrupted him by pointing towards an industrious woman, who seemed to be in a desperate hurry; yet she was not at all excited. My friend suggested that steam must be circulating in her nimble fingers, instead of blood. She smiled at the pleasantry, and said, meekly enough, that it was custom. She was as clumsy as I should be, when she began:—but long, long days of experience—there, sitting before that board, and cutting incessantly those seams that curl so neatly off the rough pipes—give that dexterity. It is well—perhaps severely, paid for. The workwoman wears a serious, dull face generally. It struck me, as I watched the repetition of her movements, that in their

dreadful monotony there must be a deadening influence upon the mind and heart. I even thought that she must find it a relief now and then to break a pipe, or drop one of the glistening steel rods. First, she took up one of the rough pipes, and with a sharp steel instrument, smoothed all the rough clay about the bowl. Then she smoothed the stem with a flat instrument—then she cut the mouthpiece even. Having thus rapidly travelled over the moulder's work, she withdrew the fine steel rod from the tube, blew down the pipe to assure herself that the air passed from the bowl to the mouthpiece, and then carefully added it to a row, placed upon a frame beside her. The finished pipe was hardly deposited in its place before another was in her hands, and in rapid process towaads completion.

The heat, from a roaring fire crackling in the grate, was oppressive. Above, were more endless rows and galleries of pipes, waiting to be baked, and in a fair way, I thought, of undergoing that process where they lay. I could hear the dull, heavy sounds of the clay-beater's weapon below, and in the room the incessant click of the closing moulds. The workmen were proud to show their dexterity—as they well might be. Our friend in the farther corner, as he talked pleasantly to us on various subjects, still carelessly made his clay tadpoles; the woman never paused from her rapid work when she exchanged occasional sentences with a boy who stood near her; and the wife of the manufacturer surveyed the busy scene with sparkling eyes.

I thought once or twice of the damp clay streaming about these workpeople; and of the hard, stern work going on to provide receptacles for lazy men's tobacco. Pipe-clay seemed to force itself everywhere; about the rafters, on the benches, on the floor, in the walls. My friend's curiosity was soon satisfied; for his anxiety to avoid contact with the raw material of his favourite manufactured article, drove every other consideration from his mind. He vowed that he did not wish to appear in the streets of London in the guise of a miller—that, generally he preferred a black coat to a piebald one, and

that not being a military man, the less pipe-clay he took away in the nap of his clothes the better. But I had one or two questions to put to the tadpole-maker;—not with the view, as my friend stoutly asserted, of writing a sermon, but perhaps with an object sufficiently laudable. I learned that a workman, 'keeping to it' twelve hours, can make 'four gross and a half' of pipes per diem.

"The devil he can!" from Brother Horrocks.

"My friend was struck with this astonishing fact; and, forthwith, began to prove from it that he ought to have the half-gross he wanted at a very low price indeed. It was only when the workman paused, for the first time, from his work, to discuss the beauties of various pipes, that my friend felt himself quite at home in the manufactory. The workman placed a variety of pipes in juxta-position, and began to talk of their relative excellencies and beauties, with the taste of an artist. This man was not without a shrewd sense of art; he had his ideal of a tobacco-pipe, as the political dreamer has his ideal of a model state, or as a sculptor has his ideal beauty. He had shrewd unanswerable reasons for a certain roundness in the bowl; his eye wandered critically down the graceful bend of the tube, and his hand tested nicely the finish of the surface. His skill lay, certainly, only in the manufacture of tobacco-pipes; but, still, herein his mind was active, and his taste was cultivated.

'What would become of you if smoking were put down by Act of Parliament?' my friend asked with a sarcastic air. But the man was a match even for the practised eccentricity of my companion.

'Why, sir,' said the man, 'most likely more snuff would be consumed instead, and I should shut up the kiln, and take to making snuff-boxes.'

My friend was silenced; and, as we walked away from the manufactory, down the dark narrow streets, he allowed, in a whisper, that there was wisdom in the pipemaker's answer. And then he began to make calculations as to how many people flourish in the world on the bad

habits and vices of their fellow-citizens. He wove a chain of terrible length, to show how many men were interested in the drunkenness of England. A man reeled past us in the imbecile, singing stage of the vice. 'That man,' said my eccentric friend, 'has done the State some service to-night. He has been helping to swell the Excise returns; presently he will create a disturbance; a policeman will gallantly walk him off to the station-house, and be promoted. Drunkard's hat will be broken, to the great advantage of a hatter; his shirt-front will be torn, to the benefit of some poor, lone seamstress; and—there, he has broken his yard of clay, to the advantage of the manufactory we have just left! *Delirium tremens* will come at last; and with it a surgeon; and, with the surgeon, herbs which are now growing under the burning heat of Indian skies.' Thus my eccentric friend ran on, and I did not interrupt him; for, in his words, I detected sparks of light that led us merrily forward to our journey's end; where we found half-a-gross of 'yards of clay;' 'a perfect picture,' according to my friend—lying, all white as snow, before us, trimmed, I knew, by the serious, nimble-fingered woman we had seen at her work. And she is at it now, still cutting the seams off, and blowing down the tubes!"

"Even now, my friends," said the master, folding up his paper, "while we are thinking of our tapers, and our way to bed."

CHAPTER IV.

BROTHER LEBORD was, unquestionably, the most popular contributor to the readings of the Crutch. He was the man whose experiences carried his companions to new fields. He had moved in the midst of historical personages. He had seen the Cossacks encamped before the Invalides; he could tell all the story of the English Government's meanness in the purchase of the British Embassy in the Faubourg St. Honoré. He had heard the firing of July, and had seen Brussels in a state of revolution; so that subjects came readily enough to his pen. His careless stories suggested themes.

"Tell us," old Horrocks would say, "all you know about the French army, or the Mounseer sailors."

"What is their exchange like?" Brother Phœnix would ask. Lebord was pleased with these questions, and promised to answer them all in good time.

On the third occasion, when the Brothers were assembled in the hall, to listen to readings, Lebord offered accordingly to communicate to the company something that should be of interest to them, and especially to their gallant friend Horrocks. He had been thinking, of late, about

THE FRENCH PIOU-PIOU.

He would read as clearly as he was able.

"Let me offer you a lozenge," said the genial master. "I have found them of great service."

The lozenge was received with a profound bow—a bow of the old school—and then the reader began :—

"Leo Lespès has described the French soldier justly enough: mixing up with his facts that fair quantity of lively matter indispensable to the production of an article that is to interest *feuilleton* readers.

The French soldier must be between the ages of eighteen and thirty. He must measure one metre sixty centimetres; he must possess sixteen teeth at the least; he must have a true eye, and his leg must be free from varicose veins. He must not be subject to fits of any kind. Here is the healthy raw material. The perfect man is taken in hand; he is made to turn his head briskly to the right and left; to throw out his leg, &c., during three months, and then he is thrust into red trousers and a blue frock coat. 'The god Pan is a warrior!' Very perfect must the '*tourlourou*' be, while great men have the privilege of going through life with club-feet, short-sight, or any other defect which nature may have given them. M. Lespès reminds these gentlemen that with all their eminence as civilians they would not have found their way even into the honourable corps attached to the *ambulance* department; a corps said to carry sticks of liquorice in their gun-barrels, and sticking-plaister in their cartridge-boxes. French soldiers are broadly marked off into two classes, viz., the volunteers and the conscripts. The former are ambitious, the latter are, generally, only resigned to the profession of arms, as an inevitable temporary calling. The conscript has '*tombé au sort!*' and this popular description of his fate describes also the spirit with which he puts on his regimentals. When he has drawn the unlucky number, he returns to his native village arm-in-arm with his companions in misfortune; tricolor ribbons floating from his hat, and but the dullest colours in his eye. He serves his time without the hope of winning even a corporal's stripe, and he is glad enough to leave others to fight for the marshal's stick, while he

returns to his village, and his scrap of land. We must not forget the sordid fellow who sells himself to glory; who, for some £100, replaces a neighbour with an unlucky number, and with money to buy a substitute. The substitute is but ill received in the ranks, and is contemptuously described by the soldiers as 'one who has sold his father's pig.' Lespès describes these substitutes as winding up their lives, after having sold themselves three times in the dignified position of masters of canteens, allied to washerwomen, or occasionally giving the advantage of their experience to the fencing-school of the regiment. Only the conscript is received, by his regiment, with military honours. When a draft of these conscripts arrives, the entire regiment turns out, with its band; and the new warriors enter their barracks to the stirring strains of martial music. Then the conscript has to answer the pressing inquiries of his comrades as to the state of his purse; he must pay his footing. Woe to him if his prudence suggest to him an endeavour to avoid payment. Rude tricks (as rude as those played by English officers and gentlemen) are tried upon him. His cartridge-box is stuffed with sawdust; thistles bristle between his sheets; and dead rats perfume his shako. These experiences must give delicately-constituted minds a distaste for glory, at the outset; but then there is the dinner from the *gamelle !*

This *gamelle* is a large vessel, which, filled with soup, floating six lumps of meat upon its greasy bosom, contains the dinner of half-a-dozen soldiers. The man who fetches the *gamelle* from the kitchen, has the privilege of choosing his lump of meat, before his companions dip for theirs. Very critical is the fellow's eye: equally critical are his fingers very often, as he searches for the best piece, with the decidedly indelicate intention of taking it. And then, when the lumps of meat have been withdrawn, the six diners, each armed with a spoon, dip by turn into the common soup-dish, nor does a single spoon lose its activity until they all clash at the bottom of the vessel. It is said that attempts have been made in various regiments to replace the soup with a *ragout*, but without success; the

soldiers cling to the soup, and grow melancholy on any other diet.

"Ha! ha! ha!" from Brother Horrocks.

"This attempt at a change became known among the soldiers as the *rata;* and now *le rata* is the synonym for everything that is poor and bad. M. Lespès cites a popular song sung by the soldiers, the satire whereof consists in calling the weaknesses of their officers the *rata* once more. Let me quote a verse as a specimen:—

'Le caporal est bon enfant,
Il boit bien, sec et souvent;
Mais au marché quand il va,
Il nous garde un sou par franc,
Voilà le rata!'

I am tempted to quote the concluding verse also, as exhibiting the ordinary aspirations of the soldiers. They look to their villages very often through the tobacco-smoke of the barrack:—

'Je voudrais être chez nous,
Avec margot sur mes genoux;
Mais quand au pays mon cœur va,
L'adjutant dit: *garde à vous!*
Voilà le rata!'

Many writers have been facetious over the pay of the soldier of the line. The sou, per diem, which he receives, carries with it the responsibility of providing his own blacking, varnish for his cartridge-box, nails for his boots and brushes; but these expenses defrayed, he is master of the balance.

"Ha! ha! ha!" again from the gallant Horrocks.

"Resources so slender make him thrifty; and it is probable that the working-men of France, who have served their seven years in the ranks, return to civil life with regular habits, that give them a great advantage over neighbours who have not served.

The gaiety of the French soldier is inexhaustible. He is fond of practical jokes, tobacco; and for martial songs, remarkable rather for a downright expression of meaning

than for a classical correctness of grammar; beer and brandy, stories of wild adventure, told after the lights are out at night, and sarcasms levelled, as a rule, at his corporal. The famous story of La Ramée, who had been twenty-seven years in the 17th regiment of the line, and had lived on in the hope of being corporal at last, is always a favourite. How this famous trooper appealed to his captain, who replied that he was some hundreds of francs in debt, and without shirts, and that these shortcomings stood in the way of his promotion. How La Ramée obtained leave of absence to get money, that he might pay his debts; how he experienced wonderful adventures in the dominions of the King of Seringapapapathos, and finally returned to his regiment with a hundred million six-farthing pieces, and the daughter of the king, whom he had married. How, at last, he paid his debts and became corporal, are points of wonder which have been told in hundreds of guard-houses over which the tricolour floats.

The popular termination of this story is, that the princess and corporal's wife (Madame la Princesse La Ramée, if you please) obtained the great honour of serving the *sous-officiers* with *fricot*. The hit at the *sous-officiers* is, of course, the sting of the ballad. The secretary enjoys a hit at the minister; the clerk chuckles over a caricature of his director; the artisan vastly relishes a joke played upon the foreman.

Other songs sung round the barrack-stove are characteristic. Those of an amorous tendency, in which nuns occasionally figure, cannot be printed; but there is one of the martial songs sung, according to M. Lespès, to the tramp of a double-quick march, which is an excellent sample of these kind of compositions; it is called the 'Weaver of Corbeil.'

"I cannot sing," here M. Lebord observed, "but I'll give you some notion of the air:—

> "C'est le fileur de Corbeil,
> Qu'il n'y avait pas son pareil;
> Avant d'être au regiment,
> Il avait un attachement.
> * * *

Il s'en va dire à sa maman,
Je pars insensiblement ;
Dites à ma tante qu j' suis son n'veu,
Et que j'ai q'u le numero deux.

* * * *

Si Charlotte vient m'demander,
Dites lui que je suis occupé ;
Qu'elle me garde son cœur, sa foi,
Si ça peut, quelquefois.

* * * *

Dites encore aux compagnons,
Que le fileur de coton,
Qui à filé bonnets et bas,
D'vant l'ennemi ne filera pas !"

* * * *

Brother Lebord chaunted these verses with the lightness and vigour of an old trooper; then he resumed his reading:—

"The concluding pun gives the song its value in the eyes of the lively French soldier; and he trolls it gaily as he marches under the standard which, during his seven years of service, he calls 'the steeple of his native village.'

And bravely does he stand in the shadow of this steeple; cheerily does he point to it on long marches; reverently does he salute it when it has passed through victorious battle-fields! For, if he be content with his obscurity as a simple soldier; if he be firm in the determination to return to his native village when his time is out, he still respects his vocation of soldier; is jealous of the honour of his regiment; and at any moment would lightly cast off the ease and fun of garrison life, to be scorched in Algeria or Italy, or to be frozen upon the heights of Sebastopol.

"And now," said Lebord, breaking off from his reading, "let me give you some characteristic touches of our neighbours, which I have collected lately, and which I have thrown together in the form a letter."

"By all means," quoth the Master; and Brother Lebord continued his reading:—

"My dear B.—'*Tenez, Monsieur, vous faites de la peinture en Angleterre!*' said a dignified, elegant countess to me in a Paris *salon*, in 1855, when I told her that the English intended to contribute largely to the Universal Picture Exhibition. It was the belief of the lady that the English manufactured nothing save cotton and iron, and that Poetry and Art had hardly dawned upon our 'bizarre' race. It was easy to excuse the lady's ignorance. She had possibly derived her notions of England from Jules Lecomte or M. Wey. But it is provoking to find Frenchmen who have opportunities for close personal observation, and who are, moreover, tolerably read, still airing their complete ignorance of England and the English.

M. Menche de Loisne's elaborate contrast between France and England have suggested to me some few further illustrations of the general literary estimate of ourselves by our neighbours. M. de Loisne has lived in the midst of English people, for years, in his Boulogne prefecture. He is a thoughtful and a well-read man. He is popular in the town he governs. He has leisure and abundant opportunity to study the English character, and the result of reading, observation, and analysis is—a view of us not less exaggerated than the famous '*Voyage de Désagrémens à Londres.*' From his windows M. de Loisne can see the cliffs of Dover; in his daily walks he meets troops of English mothers with their children. He is brought hourly in contact with Englishmen and Englishwomen, and yet he understands the genius of them, or the heart of them, as little as an inhabitant of Jeddo comprehends the economy of one of Her Majesty's ships of war.

Whence has M. de Loisne derived that bold summary, wherein he declares that English mothers are without heart, and English children without poetry? I fear that it is the old story of a Frenchman having studied a people after he had made up his mind with regard to them. Did not M. Francis Wey live in London, and return to Paris to tell our neighbours that strangers were charged a shilling each before they could enter our tavern parlours? Did not this writer dine at the Reform Club, and write

that here sherry, port, claret, and Bordeaux preceded the champagne? Did he not discover that every Londoner walked with a stick? Is it not due to M. Wey that the Parisians believe we have only two cheap articles in London, viz.—flowers and cotton nightcaps? Way for Wey! Here is an English scene drawn by a Frenchman:—

'A cutler placed some needles before me. This created a desire in me to buy a knife. He showed me a single one. I asked for two or three. He placed them in a row before me, told me their prices, and left me to myself. I sat down, looked towards the ceiling, and as Méry has it, sang a song which does not exist. The artisan took up his work and his file. Presently he remarked to me that it was very hot; whereupon I replied very patly, 'Yes.' As I played with the knives, I at last chose one. The cutler examined it, and said to me, 'Not is good.' He put it down again, and returned to his work. I then endeavoured to make a more sagacious selection; whereupon it was the cutler's turn to say 'yes.' I wanted a really good knife. The tradesman picked one out and placed it before me. When I asked to make my own choice he said—'Very good, very good!' Still he did not move, but kept murmuring in my ear, 'Very good.' Well, I bought the pen-knife. It is carefully made, and the steel is very fine, I presume; but it will not cut at all.' I can only congratulate M. Wey upon having chosen the shop of a very patient cutler, who allowed his customers to gaze at the ceiling and hum an air. But then the cutler was, of course, not an Englishman, since he told his customer that a certain knife 'not was good.'

But M. Wey shines in generalities. He is bold when he has a verdict to pronounce, or a warning to offer. Towards the end of his experiences he addresses his compatriots, exclaiming—'Lively children, devoted to the culture of fashions and dancing, fear the disdain of this austere and grave people, who furnish Europe prodigally with learned ladies' companions, and who govern by the fingers of their legions of dentists all the jaws of the Continent.' I am inclined to excuse even M. Wey all his absurdities, since he confesses that his friend, Lyonel Banks,

dragged him from one end of Cremorne Gardens to the other, and refreshed him—with ginger-beer! M. Wey is not, in short, so serious as the Boulogne Sous-Préfet, but he is quite as near the truth.

He is as near the truth—or rather as near a correct appreciation of us—moreover, as M. Edmond About, the now established romance-writer, whose 'Tolla,' some years ago, was welcomed as an original and an elegant work. M. About has published a very clever and amusing book ('Le Roi des Montagnes'), in which some English and American people figure. One American is called William Lobster: the English ladies are Mrs. and Miss Simons. Mrs. Simons has a share in the house of Messrs. Barley & Co., a London firm. The ladies are taken by the robber band commanded by the renowned Hadgi-Stavros,—whereupon their Britannic eccentricities ooze out. The chief eccentricity of the elderly lady is to assert that she is English at every turn. She is on the edge of a precipice, whereupon she is made to exclaim that 'she is English, and therefore not made to fall down precipices.' Her other Britannic peculiarity is her gluttony. She has an insatiable maw. British phlegm is illustrated by the following dialogue between mother and daughter:—'Mary Ann.'—'Mamma?'—'I'm hungry.'—'Are you?'—'I am.'—'I am hot, Mamma.'—'Are you?'—'I am.' 'You would readily believe,' the author adds, 'that this wonderfully British dialogue made me smile. But not at all; I was fascinated by the voice of Mary Ann.'

Absurdities of this description, however, may be found in nearly all the living romance-writers of France. The most distinguished English names are mis-spelt in the leading French journals; and M. Théophile Gaultier opens a review of the British school of Art, in the columns of the *Moniteur*, by declaring that this Art is always 'aristocratic and *gentleman*.' *La Presse* reports a speech on war matters of *Sir* Sidney Herbert. Still Jules Lecomte's assertion, that England is all iron and coal, is the belief of the Boulevards; while the Quartier Latin is fixed in its faith that the great majority of Englishmen have red hair. Errors with regard to us, as old as the time of Louis the

Fourteenth, are still printed and reprinted in the current literature of France. Stale squibs current in England fifty years since, and affecting our national character, are absolute living facts to the vast public under the sceptre of the Third Napoleon. Old Mathews' joke about the variety of meaning given to the word Box, is used, for instance, by M. Jules Lecomte, as actual personal observation made in 1851,—the year in which this charmingly incorrect writer treated an English 'Miss' (according to his book) to six shillings' worth of pastry, which she ate as she stood before a refreshment stall in the Great Exhibition building, in Hyde Park!

If, then, M. Lecomte, who has visited England—if M. Wey, who has lived in England—cannot comprehend us or appreciate us without prejudice, M. de Loisne may be surely forgiven. It is a pity, indeed, to see so much historical study thrown to the winds. It is unpleasant to wade through long pages of argument to a conclusion based in blind ignorance. But I, for one, was not surprised when I reached the climax of the Sous-Préfet's book. My experience of the literary tone of Boulonge-sur-Mer was too recent to permit me the pleasure of surprise at any exhibition of popular ignorance on the subject of England that might emanate from the Pas de Calais. I knew the temper of Boulogne journals, under M. de Loisne's inspiration. Let me offer you a few dottings of my experience. A few days since, at Boulogne, I was the centre of terrible rumours: the receptacle for appalling official facts, that turned out to be not only non-official, but not facts at all. 'See!' said a Gallic friend of mine, the Boreas-in-chief of the local whirlwind, 'you detect that white mark upon the line of the blue ocean. The cliffs of England, Monsieur; the cliffs of England!' And he folded his arms, as only a Frenchman can fold arms. I thought he would have wrenched them from his shoulders. And he nodded his closely-cut head towards the white line upon the blue horizon, solemnly, energetically. I lifted my opera-glass slowly, and then declared that I saw the white line in question. This admission made my friend more energetic than ever. 'You see it! you see it!' he

exclaimed frantically; 'and do you known that for the last fifty years we have always taken the appearance of those cliffs as a sign of foul weather!' My friend now folded his arms with startling vehemence, and glared under my hat, possibly to see whether I felt faint. But I was lighting my second cigar. Disappointed to discover that the 'British phlegm' was not disturbed, Baptiste (my Boreas was called Baptiste) threw me a little newspaper; then cast himself upon one of the benches at the pier-head, and prepared to watch the changes in my countenance, and to catch me, should the thunderbolt destroy my equilibrium.

It was a very little paper, with a very imposing title, and with a very lofty style. For news it told me that the English yacht 'Mill of the Wosp' had left the port, and that 'the chief and lady Clanranold' had taken tickets for the local bathing establishment. It included, also, a report of the meeting of the mayor and council, at which the building of a 'grandiose' establishment for bathers and visitors had been determined upon. I was invited to take part in the solemn inauguration of a series of children's *fêtes*, and to assist at a concert, to be given by artists of European reputation, but with whose names I was not familiar. Having read all these interesting points of information, and glanced at grand '*déballages*,' advertised in colossal black letters, I was about to put the dignified little newspaper aside, when my friend rushed at me, and dabbed his fingers heavily, again and again, upon a particular passage. His hands thrust into his pockets spasmodically, his head wagging up and down ferociously, my Boreas glanced at me as I read the little journal's defiance o England.

A great Thunderer on the other side of the Channel had said uncivil things about loyal France. A great Thunderer was not content to see gigantic transports rising above the walls of French dockyards, even when the Thunderer had been assured that these floating barracks were intended merely to take advantage of the newly-opened Japanese markets. A great War Trumpet

was being blown by the 'juvenile' English; Dover was shaking with the thunders of practising artillery. What was the attitude of France, under these circumstances?

I glanced from the page of the little paper at my excited friend. His head wagged more vehemently than ever; his hands were searching for a lower depth in his deep pockets: 'Proceed, proceed!' he said. He was determined to shame me thoroughly. I proceeded.

Yes, what was the attitude of France under these circumstances? Why the fort of *La Crèche* was crumbling before the attacks of the sea; the fort on the east was dismantled; the heights were without batteries (save that one which saluted Queen Victoria in 1855); the coast was guarded by a few Custom-house officers; and the town was protected by forty-four foot soldiers! Vehement use of points of exclamation give emphasis to the convincing arguments of the little journal.

If these forty-four *piou-pious* and the crumbling fort of *La Crèche* are not convincing proofs of the peaceful intentions of France, the editor of the little journal will be happy to know what proofs mean. But to add perfume to the violets of his rhetoric, the editor will beg the reader to remark, that while Dover is practising artillery, France and England are dancing polkas together in the *Etablissement*. '*Eh ben! Eh ben!*' still wagging his head, shouted my friend, following my eyes, glancing under my hat, dodging me, indeed, as though he would mesmerize me. What would be said in England, to this? What would our Parliament say? Would not the editor of the Thunderer pull down the blinds in his office, and going down upon his knees before a figure of France, proceed to devour a substantial meal of humble pie? Would not the artillerymen of Dover decline to fire another shot? Would not the shipwrights of Chatham, and the engineers of Woolwich leave molten iron at the edge of the mould—the bolt unriveted in the ship? Boreas was quite aware that the English were a *bizarre* race; but the logic of the little journal must appeal to the meanest understanding.

I ventured to inquire into the importance of *La Crèche*,

which is 'falling to pieces.' It is on the right as I stand at the head of the pier, fronting the sea—fronting England —*bizarre* England—to which, even under the fierce glances of Boreas, I am proud to say I belong.

La Crèche is a heap of stones lying a few feet below high water-mark; a heap upon which some thirty very expert acrobats might perch themselves. 'You see!' says Boreas, 'all in ruins, and opposite your noisy Dover!' I stroll along the pier towards the town of which the little journal is the mouthpiece, under the superintendence of the thin and sallow gentleman who is approaching me on horseback; who wears the ribbon of the Legion; and who is in the leading-strings of the great personage of the Rue Bellechasse, Paris. This happy reference to the forty-four *piou-pious* has been duly considered and amended by the sallow gentleman. This sallow gentleman is answerable for the little journal's reference to *La Crèche.* This sallow gentleman might make short work of the little journal's editor, if this functionary were to speak his mind regardless of the prefecture. This sallow gentleman, to be technical, 'inspires' the editor of the little journal; and, to be brief, is the author of 'France and England Historically Considered.'

Friend Boreas bows to the Inspirer profoundly, and we pass on to an hotel, where I propose to refresh myself after the excitement natural to a man who feels that his country has given way to 'puerile' fears, and has, to use a vulgarism, been 'sat upon' by the overpowering logic of a French provincial editor.

A few Gallic ladies and gentlemen are in the *salle-à-manger.* The ladies have just crossed the Channel, and are describing the perils of the transit to their male companions; the said male companions are putting on polite expressions of consternation, and giving way to timely 'Bahs!' the while. Having passed six days in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square, the travellers are authorities on the present temper of the English nation. With animation almost hysterical, the craven fears of the *Anglais* are set before the gentle-

men. Then the gentlemen are asked to explain this sudden warlike bustle made by the 'droll' English. Whereupon, a tall Gaul, with the figure and force of a spill, rises, and, shrugging his shoulders, says:—'It is very natural that they should be afraid of us.' 'Shall we have war?' my waiter asks me, as he puts my half chicken before me, and excuses the absence of water-cresses. I confess that I know nothing about the matter. 'The English ought to be very grateful to us, Monsieur.'—'Why?'—'We saved their handful of soldiers from annihilation in the Crimea. But you English (pardon me, Monsieur) are so self-sufficient! A friend of mine said to me the other day, the English believe that they have a right to every puddle upon the face of the globe. Will Monsieur have an omelette?'—'No François, thank you.'—'I don't say you are not good sailors. But your navy's big enough. You don't want it for the colonies now. You've killed all the Indians—those poor Indians!' And François clasped his hands, with a napkin between them, and looked tragic. 'But our army!' And he shook his head over my half chicken.—'Well!' I said, a little nettled, I confess, at being drawn head over heels into an argument, by the waiter. François was now folding the napkins into the shape of pyramids, making a roll the apex of each pyramid.—'Well, Monsieur, shall I tell you what I think? Mind, I'm an Englishman rather than a Frenchman, in sympathy. I think that if the French army once got a *pied-à-terre* in your famous Albion, the English army would not suffice for a breakfast *à la baïonette* for our Zouaves.' François paused over a damask pyramid, and repeated that this was his opinion:—more, that it was the opinion of a gentleman from Paris, very high in society there, who had dined at the *table-d'hôte* yesterday. He should be sorry to see a war between the two countries, nevertheless; because the cannon balls would just reach his little 'bazaar' (meaning his garret) under the rampart walls; and it was as hard to lose one hundred francs as one hundred thousand, if a hundred were a man's all. 'Then, what was to be gained by either side?' François

turned ferociously upon me.—'By France,' said I, 'Glory!' François shrugged his shoulders, declared that he was an ignorant man, and could not deal with State questions; but as for glory, why glory was to him, like a tramp by the road-side—very picturesque, but *sans le sou*."

"A few hours in the lively, noisy little port on my friend's hasty way from the modern Babylon to the centre of civilisation, sufficed to have the above little tunes whistled in his ear," added Lebord—"tunes of which I shall be, not the critic, but simply the transcriber. There are pompous excellencies, and eminences, and right honourables, and high mightinesses enough to transpose, and adapt, and re-adapt, and set to all kinds of discordant instruments, feebler tunes than these, which may serve humble people who are neither excellent nor eminent, as suggestions as to the way of the wind about this time. From ill-natured bluster, opinions based upon ignorance, and sarcasms that can amuse only when knowledge of facts is wanting, I turn to Charles Gouraud's book on the 'Causes of England's Greatness.' Here is a fair and conscientious study of the rise of England's power, compared with which M. de Loisne's long journey upon the wrong road is bóy's work. We must be content to permit the Sous-préfet to sow the belief among his readers (and I hear that a second edition of his book is in the press) that Englishwomen and Englishmen part from their children as sparrows part from their young. The Boulogne Préfet has, unhappily, more power to bring to bear upon the propagation of error than poor François, the waiter, has."

All the Brothers thanked M. Lebord cordially for his papers; and begged that he would prepare others for them in the same style.

Lebord bowed profoundly—in the manner of a gentleman of Louis the Eighteenth's time; and assured the company that he would do his best.

"Meantime," said the master, "as we are on French

subjects, and as Brother Hartopp has a very interesting communication from his nephew, in which the entry of the Army of Italy into Paris is described, I think we cannot do better than call upon our worthy brother to read it."

Brother Hartopp was delighted. Having relieved himself of a little superabundent embarrassment, by the assertion that this was the happiest moment of his life; he unfolded the paper, and read.

"My nephew calls his little description," Mr. Hartopp premised—

"THE CONQUERING HEROES COMING."

"It runs thus:—

"You are requested to be of good cheer, and to unfold your red velvet drapery along your balcony. Will you be good enough to have the beak of your loyal eagle reburnished? If your throat be clear, will you have the extreme kindness to cheer?

The scarlet is bursting upon every house in Paris, thanks to imperial doctors in cocked hats, and with lancets at their sides. Bright crimson spots indicate a Parisian fever, and that the fever is coming out well. In the vicinity of the Place Vendôme, the heart of Paris, the doctors have achieved a triumph. Scarlet from the attics to the gateways, scarlet amphitheatres and columns scarlet-bound! Much delirium may be prognosticated. Way, there! for the blouses, bearing pails full of liquid red ochre, that is to be poured over the Venetian masts, for banners. A clear space for the agile fellows, who are hauling these lofty masts to the perpendicular, that their oriflammes may be even with the windows of grisettes' fifth floors. While the skilful artistes of feverish Paris pause, with their huge red brushes in their hand—a fair field for the wonder-working moulders! who turn out Corinthian columns while you wait in their shop; who will perch a Victory for you, upon a hollow pedestal, that shall look solid as the granite rocks, while you read your paper; who will work in little lanterns propped high up

in the air, all night; fixing colossal capitals fragile as whipped cream, upon columns about as substantial as Rheims biscuits. The head is lifted upon the plaster shoulders of Peace (with eagles for a footstool), as easily as the helmet was deposited upon the diver's head at the Polytechnic. Then the air is rich with the *débris* of gold-leaf; and anon, the sandals of Peace are burnished, and the crouching eagles glisten in the burning sun!

No wonder that the fever spreads rapidly in this weather; that the Boulevards catch the infection from the Place Vendôme, and unrol thousands of yards of crimson drapery. Paris is thirsty; and from Venetian ices to the humble coco, Paris drinks deep; her red face bursting, till it almost rivals the flush of the setting sun. One great idea dominates her, in her fever. THEY are coming. Along these Boulevards; under these flags that darken the roads; past these great amphitheatres! They are coming! But, who?

Ask these importunate *café* waiters, who will graciously permit you to answer the question yourself, to-morrow, for the small charge of forty francs. Ask that bluff countryman of yours, Mr. Bull, who is known all over Paris, because he has given forty pounds to satisfy himself as to who is coming, and how this great Somebody is coming, and what will be said to this great Somebody when he does come. Seats, wherever the great question shall be satisfactorily answered early to-morrow, are being thrown up, even in the doorways; and hammers are having a busy time of it, in all directions. Shop-windows are daintily lifted to the pavement, and women are discovered in the rear, still sewing at the crimson cloth. Brazen-voiced men, upon whom the fever is clearly expending itself with ferocious violence, thrust programmes under every passing nose. The fever has even seized upon the stockbrokers; and they are crimson to the house-tops, with their Venetian masts and velvet hangings, in the regions of the Bourse. At the doors of the shopkeepers, lie great baskets full of rough-looking accordions. Dare to ask what is the use to which these instruments are to be put, and you shall

be gruffly answered that they are Venetian lamps, at five sous each, '*pardié!*'

Admiral 'Sir Chops'—the Charivari British Admiral—is doubtless here, grinding his teeth over the inevitable annihilation of his fleet by a few French fishing-boats. Or, better still, he may be closeted with M. Protin (propagateur, initiateur-matrimonial), with a view to a scheme for a general introduction of Englishmen to French wives, that poor Albion may have a last chance of saving herself by the help of a Franco-English race. As M. Protin promises husbands 'dots' ranging from one hundred to twelve hundred pounds, it is probable that the scheme would succeed if M. Protin's 'dots' do not, in any sense, stand for noughts. But Sir Chops must be comforted; good France will be his friend still, and still in the English quarter of her capital, provide for his 'bizarre' wants. He shall not lack even that 'Guy's Ess Balm,' which, according to a Rue de Rivoli shopkeeper, enjoys so enviable a reputation in his native island.

We are determined to rescue Sir Chops from the melancholy into which the ill-natured comic French writer has plunged him. He shall not be devoured by his constitutional spleen. Sir Chops shall feel the raging pulse of Paris, with us. With us he shall hunt for a cab under the blazing sun, and with us he shall pray for blue spectacles to protect his eyes against the ever-reddening fever. From the red balconies whither may one's aching eyeballs wander? To the shops? The baggy red trousers of Zouave suits at forty francs, for little boys of eight years old; the scarlet fez; the toy Zouaves, hanging by their arms in dozens, distract us. From the shops to the people? We pass the blazing face of a Turcos, whose brilliancy draws tears from our poor eyes. To the pavement? The stones send up a red heat to caution us. The relentless sun, that leaves no shady side to the wide simmering Boulevards, dashes the heat under our broad hat, brands our shoulders, parches our feet, and flays our neck. Currant syrup consoles us not, and in vain we quaff the grateful beer of Lyons. That in this heat, people

can still fever themselves over dominoes, and throw themselves into contortions at a billiard-table! That under this tyrant sun, darting to the marrow of man, evil-faced crowds can shamble lightly over the burning pavement; laughing, eating, and haggling! That they can fight good-humouredly at omnibus doors, and broil, while a tumbler glares in the face of the sun, at the ball he is to catch upon his forehead! Sir Chops vows that the heat beats Egypt; and he mops his bald head. With a light, cheery voice, a man cries medals struck in honour of the coming occasion, and looks without blinking, into his tray of new coins, that sparkle like an adder's nest. It is not too hot for a grisette to trip about father and mother and sister (with baby) and lover (with herself), and, having bought a farthing sugar-stick, to bite bits off, and laughingly poke them into the mouths of the party. Sir Chops must take courage, then, and follow the boiling stream, with us.

Heavy bribery produces a cabman at last; and we rumble lazily through the terrible Quartier St. Antoine to the Barrière, whence a broad dusty road leads to Vincennes. We make our way through solid banks of dust, till we are stopped by a feverish policeman, who turns us into our proper place, in a file of vehicles: lemonade carts, Seltzer-water carts, trim carriages copied from Rotten-row, carts full of sugar 'broken by patent machinery;' indescribable carts full of indescribable people, driven by a noisy blouse and drawn by animals in rope harness; hawkers propelling barrow-loads of cheap peaches, figs, and plums; honest old women, whose white eyebrows stand in bold relief from their bronzed skin, and whose snowy caps are deeply shaded in the folds by the dust, carrying heavy baskets loaded with macaroons and jumbles; a chattering, laughing, tumultuous blue and white crowd filling up every available space between vehicles, hawkers, and policemen; all talking, shouting, singing, and clacking whips, in a white fog of dust, heated still by the unrelenting sun,—these were unmistakeable indications that we are on the right road to know some of the reasons why Paris has taken so merrily to the scarlet fever.

The vast plain, at which we eventually arrived, appeared, at the first glance, to have thrown up countless white molehills, amid which needles were stacked, and blue and red and black ants seemed to be running by thousands, in all directions. But, as we took our eyes from the distance, and drew them upon things close to us, we perceived that the far-off ant-hills were fac-similes of the tents (about the size of cucumber frames) at our feet; that the stacks of needles were bayonets; that the ants were men and women. Here were mounds of heavy grenadiers' arms, with the men's rusty shakos hanging upon the bayonets, the men being not far off, indulging in games of skittles, or gaining honest sous by putting up the pins, for visitors.

Beyond the grenadiers' lines were those of the Turcos. Cheered by the gaiety of the scene, even Sir Chops almost jumped from the carriage. Hundreds of elegant ladies were peering into the little canvas boxes of the solemn Arabs. They were not the most savoury boxes, where eight swarthy fellows slept, packed close as figs, and where their ragged, greasy clothes lay, all day long. But the Turcos were proud of them, and did the honours with dignity. Here a brawny fellow, lying upon his stomach, with his head just out of his tent, was looking at the pictures of the Sou Paper; there a fellow, squatting tailor-fashion, was taking his soup out of a battered tin with a bent pewter spoon. There is a hole in the midst of the first lines, and in it lumps of raw flesh are warming, and shapeless saucepans are bubbling, while Turcos, enveloped in capacious aprons, and sheltered from the sun by heavy burnous, are watching the dinners of their battalion. Visitors talk to them, but are unable to understand the Arab-French in which the noble savages reply. Here is the trumpeters' tent, with the bruised trumpets slung to sticks, at the entrance. Everywhere are Turcos sauntering, squatting, laughing with grisettes, folding turbans, playing at cards, polishing swords, mending rent garments, all talking, and all smoking, and all proud to be the observed of thousands of visitors.

"Look to yourself, Sir Chops! for hitherwards a

mounted Zouave is dashing upon a bony steed, with a great tin pan slung to the animal's neck. He is on his way to fetch the food of his company from one of the smouldering holes hereabouts. There is much to be cooked yet, before all these mouths will be satisfied ; and square lumps of meat, clustered in bunches, are slung upon bayonets still before the tents, where the flies are coming in for first taste.

The tattered flags are stuck in mounds of loose stones ; canvas beer-shops are choked with soldiers and soldiers' friends, clicking glasses, and imbibing seas of sour beer and wine, at threepence per bottle. The butts of Vincennes, ploughed with cannon-balls, are covered with the yellow linen of the troops, drying in the sun. Springs have been conducted hither by the engineers, and are filling cans of all shapes and sizes. Greedy corporals are making a long and noisy *queue* before the camp-butcher's shed. The English Crimean medal lies upon hundreds of breasts—the blue riband browned by the sun. Everybody is on the move. Here a Zouave is splitting wood with his sword ; there a Turcos is sketching. Rows of lean horses (some wounded), tied to stakes, are munching dry forage. Empty wine casks serve for tables, whereupon brown bread and black sausages are spread, tempting sous out of the pockets of the hive. In the corner is a very substantial stone police station house—a building not altogether useless here. Everybody is so lively, that even the drum-majors unbend, and bear themselves like common mortals. A contemptuous artilleryman describes a dandy passer-by as a man with 'white-bread' ideas. Heavy grenadiers chuck nimble nymphs under the chin, while the omnipresent Turcos appear to be sated with the admiration of the fair sex. We pass through a wood to the vast plain where the cavalry and artillery are encamped. The dragoons are very dignified : the guardians of the terrible rifled cannon bear themselves proudly, and cherish an unalterable affection for the guns that have ploughed up fields of living men. Everything has a nickname in France, and these guns are called Austrian Cigars. Cuirasses are being brightened for to-morrow ; cans of oil

are being emptied upon steel and brass; boots as tall as an ordinary chasseur, are being blacked; and horses are being fed and groomed by hundreds. The steeds look lean and woe-begone, and the sadder they appear the more they are petted by their riders.

Sir Chops declares that he begins to feel feverish himself, with all this activity under the still scorching sun; and he is horrified when he hears that to-morrow this vast plain is to be a desert, and that the scattered host is to be gathered together, and directed upon Paris.

Dinner in a quiet room at Philippe's presently brought back the habitual geniality of Sir Chops' temperament. We horrified him when we declared that we were going, in the cool of the evening, to take a last look at the fever spots of the Boulevards and the Place Vendôme. But it is not often that rational man has an opportunity of seeing so serious a case of scarlet fever. Every symptom becomes interesting, every scarlet spot is significant. The disease has many phases. There is its commercial phase, for instance. Were we not right in taking pains to learn that there was room for one hundred and one thousand one hundred and sixty people at the windows, in the line where they would come to-morrow? Was not our severe study rewarded when we learned that a man had made a fortune by taking three thousand seats at a low price, and letting them at a high price; and that the inventor of the Venetian lamps had his crust and wine assured to him, by his ingenuity, for the term of his natural life? The coolness with which the waiter at the Café Pergod paused before our empty cup, with coffee and cream in his hands, and deliberately watched the finishing touches that were being given to the Peace trophy, was refreshing, in the midst of the fever. Could any human creature remain indifferent and thrifty while hawkers were selling the Imperial infant in grenadier's dress; broadsheets of the decorations of all nations; broader sheets describing all the regimentals of the Imperial army?

The Boulevards are occupied, although it is ten o'clock at night, by a compact, laughing, and excited crowd. Carpenters are sawing planks, for seats, under every gateway. Cabs,

full of flags, with the eagles lolling out of the windows, are struggling through the throng. The Place Vendôme is blocked up. The gravel carts are there, and three or four hundred workmen are there also, giving the final rub to the Imperial canopy. Behind the amphitheatre, ladies are creeping into the houses, to remain there all night, that they may see the great to-morrow from the peep of day. Cart-loads of flowers are passing hither and thither; flushed men are buying sou cigars by the hundreds; paper laurel-leaves are fetching high prices; and wild plans are being laid for securing advantageous positions upon house-tops. People who have a little forethought left, in this the height of the fever, are securing sausages, and ham, and galantine. The pork-butchers are besieged. Everybody is suggesting to his neighbour that it would be prudent to go to bed early, because to-morrow will be an exhausting day. It would be prudent, but who can sleep in a high state of fever!

The wine-shops of the Halle will be crowded to-night. The *gamin* element of Paris will keep alive the darkness through, before the pewter counters, and over little glasses of hot wine, and savagely burning cheap brandy. The bakers will have no child's play of it, baking rolls and galette through the small hours, to the chirp of crickets and the sound of distant drums. Strolling through the Palais Royal on the stroke of eleven, we pass through a group of women busily sewing Legions of Honour and St. Helena ribbons; for to-morrow's *Moniteur* is to be garnished with lists of men who are to bear crosses upon their breasts, in token of the strength with which they have thrust their steel at the enemy.

There is a spot, however, which the fever has hardly reached;—yet it is close to the Tuilieries. Calm and cool as oysters, the chess-players of the famous Régence, marshal their pawns and rest their chins upon their thumbs; while their opponents snap their finger over the game, in fear and trembling. We remember a gentleman who, wishing to give a select society an intense picture of the storming of Badajos, declared that, by Heavens! it was as exciting as a game of chess. We never understood the force of

the comparison until now, when we see bishops, knights, kings and queens, of wood and ivory, lording it over mere human high-mightinesses, and holding their slaves firmly. In the Régence, the chess-board is not to be cleared for the field of St. Maur. The fever of the Boulevards stops at the café doors, and passes aside down the Rue St. Honoré.

We have made a vow that the midnight bells shall sound upon our tympanum through the softening medium of a nightcap. The great hotel in which we have been accommodated with a garret, at the price of a prince's suite of rooms (through the kindness of a friend to whom we entrusted the duty of providing a pillow for us), when it receives our jaded limbs, is wide awake still. The waiters are frantic, the master is white hot. We are inclined, indeed, to recommend him to see somebody; but we remember how deeply that searching hand of his has dipped into our pockets, and we leave him to shout, and stamp, and stare apoplexy in the face, as he pleases. Number four wishes to be called at five; number five must be called and have a cold bath at four; number seventeen is lying in his clothes, and will want a cup of tea at a quarter to six, sharp; number eight orders two bottles of bitter ale and bread and butter now, and eggs and tea while dressing in the morning.

'*Cochons va!*' responds the dingy half-waiter, half-clerk, who is taking down these orders, that none of them may be punctually attended to.

Head throbbing, hands hot, tongue dry, we take our candle, and panting under a hot roof, we hear St. Roch proclaim the advent of the 14th.

Pale morning light shone upon dazzling dresses in the long breakfast-room of our hotel. But the rolls were only broken at the corners, the rich coffee was only sipped, in the general haste. The fever of yesterday had reached the hotel. Angry fathers were gathering stray members of their family; matrons were leaving strict injunctions about baby's food; and young gentlemen in plaids of the Moses clan, were buckling opera-glasses busily about them.

At the hotel door a low, rumbling murmur caught my

ear. It was not seven o'clock yet, and the bye-street was swarming. Moustachioed gentlemen were dipping huge lumps of bread into coffee-cups before the cafés; others, terrible tipplers of that terrible absinthe, were mixing their favourite cloudy-green beverage. Blouses with gaily-ribboned damsels on their arms, were stalking along the roads toward the Boulevards. Vendors of the four seasons were pushing barrows loaded with damaged peaches, thither. At hundreds of windows, blithe *bonnes* were tying Venetian lamps by dozens. The rub-a-dub of drums broke upon the ear at every corner. Policemen looked ferocious, and were frantically catching at horses' heads, as, still moving with the stream, we neared the Boulevards—Via Sacra upon which the footprints of sixty-thousand heroes shall be printed ere the sun goes down! At every turn we dip under the floating tricolor, and come nose to beak with the imperial eagle. Shrill as Boulogne fishwomen's shriek when they are hawking oysters, is the cry of vendors of medals and paper crowns. Pleasant is the laughter of men and women as they elbow one another when the crowd thickens! We defy any nation to produce men who can poke more pointed elbows in neighbours' chests, with better politeness! Packed in solid masses, between houses and a hedge of bayonets drawn along the kerb-stones, the Parisian may be studied to advantage. With what good-humour he will tread upon your toes! How deferentially he will bar your way. How ceremoniously he will answer you when you wax a little wrath with him. There is nothing for it but to laugh, and chatter, and politely push, and ceremoniously squeeze with the rest;—to take the laughter of jammed grisettes for music, and to inhale the fumes of barrack tobacco and garlic as tastes of delightful Araby! Ah, me! the sun is gaining power overhead, and the Boulevards are packed closely as a fig-drum. There is a mighty din along this broadway, mingled with the clashing of horsemen's swords, and the occasional shouts of the blouses, raised, when some gaudy staff officer, or well-known general gallops along the cleared road, between lines of glittering bayonets. Every lamp-post is again and again scaled by urchins, who

are driven back by the police. The balconies are alive with pretty faces, the chimney-pots are gay with the tricolor. Disderi the indefatigable, is in his dark chamber, preparing plates that, by a stroke of the sun, are to cast upon paper two faithful pictures of the Heroes Coming. Every shop window has a splendid *étalage* of happy human heads. Thousands of arms bear chaplets, to be cast upon the broad way presently—paper chaplets, cut in the sombre byways where hunger glares, ever ready to pounce upon a chance that holds a crust.

The sun flames upon this waving sea. The sea keeps up its music still; and steams, as it flows between the bayonets and the houses. There are three miles and more of these shouting, singing, struggling crowds. There are three miles of these lofty houses, crowded from garret to ground with the faces of men, women, and children. A broad, even line of march, with great hedges of people flanking it; with unbroken banks of armed men to guard it, shadowed by triumphal arches, and enlivened by dancing oriflammes, is spread before the bronzed host that chokes up the Quartier St. Antoine, and extends far on the dusty road to Vincennes. Little boys are carried everywhere by proud parents, beating little drums or sounding little trumpets. Three-year-old Zouaves are whimpering for *galette*, and a Grenadier of the Guard (who must have been short-coated for the occasion) is sucking a sugar-stick. Old men are sporting the bronze medal of St. Helena, and are the object of special veneration to the blouses. Every five minutes, 'There they are!' is shouted along the outer lines of the throng; and an almost deafening roar rises, and runs along the lines, to die only in the Rue de la Paix. The minute hands of the clocks are watched; the point of distance is steadily kept in view; and men, women, and children, with outstretched necks, press towards the roads. The sun may dart his most fiery shafts upon this delirious throng; not a man, woman or child will wince. For glory is coming, in tattered clothes, and with rusty helmet; with Italian dust upon wheels, and the spots of enemy's blood upon bayonets; with ragged flags holding by threads to hacked poles; with

the limping wounded showing honourable scars scarce healed.

Hark! the roll of drums; the thunder of the Invalides guns; the lively strains of regimental bands; the electric sounds of distant *vivas!* Let me escape to my window from the mad multitude. They throw their limbs about frantically, waving flowers and chaplets! Suddenly the roofs of the houses are alive. People run along parapets, skip upon chimney-pots, slide down slates, and crawl upon burning zinc, with the agility of monkeys. At points along the line, women and children are squeezed through the serried ranks of the soldiers. The faces of all the soldiers, and of all the crowd, are turned towards the Bastille. The sun is there to which these human sunflowers open their blossom. The murmur, the drums, the music are approaching. The sounds are becoming separate and dis tinct, and where the opposite lines of soldiers meet in the perspective, there is a dusty, half-distinguishable confusion.

Yes, yes, they are coming! Oh! moment of supreme happiness! Oh! proud mothers and sisters, and wives, throw open your arms—for your heroes, with lofty step, though footsore and elbow-greasy, are tramping along the triumphal way; and every step presses a votive flower! Bright helmets gleam through the dust; the music swells, and sharp is the roll of the drums. A loud, shrill, prolonged cry greets this new assurance that the heroes are at hand. And then a dead silence follows. Every eye is searching a few yards behind the sturdy horsemen who open the march:—searching for a solitary Figure.

It is approaching, along a flowery way. A terrible fire of colossal bouquets from the windows, and a galling support of chaplets from behind the soldiers, makes the proud steed of the solitary man wince and caper. Handkerchiefs flutter like butterflies from every window; and a loud shout of welcome rises as the solitary Man, unmoved and easy, and graceful upon his restless horse; lifts his plumed hat, and just suffers himself to smile, at the tens of thousands who hedge him about, and strew the way of his dainty footed horse, with flowers. He is perfect master of himself while the floral shower is at its fiercest;—

while the *vivas* are loudest. At a brisk walk, his steed carries him forward between hedges of uproarious subjects. A bouquet strikes him, and he smiles; a shout rises, and he lifts his hat. But whence come all these flowers? Are the fields for miles round Paris, leafless? Is Fontenoy-aux-Roses without a rosebud? Sixty thousand men are tramping behind this remarkable leader: with marshals created on the battle-field, and standard-bearers still stained with the sweat of mortal strife. There will be flowers, and enough for all of them.

We can hardly believe it as we notice, following in the wake of the leader's brilliant staff, a battalion of men, dressed in all kinds of regimentals, it would seem; but so covered with flowers, from the points of their bayonets to their waist, that the regiments to which they belong remains a matter of doubt. 'Long live the wounded!' shout the crowd from chimney-pot, garret, drawing-room, and pavement. But many handkerchiefs that were waving in the air a minute or two since, are damp with tears now. For this battalion of maimed men trudging upon crutches, bearing ghastly white bandages athwart very pale faces—with arms in slings—and one with both arms gone—this sick and faint battalion, is a very difficult thing to keep dry eyes upon. Women burst upon the invalids through the file of soldiers; national guards lift wine to their parched lips. They try hard to bear themselves lightly, and to march briskly under the blazing sun. They are conscious of the great position they occupy—that every bandage is a sash of honour—that every sabre-cut is an ornament. We are now hob-and-nobbing with the horrors of the battle-field. But the wounded are passing on their way. To the right and left I can see the army of Italy—a mile of it at a time—winding its way: lively, musical, and nimble—past tens of thousands of shouting people. In the distance, the flowers fall so fast from the windows that they appear like floral arcades, stretching from the houses to the road. This is indeed a happy day! The great army, trailing along, capped with sparkling steel, looks like a gigantic serpent passing through a dark and restless bed.

Compact as a rampart stalks the haughty Guard, proud of the rusty shako and the white seamed coat. Behind, we catch, bobbing in the distance, the turbans of the Zouaves. The excitement of the roofs and garrets is appalling. Ladies lean frantically over the balconies; gentlemen cast clouds of cigars into the open space, as the great Zouave drum-major throws his stick high in the air, catches it, twirls it round and round upon his finger, twists it behind his back, and jerks it forward over his head, all to the time of the drums, and walking at a brisk pace! He makes a great sensation, to which he appears to be supremely indifferent—just as indifferent, indeed, as the majestic dog at his side is. To be the dog of the Zouaves of the Guard is to be the king of dogs. And the dog marching before all Paris, with a decoration upon his proud canine chest, and his general military costume, is equal to his brilliant destiny. You can see it in the solemn step with which he heads his battalion, and in the lofty calmness with which he meets the cheers of the populace. The dust of Italy is upon his paws; possibly, the fleas of Italy are in his coat! He may well be proud to head the battalion that struts boldly behind him. He can even afford to look down upon the goat of the Chasseurs.

Made for fighting, handling muskets as lightly as toothpicks, self-sufficient everywhere, lithe as osiers, patient under a burning sun, and with a keen sense of the enjoyment of fighting, and the pleasure of ploughing human flesh with those long, broad sword-bayonets, these Zouaves look terrible and cruel. If we are cheering successful war, however, we must be loud, as these dark men glide lightly and stealthily past, for they are of King Death's chosen body-guard. Still echoes of distant bands to the right and left—bands going and coming; the heavy roll of the drums before us, the distant and near cries of the vast crowd;—all under a sun, searing as a burning-glass, overwork the mind. My temples throb, and I am faint, and the march has only just opened! Some thousand fighting men or so have passed. Why, there are fifty thousand waiting behind, for their *vivas* and their flowers!

I catch the rumbling of artillery. '*Les Rasés!*' shout

the crowd. The cannon that ploughed up the Austrian rear must be saluted. Ladies' pocket-handkerchiefs to welcome these hoarse-throated monsters! Well, it is not a time to moralise: my business is cheering. The excitement is upon us all. What with that Zouave drum-major's lusty drummers, what with the bugles and the bands, what with the shouts of tens of thousands of people which have been ringing in my ears, I cannot hold back to speculate why those rifled cannon should be cheered.

Then a Marshal of France, with one arm; a serious, sallow man; lifts his empty sleeve to his hat, as the people shout to 'Hard-as-leather!' Here he is, back from the war, with his *corps d'armée* behind him, bearing tattered flags. '*Les drapeaux!*' shout the crowd; and then men almost fall upon their knees and worship these picturesque rags, which bring the sweat and heat of strife vividly before the mind. Men's eyes start, to drink in the story of every tear, of every spot, upon the beloved tricolor. Bosoms swell as the Austrian colours are borne along. Regiment succeeds regiment, all scarred and worn by war. For each there is a new welcome, and for every marshal a loud cheer and a bed of flowers. It is astonishing to find, as hour after hour passes by, that the cheers last, and that there are more flowers. And still, again and again, artillery rumbles in the rear of each *corps d'armée*, and the flags are worshipped, and men and women of the crowd dash at intervals into the middle of the battalions, and hug and kiss a bronzed brother or friend. Here a national guard throws himself into the arms of a captain of chasseurs; there, a blouse salutes the tawny cheeks of a sapper of the line.

Every *corps d'armée* has its nickname. Magenta's corps is Victory; and when proud Magenta passes, the people cast themselves frantically on his path, and worship the hero of the war. Canrobert is affectionately saluted, at the head of his corps, which is wickedly called Hope. Then follows, with the *bâton* of a marshal, Niel, nicknamed The Spoilt Child. Very few cheers meet him. The crowd must be hoarse and weary at last, with the shouting, the dust, and the sun; so that there is very little enthu-

siasm left for the cavalry, which brings up the rear; there is none left when, as the poor fellows pass, a deluge falls upon tens of thousands of unprotected people. The *gamins* are driven by the storm from the house-tops; the women packed upon the pavements laugh, and gesticulate, and shrink back under cover somewhere; but still thousands hold their ground in the great bath, and give a faint welcome to the dripping dragoons.

It is fortunate that the rain has come to put out the raging fever. The National Guards, with the water eddying from their shakos upon their bourgeois noses, are cool enough, as they close round the last horseman of the army of Italy, and shamble off in a broken line, to their quarters."

"Very exciting, no doubt," said Brother Seesaw, who regulated his idea of every human operation by its effect upon the funds. "Yes, very exciting, very; but mark my words, gentlemen—it's all holler! all holler!"

CHAPTER V.

"GENTLEMEN," said the good Master, "we are already under heavy obligations to Brothers Lebord and Hartopp. Now we have an artist among us, who is, I believe, ready to give us some of his dreams. You remember his visit to the great Manchester Exhibition of Pictures in 1857, and the gossips we have had with him about all he saw. He has put something upon paper, I know; and I have determined to make him read to us this evening."

Mr. Babbycomb was delighted. He and Brother Balder (the artist to whom the Master had alluded) were great friends. Balder talked about his pictures, and the *ateliers* in which he had figured; while Babbycomb recounted his exploits in alleys and garrets, in cholera times (modestly as all good men speak of their good works), as his companion still idly drew his pencil over ends of academy boards.

Brother Balder was a dreaming man. An enthusiastic and accomplished talker about art—he had never produced a great work of his own. He should have been in an art-professor's chair; it was hard that he should have been all his life doomed to set forth half-realised ideas, with his brush. He began always on a grand scale, and could never set his mind to supply the market. Great, clumsy cartoons were his, with noble but disjointed thoughts in them. He stood still; thin, and poor, and threadbare, while lighter men passed from the shivering shade, into

the warmth of prosperity. His end was a terrible illness, and rooms under the sheltering roof of the Crutch.

But now he was to read. He protested that he was no reader; that on this present evening he was hoarse. Still, however, the Master pleasantly persisted in his demand for Brother Balder's contribution. In the end, the good Brother took out his paper and said—

"Let me then give you a fanciful dream of the Historical Portrait Gallery, I saw with a friend, amid the Manchester Art Treasures, as arranged clearly, and with an artist's eye, by Peter Cunningham. I call it—

"THE BEST OF ALL GOOD COMPANY.

"We passed a strange night. Along that broad dark road, spangled here and there at its edges by the bed-lights of early risers; seeing ghostly forms in the gloom; pensive, and strangely stirred to avoid all men by the way, we wandered; while the moon was swiftly smeared by patches of cloud—to a suburban park, in which a magic palace had arisen, and where we were to meet a curious company. The ring of our footsteps alone sounded to our ears. We were leaving the world behind us. Quaint forms of servitors flitted before us. Torches wildly danced in front of the magic palace. The clash of armour reached us as we advanced rapidly, determined, come what might, to be calm and cool. White lights played in the distance about moving halberds. Were they held by men with frills and flat caps? The moonlight is so treacherous, that we dare not assert anything.

The gloom deepened, however, as we reached the palace-gates. The hum of life was certainly there; but how curious were the figures!

A steel gauntlet presently flashed under our very nose. We were evidently summoned to declare ourselves. But a gentler hand, clad in buff leather, waved the cold steel away, and we passed on. Now, we appeared to walk upon rushes; and now our feet timidly sank into the softest carpet. There are lights, but strangely contrived—"

"Gas?" asked that practical Seesaw. A look of scorn from the Master suppressed a rising titter.

The dreamy artist continued:—

"But strangely contrived; and there is, here and there, a nauseous smell of burning fat. The gallery in which we stand is a lengthy one, with a ribbon of moonlight along the roof. The columns look like shafts of burnished gold; ghostly forms, in white, keep the way clear, down the centre; music faintly rises from the dim extremity, that, to our confused sight, is simply shifting vapour; and the flitting figures are but so much moving, darkened, cloud-shadows in a silvery fog. You will all readily imagine that in our every-day dress, with a silk hat between our kid-gloved fingers, we felt somewhat ill at ease. Now a colossal wig; now a head, cropped, and round as a cocoa-nut; now a helmet; now a low, broad cap; now a conical hat, smothered under feathers, dashed past us. Still we moved forward.

Presently, for the first time, we caught the sound of human voices; but they were not the voices to which our nineteenth century ears were attuned: the words they spoke were strange. A jargon of French; coarse oaths and allusions, shocking to our ears; jokes, for parallels to which I refer you to untouched editions of Congreve; but all distant and faint! As we still advanced, however, the light increased. We strained our eyes, and clutched our hats.

The company was arriving. A hand beckoned us to the south side of the nave. We followed silently; and leaning against a column, or endeavouring to lean against its shadowy line, for we could never touch it (and yet it could not be made of air), we watched the progress of ghostly events.

We could see just the nape of men's necks along the entire line of the perspective. The front of these bended men was turned towards the wall; and in their hands they held lights of many kinds, varying, as far as we could judge, from the pitchy torch to the pink wax-candle;—still the faint music could be heard, and still the voices, from

far off, sounded weirdly in our ears. A distance that we endeavoured in vain to lessen, appeared to be between us and the scene we were witnessing. Men were incessantly about to speak to us, but they never did speak; now a hand was about to grasp ours heartily, but it was invariably withdrawn before we could catch it. A goblet of ruby wine, or some sack was at our elbow, and our palate longed to taste it,—only to make it vanish. An inviting chair tempted us to press its cushions, but we never dared to trust ourselves to its treacherous solidity.

But, hush! They come:—and how strangely!

Along the dark walls are gold-edged doors, or frames, and from them step the motley company. Men whom we thought dead long years ago, stride, in the moonlight near us; but still, we feel, very distant. First, in the throng, stalks the second Richard. They say he is a fop; but who would think so? He is stupidly stolid, with that plump face of his; yet he carries the sceptre with him, completely conscious of the power it gives him. Men duck their heads low as he passes on, leading the company; followed by Henry, and nervous, cruel, Richard the Third. Let us hope that this man's eye will not rest upon us. Wickliffe also passes solidly. But, way there, ghostly unsubstantial serving men! way there, old Holbein! for see, the broad shoulders of the eighth Henry appear, and the complaisant moonlight plays upon the countless jewels that cover the rotten heart! With what a jaunty swagger he wears that low velvet hat; and how the cruel little eyes gleam! Surely that manly figure at his side, splendid in scarlet robes;—that noble countenance, can never be the vassal to such a lord! Ay, it is so; for see, how respectfully he waits upon the footsteps of the squat Harry. Earl of Surrey, sweet-lipped poet, who brought home some of the sunlight of Italy in his verse, bows to Jane Seymour, the gentle. There is a grace in her pendant sleeves, and even in the squareness of her dress. Very feminine is she, as she turns to the burly Wolsey; and the glow of his red garments throws a warm tint upon her face, that gives it a new life. But how little is that man to be touched! There is nought, save the build,

of the butcher's son in the cardinal now. He sees his high place in the throng, and stalks into it.

Sweet is youth, always: and how fresh is childish Edward the Sixth, as he steps through his gilded doorway. His gait is not kingly, perhaps; he has little or nothing of the monarch about him, even in his ermine and white satin. Pretty feet now press the vapoury ground, from the great Harry's court, resplendent with gold and jewels—stiff, and prim, and stately. The line of procession is growing rapidly. And now there is a pause in the arrivals; and the company we have noticed passes along, up the nave, into the misty distance.

Softly, again, the music rises, as Philip and Mary step, awkward, forbidding, and ugly, from their frames. In their rear comes clever Holbein, looking upon the stately procession before him with a paternal regard. And then, walking backwards, Lucchero and Sir Antonio More appear. No wonder that *they* bow profoundly. No wonder that there is a stir among the lingering crowd. For, lo! advances from the frame, with a stately tread, the figure of Queen Bess. The high arched nose, the searching eyes, and the red hair—and the long, lean hands! It is startling to look through the centuries, and see them all in the life once more! How strong the vanity, yet how great the soul! The foot is upon the map of England—yet even the ruff is not forgotten. We were almost laughing at the high-pointed sleeves of the illustrious lady; but the brilliant suite in her rear commands respect for her. Her courtiers' short cloaks have an odd look, to our vulgar eyes; and to us, their manners are too elaborate. But they command silence, these stately shades! Here is the Earl of Essex, with beard like a flat, prize strawberry; here treads great Raleigh; and behind him —it was even so—sombre Shakspere, with his noble head. About his mighty shade, manly Ben Jonson, and some few actors have congregated—a curious group, close to the skirts of Mary, Queen of Scots, who swims, stately as a swan, with a cross upon her sad heart. This heart must beat somewhat wildly in this strange company.

Was it upon us that Leicester turned his arrogant eye,

as he stalked forward? We trust not. Let the Tudors pass; and they may pass proudly, even laden with their crimes.

Sad company steps, at a funereal pace, from the dark, mysterious wall. Ponderous James the First, with his son and daughter; and grave Bacon! Buckingham is at hand, with a dazzling group in ruffs and cloaks—a moving prison. Another pause.

And now, ushered by Vandyke, melancholy Charles appears. At his side are his stately wife and his children. A brilliant array of knightly gentlemen troop at his heels; a burly figure, however, crosses his path, and he pauses in anger; but way is made for the moment, by his Majesty's gallant court, and he presses ahead.

The rays of the moon play along the edge of an axe, carried by one of the attendants, as the court of the first Charles sweeps by. Gay Lovelace and Killigrew hold back to chat and laugh with Suckling: they are dashing fellows, and bent upon drinking to their mistresses!

A relief from the bright colours. A brown, compact company make their way along the nave. The faces are massive, serious, determined. First, walks the Lord Protector, smiling—possibly at the foppery of Lovelace, and the highly-coloured crew before him—and with him are Pym, great Blake, and mild, manly Hampden, looking straight before him. But this sombre group has no sooner shown its back, than laughing, chattering fellows, gaily tinted as macaws, to which the last crimson *has* been added, trip from their frames. Where are Charles's puppies? His Portuguese wife is here; and stiff enough she looks in her native dress. But he pays her little attention. In truth, she has a quiet, homely look, beside those ample, loosely-clad ladies whom his Majesty addresses at intervals, touching, here and there, a chin, with his forefinger.

There trips Rochester, with his monkeys. Think you he is disturbed because Suckling, who has just turned back to notice him, grasps the hilt of his sword? No; the laurel remains about the animal's wicked head. We bow to Evelyn the Simple, as he almost trips over the

white wand of Arlington. Somewhat shocking, we must confess, are the dresses of the ladies who now advance, and claim place about the court of Charles. Tut! there is Nell Gwynne! pretty, cheerful, shameful girl! Sad dogs, we fear, are all these gentlemen!

James the Second steps down, carrying a portentous proboscis:—with hapless Monmouth. They passed so quickly that we had hardly more than a glimpse of them. But here come William and Mary. How grave is Newton as he moves. Marlborough, with all the splendour of a marshal upon him, looks the conqueror; ready to cleave the first aggressor with the staff he holds. Way is deftly made for him; and at his heels follow, Harley and the Young Pretender, properly powdered for the occasion.

But we are particularly interested in the next group, little claim as any member of it may have to wear ermine. Here is Dryden, emphatically putting something to stolid Tonson. But while they talk, we turn to watch the male countenance of Steele—to catch a glimpse of Addison. Why doth yonder sickly creature join the wondrous throng? Look in his eye, and you shall be answered, for you shall know Alexander Pope at once. That is Lady Mary at whom he fiercely glances. But she is undismayed, and struts carelessly onward, with Swift at her elbow.

And now a new race appears. Way for the First of the Georges, and Queen Caroline, and Walpole and Harley! Theatrical Chatham stalks past—vanquishing the gout, that he may be seen to the best advantage. We are sure Garrick looks upon him with no friendly eye. Ponderous Johnson appears, leaning upon the arm of Gay, while he talks to Gibbon, whose flabby face trembles at every step. We thought the splendid Earl of Bute, favourite of a royal princess, looked somewhat superciliously upon the poor scribes. But what cared they? Rough, ploughboy Burns returns the glance of Bute, and then darts a wicked look at dandy Byron. Solitary, and with a curl upon his lip, walks Childe Harold, and not far off we note opium-eating Coleridge.

The *cortège* is at its close. Nearly all the ghostly visitors have arrived. But, strangely enough, there is

vivacious Brougham, a young man; there, too, savage Gifford; and there fresh and frolicksome Lockhart, talking to Sir Walter! Crowds of serving-men close about the heels of these latter. There is an awful rush, in the tide on which we are carried, although no hand nor elbow touches us. Laughter rings through the air, yet it sounds to us as from a great distance; and there are the faint strains of the music still. There is to be high revelry to-night, undoubtedly. Bluff Harry's face will shine and glow ere he returns to his frame. Johnson promises himself the pleasure of a booze with Gibbon; and Burns, and Byron, and Reynolds—ay, and Sir John Suckling. The burly schoolmaster is not disinclined to see himself in the company of a lord. The only fear he has is, that Burns will get uproarious, and will disturb the conversation with his 'Rigs o' Barley.' He has always been told that the little Scot is a dangerous, although a right good fellow, sir.

The tide still rolls onward, and we float with it, almost reconciled to the army of ghosts that encompasses us. Suddenly a broad way is made down the nave. Surely their ghostly majesties are not about to dance! 'Ay!' a voice whispers. We turn sharply round, but cannot fasten upon our informant. We would not have missed this night for worlds. See Richard the Second—a very demon—leads forth plain Queen Mary. Grave James the First makes *vis-à-vis* with stately Elizabeth! And there is poor gawky Philip, wriggling forward with unfortunate Jane Seymour; while Charles the Second comes laughing after, making lovely Mary Stuart smile and chatter. There are others—but the mist which we cannot altogether clear from our eyes, obscures them. From a farther corner, we could catch the stern eye of Wolsey, and the savage little optics of the Eighth Harry, glaring on the scene. Hapless Seymour! And surely that was Cromwell's sturdy tread that sounded along the nave in the midst of the minuet, and made the royal dancers start! But the dance was a fine thing to see. It was a royal one, right royally performed. Perhaps Philip was the only prince who failed to bear himself as became his

rank. Indeed, we thought we noticed the Merry Monarch point the attention of his lovely partner to cruel Mary's ill-favoured consort. Stately as the dancers, was the music that accompanied them. It made the pulse beat feverishly; it carried the heart away—to dream delightful visions, upon which the pale moon always shone, and which faded before they could be fairly seen.

We wandered, wondering still. Everything near to us—yet everything beyond our reach. Not a single 'beaded brim' reached our parched lips through the night, yet on all sides sparkled goblets—on all sides ghostly knights and princes held crystal cups between their awful eyes and the moon's rays. The excitement alone kept our spirits up, for at every turn strange incidents claimed our wonder. Here we passed Charles the Second offering a cigar to James the First (who declined the attention very stifly);—there Mary Stuart looked at good Queen Bess from head to foot, and passed scornfully on;—there Charles the First turned rapidly down a side passage, to avoid Cromwell;—and there again the merrie monarch and the bluff king, arm-in-arm, were whispering with Nell Gwynne and a host of loosely-clad ladies. Marlborough talked with Blake, and flourished his baton with fearful vigour, as he spoke.

Silent and even pensive, amid the throng, his eye not distracted even by the jewels that blazed upon the ample chest of Seymour's inconstant lord, with his broad collar carelessly folded over his black, walked William Shakspere! A vivid light played about his head. If Harry the Eighth, and Charles, and their brilliant courts heeded him little, or simply stared at the poor plebeian in black—in return, Johnson, and Congreve, and Byron, and Coleridge, bowed low, as he joined them. And they all went their way, leaving princes behind them. Our footsteps touched the earth lightly as we followed, far in the rear. They turned aside, through gloomy passages; and as they moved onward, indistinct, but, we thought, more familiar shapes, bowed low before them. They entered a grand chamber, brightly lighted; that is, the light was bright, but to our poor eyes all remained indistinct. Still, we

were thankful for the little we could see, as the great company gathered about an ample board; and Selden, and Evelyn, and Vandyke, and Holbein, and Lovelace, and Suckling, and old Godfrey Kneller, and Abraham Cowley, joined the circle. The latter appeared, supporting ailing Pope. But where were blind Milton and Andrew Marvel? That was surely Burns' hearty laugh! There, too, was Hume, just closing his note-book. Reynolds looked on benignly through his spectacles. It was a wondrous company indeed. Our ears were strained to catch the immortal words of every speaker; but our sense was dull, or we were forbidden to hear. Still it was no slight honour to look, from afar, upon the feast—to catch even the faint echo of the triumphant song! Every eye sparkled; every cheek glowed; for the banquet was served by princes. King Henry the Eighth stood, as toast-master, behind the chair of Shakspere! Henrietta Maria was Hebe to Vandyke! Lely's cup was frothed to the brim by the Merry Monarch!

And could we have heard the words that were spoken, how should we have interpreted them? Centuries contradict years. The year that saw King Harry's portrait completed—saw Holbein the bending servitor still. But centuries shook the king to dust, and grasped to crown his urn, the figure of the painter. We keep laurels ever fresh for the brows of Holbein and Vandyke; we are still the vassals of Shakspere. Time has turned the balance, striving to teach the princes of the earth to be reverent before God-gifted nobility. Yet who, even here, would accept an immortal sonnet for a single quartering. The bloody hand waves back the careering Pegasus!

Still there is hope, we fondly murmur to ourselves, remembering for a moment the working world we have quitted—there is hope in this great mystic gathering, if we can only carry back its lesson with us to our neighbours.

Immortal lips send jewels to the ear, upon the waves of sound. Gentle lessons fall from Shakspere's mouth. The heart warms at the sight of Sir Joshua's pencil. And princes wait upon the best of all good company! Briefly:—

The morning light—sworn enemy of ghosts—surprised

old Johnson mixing a final glass! The glorious vision faded; and we went out from the fairy palace, we knew not how. Nor can I tell you how we reached our bed. But the sun was high above the horizon, when the eddying steam of my shaving-water reminded me of the day's duties."

The Master tapped the table with his tobacco-stopper, and nodded to the bashful reader; and Mr. Babbycomb's face was a garland of smiles as he shook his friend's hand.

"But," said Babbycomb slyly, "this is not all, Brother Balder. I remember a dreamy gossip of yours over that curious picture of dead Chatterton, we have so often talked about."

"Let us have it," said the Master, "by all means, over our humming ale, if it isn't long:—and then to bed."

"I'm afraid I shall bore you," quoth Balder the modest; "but, luckily, the thing is a mere fragment. Five minutes, and you will be out of your misery."

SITTING BEFORE CHATTERTON,

is the title of the trifle. It runs thus:—

"It was early morning when I sat undisturbed, in the northern aisle of the Art Treasures Palace, in the summer of 1857—before Thomas Chatterton. The world rolls back, as I sit and dream. As my eyes wander over those rich, deep locks of hair—the bitter story of the strong boy's struggle, brings tears under my eyelids. The world looks coldly on now—as it looked some ninety years ago. Many men pass this way with a sneer upon their clean-shorn lip. After all said and done, what was Chatterton? was he not the proud, self-willed, immoral attorney's apprentice of Bristol; who committed ingenious forgeries; who was insolent towards his superiors; who became a precocious young libeller; and who madly threw up the brilliant prospect of one day becoming a Bristol attorney, for the

more glorious career of letters, in London? More, consider his religious views, and then, gentlemen of the jury, for your verdict. It will probably be a harsh one—if you be in the swing of to-day's gentilities:—if your soul be prisoned in the forms that prevail, on all sides, just now, your eyes will rest upon this lifeless form:—upon the pale morning light giving a frosty bloom to the purple drapery:—upon the last puff of feathery smoke rising from the expiring flame:—upon the scattered papers, all ghastly with the dead hopes they bear in black and white—and you will cry—'Foolish boy!'

And, pray, why did he not respect his articles of apprenticeship? Why did he leave that good mother's side? Why part from the young and humble friends of Bristol, who loved him, and were proud of him? Why jump lustily into the basket of the London coach, to seek the foulness and the coarseness of Shoreditch? The feathers of the pillow are sweeter far, perhaps (so Béranger would teach us), than the solid marble of the recording tomb:—and the valley is softer than the rocky seaboard. But is the bird of sinewy pinion content to build under a cottage thatch? No,—he builds, where the winds shriek, and where the billows thunder. And so, those marble temples that glisten before me, with the sweat of death upon them, disdained the pillow in the widow's cottage, and passed to the garret 'within an inch of a thunder-cloud.'

Mr. Wallis has done his painter's work with terrible fidelity. Here is all that remains of old Cross' arsenic—that, in a thoughtless moment, he sold to the poor boy, yesterday. Here lies the poet's parting curse upon Bristol. The baker round the corner, who held back the loaf yesterday—must feel sore at heart to day.

A gentle tap falls upon the door. Strike louder, timid Mistress Angell, your lodger certainly hears you not. As he parted from you last night, he kissed you for the first time. Be prepared, good, thoughtless soul!—those lips are cold now, and there is arsenic hanging about them! You knock louder—but still that arm dangles to the ground—that noble head is marble. You whisper fear-

fully to your female friend:—and still you knock. Why, woman—Death was lying heavily upon this young boy's sturdy shoulders when he mounted the stairs, so lumpishly, last night, as though he would break up the way behind him. Cann't you *feel* that Death is in the room? Does not his icy breath pour upon you through the chinks of the door?

Ay, Mrs. Angell is fairly frightened now. And quickly her pit-a-pat steps fade to the street. Sturdy feet mount the staircase. Yet the boy's clammy curls lie, still, over the bed's edge. Raise the crowbar—it cannot wake him!

Enter, the apothecary Cross—he, who sold the arsenic, and yet who almost loved Chatterton! Enter, Mrs. Angell, poor soul!—to weep, you may be sure, and accuse herself, only too grievously. Ay, pick up the torn papers. You shall find, for Bristol, the boy's curse: for his mother, his cold limbs: for his Maker, his stormy soul, now becalmed.

Dingy men come from Shoe-lane—now that twelve wondrously gifted jurymen have said '*felo-de-se*':—they come, and bear along the parish shell. It is the world's shame, not that of Chatterton, my men, you bear upon your shoulders. Hurry away, and in the dead of the night, find workhouse earth—be sure, that it is unhallowed—for the ashes of the boy who conjured up in an attorney's dingy office, the grim figure of the Monk Rowley. You may do your work as roughly as may be—yet, after eighty years, shall brave men look upon it, and say how ill it was done.

Take Wallis and Masson for chief mourners, and be certain of Goldy's tear, as of Walpole's most gentlemanly regret.

And were those young limbs, at last, put to rest in the shadow of that church, which the hapless boy had immortalized? All we can say is—that we trust it was so—if the ashes of Chatterton can, indeed, be at rest, in the city that roused all that was bitter in him. The face looks calm enough, Mr. Wallis, as you show it to us—calm

enough to rest anywhere. There is no pride upon that lip now. Those eyes have lost their old habit of staring. The world has conquered one of the proudest spirits that ever struggled to make a figure in it. The widow, at Bristol, will not have her two silk dresses—but she may prepare her crape. The girls will be teased no longer. A braver heart never faced its doom. How haughtily, only yesterday, those lips defied your sympathy—poor, weeping Mrs. Angell! But—reserve your story for the ears of the twelve intelligent men who will meet, presently, at the Three Crows in this same Brook-street, Holborn. The scene before us belongs to Number 4 in the same street, and to the year 1770.

Well, I must move forward, and make way for the streaming crowd behind me. With charity—with pity in my soul, shall I withdraw my eyes from that noble head—from that wondrous life, extinguished in its young morning. The daylight that is creeping through the half-opened garret window, and touches tenderly the outline of this white sleeper, is young, as the light that yesterday gave glory to these vigorous limbs. You may tell that the boy suffered greatly before he fell. All about—the very air—is cold and reserved. The wreck of a proud man lies before you, and commands respect for strength, at any rate. Oh! if the pride could have been thawed, once! If Thomas Chatterton could have broken bread at the hands of apothecary Cross—from whom he took arsenic! If he could have confessed his temporary failure to the anxious hearts of Bristol! Well—then, he had not been Thomas Chatterton."

Here ended Brother Balder's reading.

"Very, very sad story, that of Chatterton," said the Master.

"I've always been given to understand that the boy Chatterton was a highly improper character," from Seesaw.

"What!" exclaimed Babbycomb, starting from his seat, eagerly, to defend friend Balder.

"Hush! gentlemen," cried the Master, smiling down the ruffled temper of the old doctor. "Hush! It is not well to sleep upon hot words. Let us lay down our pipes, in perfect peace. Good night: the sleep of just men be upon us all."

CHAPTER VI.

Brother Frowde—a bookish, silent man—had not yet opened his lips at the reading meetings of the Brethren of the Crutch. But after the fifth meeting, the Master, fresh, on a November morning, as a peony, tapped at the bookworm's door.

"Come in," almost growled Brother Frowde. The Brother had a pen between his teeth, and the folio edition of "Cotgrave's Dictionary," upon his knees.

"A wonderful jumble of English and French, this, sir," said Frowde, still turning the yellow pages with his thin hands.

"Ay, ay," cried the Master cheerily. Pulling his pipe (a meerschaum, richly brown as a ripe chesnut) from his pocket, he held it before the brother. "Have I your permission?"

"Sir, you are at home, directly you lift my latch, as indeed, every honest human soul is."

The Master bowed, and filled his pipe.

"I was much interested, the other evening, in your account of your visit to a pipe manufactory, sir," said Frowde—"but you might have made more of your subject. You might have touched upon the famous old pipes of Amesbury—the gauntlet pipes—the Indian's pipe of peace, and the Milo pipes of our present time."

"Shall I tell you, brother, why I didn't touch upon all these topics?" asked the Master.

"Well, sir."

"Because" (here a cloud of smoke)—"Because" (here another cloud of smoke) "I was profoundly ignorant of every one of them."

"Bless me!" said the bookish brother. "There is the British Museum."

"To be sure there is; but I'm no book-worm, do you see. I know nothing about your Museum. That reminds me. Not a bad idea. Could you tell us anything about it; could you *read* us something about it?"

"Nothing, that all the world doesn't know."

"What was it, say—a hundred years ago?"

Brother Frowde paused, lifted his hand to one or two of the books upon his shelves—then—

"Well, I'll look into that."

"Good—good," replied the Master; "and now I must to Lebord's; I want to pump him about my French Invalids."

"Don't rely on me," said Frowde.

"On the contrary, Brother Frowde, I shall make your paper the evening's *pièce de resistance.*"

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When the brothers were assembling for their sixth reading, Brother Frowde stepped into the hall with empty hands. The Master looked inquisitively at him: Brother Babbycomb, who was in the secret, whispered anxiously in Balder's ear.

Coaxingly, the Master presently leaned over the table towards the silent book-worm, and said—

"Are you ready?"

"Quite," was the laconic answer. At which Babbycomb started, as though he had accidentally pricked himself with one of his own lancets.

Brother Frowde dipped his fingers into his waistcoat pocket, and withdrew a few slips of crumpled paper.

Babbycomb stared; the Master (who had an exquisitely appointed manuscript before him) smiled; and the literary brother, seeing the general attention drawn upon his paper, observed, abstractedly—

"We literary men don't waste paper."

"Sometimes! sometimes!" squeaked Sands, who tittered, and rubbed his hands, profoundly convinced that he had made an inimitable joke.

"Silence, gentlemen!" cried the Master, "for our learned friend Frowde."

Our learned friend Frowde then raised his voice:—

"THE BRITISH MUSEUM A CENTURY AGO.

"Experience has long since proved the injustice of closing national museums from the great body of the people, under the plea that the public is a most destructive and brutal animal. Nervous gentlemen of the old school threw up their hands in despair when they learned that Government intended to give the public free and unlimited access to the National Gallery; but the result of the experiment has been here, as elsewhere, a strong and unequivocal contradiction of the old Toryism, that the labourer in corduroy would make as lamentable a figure in a museum or a picture-gallery, as the proverbial bull in the china-shop. Crowds of artisans pace the galleries of the National Gallery and the Kensington Museum, and yet the glories of Rubens, Claude, and Vandyke are not desecrated—the line of beauty is untouched upon Hogarth's palette. Any injury which the national collection may have suffered, is traceable, according to high critical authority, rather to the appointed guardians of the treasures, than to the rash fingering of artisan visitors. To the minds of many enlightened men, the picture-cleaner, with his scrubbing-brush, is an animal more to be feared than the poor holiday-maker, with his reverence and his seemly bearing.

"Rank Radicalism," cried Horrocks.

"Hush!" said the master.

"Curious persons who are anxious to obtain a fair estimate of the progress made by men in authority, in their judgment on the moral rectitude of the great industrial class of this country, may form a vivid picture of the old state of feeling which regulated the admission of visitors to the British Museum a century ago.

In the year 1759, the trustees of this institution published their 'Statutes and Rules relating to the Inspection and use of the British Museum.' This instructive document may now pertinently serve to illustrate the darkness from which we are struggling. Visitors who now consider it rather an affront to be required to give up their cane or umbrella at the entrances to our Museums and Galleries; will be astonished to learn, that in the year 1757, those persons who wished to inspect the national collection, known as the British Museum, were required to make previous application to the porter, in writing, stating their names, condition, and places of abode, as also the day and hour at which they desired to be admitted. Their applications were written down in a register, which was submitted every evening, to the librarian or secretary in attendance. If this official, judging from the condition and ostensible character of an applicant, deemed him eligible for admittance, he directed the porter to give him a ticket on the following day. Thus the candidate for admission was compelled to make two visits, before he could learn whether or not it was the gracious will of a librarian or secretary, that he should be allowed the inestimable privilege of inspectiong the national collection. If successful, his trouble did not end with the issuing of the ticket; for it was provided by the trustees, that no more than ten tickets should be given out for each hour of admittance. Accordingly, every morning on which the Museum was open, the porter received a company of ten ticket-holders at nine o'clock, ushered them into a waiting-room 'till the hour of seeing the museum had come'—to use the words of the trustees. This small party was divided into two of five; one under the direction of the under-librarian, and the other under that of the assistant in each department.

Thus attended, the companies traversed the galleries, and on a signal given by the tinkling of a bell, they passed from one department of the collection into another—one hour being the utmost time allowed for the inspection of a department. This system calls to mind the dragooning through Westminster Abbey, under the command of the gallant vergers, still in vogue to the annoyance of leisurely people, and ardent but not hasty students. Sometimes, when public curiosity was particularly excited, the number of respectable applicants exceeded the limit of the prescribed issue. In these cases, tickets were given for remote days; and thus, at times, when the lists were heavy, it must have been as impossible for a passing visitor to London, to get within the gateway of the British Museum, as it lately was to inspect Wren's masterpiece for less than twopence. The trustees provided, also, that when any person, having obtained tickets, was prevented from making use of them at the appointed time, he was to send them back to the porter, in order 'that other persons wanting to see the Museum might not be excluded.' Three hours was the limit of the time any company might spend in the Museum; and those who were so unreasonable or inquisitive as to be 'desirous of visiting the Museum more than once,' might apply for tickets whenever they pleased, 'provided that no one person had tickets at the same time for more than once.' The names of those persons who, in the course of their visit, wilfully transgressed any of the rules laid down by the trustees, were written down in a black register, and the porter was directed never to issue tickets to them again.

It will be seen then, that a hundred years ago the 'highly respectable' were alone allowed to be inscribed in the visiting list of the national institution, in Great Russell-street. The books were hoarded for the undisturbed enjoyment of the worm, whose feast was only at rare intervals disturbed by some student regardless of difficulties. To the poor worn, unheeded authors of those days, serenely starving in garrets, assuredly the British Museum must have been as impenetrable as the old Bastille. The prim under-libra

rian probably looked with a doubting mind upon the names and addresses of many poor, aspiring, honourable men—men whose 'condition,' to use the phrase of the trustees, bespoke not the gentility of that vulgar age. In those days the weaver and the carpenter would as soon have contemplated a visit to St. James's Palace, as have hoped for an admission ticket to the national Museum.

The mean precautions of the last century, contrast happily with the enlightened liberty of this. Crowds of all ranks and conditions besiege the doors of the British Museum—especially in holiday time; yet the skeleton of the elephant is spotless—the bottled rattlesnakes pickle in peace. The Elgin marbles have suffered no abatement of their profuse beauty; and the coat of the cameleopard is yet without a blemish.

The Yorkshireman has his unrestrained stare at a sphinx; the undertaker spends his day over the mummies, or 'Egyptian parties,' as he calls them, and no official controls his professional objections to the coffins; the weaver has his observations on the looms of the olden time; the soldier compares the Indian's blunt weapon with his keen and deadly bayonet; the poor needlewoman has her laugh at the rude needles of barbarous tribes; the stonemason ventures to compare his tombs with the sarcophagi of ancient masters. No attendant watches every five visitors with the cold eye of a gaoler; no bell rings the company from one spot to another—all is open, free.

At all events, the two pictures—that of the British Museum a century back, and the Museum of to-day, crowded with holiday visitors, are in happy contrast. And what, in all things, are we to learn from the great sum of accomplished facts, save that in this sum we have an earnest of coming harvests of good?"

"Quite so, Brother Frowde," said the Master, handing his tobacco-pouch to the reader.

"Too short—much too short," cried Brother Sands, who was anxious to atone for the severity of his joke about

author's paper. Brother Frowde (he couldn't help it), looked upon the little man, and his jokelet, and his compliment, with profound disdain.

"And now, profound attention for our worthy Master," cried Horrocks, as though he were roaring from the quarter-deck, in a full gale.

The Master bowed; and untied the rosy riband that was about his manuscript. Turning to Brother Frowde, he said:—

"You see, we amateurs are so proud of our first literary children, that we hardly care how much we spend on their dress."

And then, putting the brown meerschaum upon the table, the master declared that he was about to give the company something about—

"THE INVALIDS OF THE FRENCH ARMY—

A subject that, to all who were under the protecting wing of the benevolent founder of the Crutch, must be peculiarly interesting.

Montesquieu said of the Invalides:—The world cannot show a spot more venerable than this temple consecrated at once to personal misfortune and public glory. Were I a prince, I should be as proud of having raised this building as of having won three battles." And, in truth, this building is perhaps the best monument Louis XIV. has left behind him. Its aspect is in keeping with its object It has a solid useful look; and its proportions give it importance. Herein eight generations of disabled soldiers have found rest and comfort. Here the wounds of Rocroi and Lodi, of Fleurus, of Fontenoy and Austerlitz, of Denain and Waterloo, have healed, under the protection of the national flag. Here are still men who fought under Napoleon—men whose eyes glisten yet at the sound of that magic name; and who are wearing away the few years that

lie between them and the grave, in happy contemplation of the great drama in which they figured. Prince Jerome was lately their governor; Count Ornano is their deputy-governor: Santini is the guardian of their hero's costly tomb.

'Everything about the building,' writes M. Cayla, 'is on a grand scale: from the gilded dome to the great halls—every detail is admirable. In this pile of solid stone; in this forest of columns; in these sculptured battles; in this masterpiece of French architecture, there is more than a palace—nay, more than a temple: there is a building as great as its object—immortal as the name of martial France—an institution for which the olden time can show no precedent.'

The idea of building the Invalides is due to the minister Louvois; but the original idea of founding an institution similar in object to the Invalides, may be traced back to the time of Philip Augustus. Centuries elapsed, however, between the first conception of the idea, and the erection of the building. Meantime, infirm warriors were sent to the religious retreats, where they were received as *religieux-lais* or *oblats*.

Félibien asserts that a Paris tradesman established a hospital for orphans and poor people—first at the *Enfants Rouges*—then in the Rue de Lorraine; and lastly, in the Rue St. Marcel. Queen Louise of Lorraine obtained for this establishment, from her husband, Henri III., letters patent, dated 1583, by which it was agreed that the hospital should shelter and feed poor gentlemen and disabled soldiers. This foundation, it may be remarked, very closely resembles that of the London Charter-house. Afterwards Henri IV., by letters patent, dated October, 1597, made over the entire establishment, originally founded by the Paris tradesman (Nicholas Houel) to poor gentlemen and disabled soldiers. He devoted the funds left by Henri III. for poor orphans, &c., to this object; and he secured this application of his predecessor's bequest by subsequent letters patent, dated the 1st of June, 1600. After the death of Henri IV., his queen resolved to perfect her husband's plan; but the necessary

money was wanting—and so, invalid soldiers still crawled about to religious retreats in search of a pallet and a crust of black bread.

Richelieu, who was certain to understand perfectly the beauty of a scheme like this, saw at once the utility of a house of refuge for disabled soldiers. In the name of Louis XIII., this notable cardinal devoted the castle of Bicêtre to this pious purpose. But once more the good intentions of the governing powers were not carried out. The cardinal's project died with him: and now crippled soldiers were compelled to beg, for the religious houses had turned them from their gates. It is clear, however, from these endeavours, that the idea of a retreat for military men was an old one, long before the first stone of the Invalides was laid. To each effort let us heartily pay the honour due to it—to Philip Augustus, to Nicholas Houel, to Henri IV., and to Richelieu, belongs the credit of taking the initiative; to Louis XIV. that of the realisation. Thus the Invalides—a state recognition of sacred debts contracted by France upon her battle-fields—is an idea which Louise of Lorraine endeavoured to realise; which Louis XIV., with the help of French money, and the genius of Bruant and Mansart, did realise.

A great idea was greatly executed. If the King may be praised for the munificence with which he went to work, the great artists who taught him how to spend the national money well, may also claim the gratitude of their country. The most remarkable fact, however, in the history of this interesting building is, that it was erected in eight years, and while the country was supporting the heavy expenses of war.

The first stone of the hotel was laid on the 30th of November, 1671; and four years afterwards the completion of the *façade* was celebrated by a gratified people. This *façade* was adorned by the genius of the Coustons and of Girardon. The revolution destroyed Girardon's figure of the royal founder; but the restored Bourbons employed Cartelier to model a *fac-simile* of it. Here, too, marking the four angles of the *façade*, are Desjardin's bronze figures of the nations conquered by France. Of

the general plan of the hotel it will be sufficient to remark that it describes an oblong—the long lines of which include no less than five square courts of different areas. All these courts are flanked by four-storied buildings—comfortably arranged, and admirably adapted, it is generally allowed, to the honourable purpose for which they were constructed. The vast quadrangle, known as the Court of Honour—one hundred and six mètres long, by sixty-four mètres in width—has an imposing appearance. The church is opposite the principal entrance: and the way to this sacred edifice is ornamented in the French style. Two stories of arcades, stretching the length of this vast quadrangle, give it a lofty character, and afford to the veteran soldier a dry walk in bad weather. Under Lepautre's clock, and the plaster model of the Napoleon statue of the Place Vendôme, the visitor passes to the soldiers' church, remarkable chiefly for the ragged trophies of war which decorate it. These, and the cenotaphs of deceased hotel governors, are the only ornaments of the church—save always the glimpses of the blue and golden splendour of the hero's tomb beyond.

The flags are only a remnant of those which belonged to the Invalides in the beginning of the present century. We need not dwell on the story which ended in 1814, in the encampment of the enemies of France in her splendid capital. Every Englishman turns chivalrously from this past, to the brighter passages of international history which are promised by the future. Therefore, let us simply note —for the elucidation of our story—that the Cossack tents were pitched at the threshold of the Invalides in 1814. The Englishman, whose insular position has protected him during many centuries from similar indignity, may yet realise to himself all the mortification and disgust with which a brave people saw their enemies at their doorways. Insolent in the passing hour of triumph, the allies had summoned Marshal Serrurier, Governor of the Invalides, to restore the trophies which France had wrested from her enemies upon the field of battle, at the cost of very precious blood.

The demand was calculated to rouse the martial spirit

of invalids, who remembered only the times when France had dictated terms. For a moment the Marshal had resolved to bury himself and his disabled subjects under the ruins of the building. Even this sacrifice was preferable to the shame of yielding back to the enemy these trophies of French valour. Serrurier hesitated: the demand was repeated. At length a better plan was hit upon—a plan, the execution of which would save at once the national honour and the building. The Marshal summoned Baron d'Arnaud and Colonel Cazeau, and said to them:—

'Resistance is out of the question: they are two hundred to one: the blood of all of us would not save the standards. We could not effectually hide them, for the barbarians would search for them even in the graves of our dead soldiers. Come, then—since we cannot save them—at least they shall not have them.'

The three warriors entered the church. Here the Marshal, in a voice choked with emotion, ordered the trophies to be removed, and to be piled in a heap, in one of the cellars. Amid the tears of many an old soldier, they were burned, on the 30th of March, 1814. When the flames had claimed every trophy, the Marshal ordered the messenger of the Cossacks to be called in. And then, pointing to the smouldering ashes, he said to him:—'You demand the trophies which our soldiers wrested from you: take them, they are there.' And the astonished Kalmouk retired to communicate to his masters the Marshal's reply. Some trophies remained, however, but these were further thinned by the fire which took place during Marshal Sebastiani's funeral, in 1851.

There are other points of interest in the Hotel of the Invalides. Every visitor has been pestered with the statistics of the great kitchen—with the fumes of the eleven hundred pounds of meat and twenty-five bushels of vegetables daily cooked in this colossal establishment: every visitor is familiar with the dining halls, where little round tables are set apart for the officers' mess, and where the plate and china presented to the hotel by the Empress Marie Louise is used; every visitor has been tired out

with the paintings which cover the hall walls, all pointing either to the greatness of Louis the Fourteenth, or to the invariable victories of French engagements. Of these decorations it may be said that they are generally in the style of the Van der Meulen battle-pieces of Versailles—indeed, they are by Martin, that master's pupil. And then there are the halls in which the wasted warriors repose; and happily must the fine old fellows slumber in Bayard's hall, or in the dormitory named after Kleber. Comforting, too, is it doubtless, to the old fellows, to be carried, when ill, to the ward of Valour, or to the ward of Victory. The hotel is, in short, a place where old soldiers may cheerfully wait death. They have every comfort. There is their little tobacco-shop under one of the colonnades; baths of every description are on the premises; and, in the court of Friendship, they find various games. They have the enjoyment of a library of twenty thousand volumes—a library, moreover, where are laid, the ball that killed Turenne, and the hat the Emperor wore at Eylau—and which served Le Gros for a model when he was painting this battle.* The hotel is crowded with relics and paintings of interest to the pensioners. The council chamber is decorated with portraits of French marshals and governors of the establishment, and contains Bosio's white marble bust of Napoleon. And there, behind the church, rest the remains of the hero of Austerlitz. Under Mansart's great dome, surrounded by all that the wealth and genius of modern France could produce in his honour, will repose the ashes of the Emperor. Here, even the little philosophers who may have twisted their petty historic pellets to throw at the gigantic reputation of Napoleon, cannot but hold their breath, and recognise in the splendour before them the expression of a great nation in favour of their dead leader. That pensive, solid head carved all this glory out of the spare materials of a lieutenant's single epaulette! Everything looks great and

* It was bought at the Sale of Le Gros' effects, in 1835, by M. De la Croix, of Orleans, for 2,040 francs (£81 12s.) and presented to the Invalides on the occasion of the Emperor's funeral.

solid as the name it is meant to immortalise. Enduring masses of carved marble—stupendous blocks of granite, marvellously arranged for strength and beauty—make up a sanctuary associated with the most brilliant passages of French history. And in this sanctuary the faithful Santini—some time Napoleon's valet—proudly displays the cross of the Legion of Honour.

In spite of the earnest desire of Louis the Fourteenth to see the dome of the Invalides finished; in spite of the activity of the minister Louvois, seconded by that of the architect Mansart, the dome, begun in 1675, was not finished before 1735, or sixty years after the foundation stone was laid. Louis the Fourteenth had been dead twenty years; Louvois had been gathered to his fathers forty-four years; and Mansart's grave was twenty-seven years old. Even now Napoleon's ashes do not lie in their final resting-place. A dim funereal lamp shines upon his coffin, and upon the trophies of Austerlitz and other emblems of his glory, in a little side chapel. The granite sarcophagus is yet open; and its massive lid lies upon great rollers, ready to cover up the precious ashes for ever.

The entrance to the tomb is reached by a broad and massive marble staircase. The colossal door which leads to the crypt is supported by bronze Caryatides—old men, the depositories of the symbols of human greatness. Above, in letters of gold, is inscribed the celebrated wish of the Emperor: 'I desire that my ashes may repose on the banks of the Seine, in the midst of the French people, whom I have so deeply loved.' M. Duret's figures majestically support this entablature. Strange that this wish, expressed in exile, should have been realised by a monarch who, himself, found a grave in a foreign land! Appropriately guarding the entrance to the Emperor's tomb, lie the ashes of brave men. The heroes of Jaffa and the Kremlin—of Valmy and Austerlitz—of Marengo and Friedland, and of Tilsit! Neither the Pantheon of Rome, nor the Necropolis of Athens, could offer more suggestive matter than that which belongs to the ashes of so many heroes grouped in one common sepulchre. As

worthy sentinels before the great tomb, Visconti placed the funereal monuments of Bertrand and Duroc. Here are Friendship and Courage at the gates of Glory! The mind flies back irresistibly to the past, as we pass through the heavy gates into the great man's tomb. All his conquests, all his national reforms—his laws—his errors, if you will—crowd upon the brain, and oppress it as it attempts to realise a spectral figure of the giant, whose memory haunts every footstep. All about is rich and great. Everywhere the walls and floors are of the purest marble—as the visitor passes into the open crypt—covered only by the dome, under the central point of which, surrounded by Pradier's twelve colossal Victories, will lie, in a Finnish quartz-rock sarcophagus, the ashes of Napoleon the First! M. Cordier has compared this quartz, which is harder than porphyry, to that of Upper Egypt. It is sprinkled, like avanturine, with gold. Steam power alone could make an impression upon it. As we look upon this colossal work, we stand upon the brilliant mosaic pavement, which describes an enormous wreath of laurels encircling the tomb; and the walls round about are rich with Simart's allegories of the civil glories of the empire. In a circular chamber, and lighted by a funeral lamp, is Simart's statue of Napoleon; and upon an altar before the statue, the sword of Austerlitz is laid, as are also the insignia of the Legion of Honour.

In one of the four chapels, as we have already noticed, the remains of the Emperor still lie; in another is the body of Turenne, placed here in 1800, and covered with a monument by Le Brun. The space between two of the chapels is dedicated to a monument in honour of Vauban, by Etex. These chapels are decorated by the Boullongues.

The body of Turenne was placed here on the 27th of September, 1800—and the funeral pomp was applauded, even by those who had seen the body exposed to the public at the Jardin des Plantes, in a glazed iron cage, during the revolution. This monument was designed by Le Brun, and executed by Baptiste Tuby. Turenne is represented expiring in the arms of Immortality. The bas-reliefs illustrate the

later exploits of the warrior. The two female figures were sculptured by Massy. The only inscription is—TURENNE.

The guardian of this Imperial tomb, where Napoleon lies surrounded by great French generals, is Santini—*the* Santini who brought the famous protest from St. Helena to England. He has told his own story of hair-breadth escapes:—of imprisonment:—and of weary heart-breaking travels—suffered, that he might make known to the world the wrongs borne by his master at St. Helena.

And here, resting before the splendid sarcophagus, in which the remains of the emperor are to be finally deposited, let me recall to your mind, the funeral ceremonies with which these were conveyed to the chapel on the left of the entrance, where, guarded by the veteran who holds a flag near the gates they lie in the glories of this temporary sepulchre. Many of you may have read descriptions of the ceremonies with which the body of the emperor who died in exile, was brought back to the country of his adoption and of his love. Without, therefore, endeavouring to place the scene once more before your eyes, I may translate a few paragraphs from the archives of the Invalides in which this solemn ceremonial is recorded. By way of preface, it may be remarked, that during this funeral ceremony, of the 15th December, 1840, no spectators showed more feeling—more enthusiasm—than the Englishmen present; in this, doing personal penance for the outrages committed by a British faction in the name of England. The paragraphs I have selected for translation, run as follows:—

'Upon the Esplanade, and from the gates of the Invalides to the Quai d'Orsay, the way was ornamented by thirty-two statues representing Clovis, Charles Martel, Philip Augustus, Charles V., Joan of Arc, Louis XII, Bayard, Louis XIV, Turenne, Duguay, Tronin, Hoche, La tour d'Auvergue, Kellerman, Ney, Jourdan, Lobau, Charlemagne, Hugues Capet, Louis IX., Charles VII., Duguesclin, Francis the First, Henry IV., Conde, Vauban, Marceau, Desaix, Kleber, Lannes, Massena, Mortier, and Macdonald. Between these statues were tripods, from which funeral fires blazed. Before the gates of the Invalides was an immense dais, near a triumphal arch, under which the funeral car drew up. Here the body was delivered over to the civil and Military authorities.'

The following is the *procés verbal* given by the officers of the Hotel on receiving the remains of the Emperor:—

'We, Vauthois Christophe Anne, this 15th of December, 1840, officer of the Legion of Honour, etc., charged with the government of the Invalides, acting under the orders of Marshal Moncey, Duke of Conegliano, Peer of France, Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honour, Governor of the Invalides:—in conformity with the law of the 10th of June, 1840, which decreed that the remains of the Emperor Napoleon should be deposited in the Royal Hotel of the Invalides: in conformity also with the *procés verbal* given by the Count de Rohan Charbot, on the 15th of October, 1840, on the island of St. Helena, and in virtue of the powers given, etc. etc.;—and the above act declaring:—that the coffin was found to be in a good state of preservation, except a small portion of the lower part which had shifted, and that on opening the coffin, the entire body of Napoleon was discovered, only so lightly touched by time that the features were instantly recognised:—in conformity, also, with the *procés verbal* brought back by C. Guillard Remy Julien, surgeon major of the frigate Belle Poule, describing the state of the remains of the Emperor Napoleon, and the articles deposited in his coffin,—it is declared that the remains of the Emperor are inclosed in six coffins: 1, a tin coffin: 2. a mahogany coffin: 3, a lead coffin: 4, a second lead coffin, separated frnm the first by sawdust and wood: 5, an ebony coffin: 6, an oak coffin to protect the ebony.'

Here follow interesting details of the official forms. The archives then go on to describe the conveyance of the coffin into the building, by the sailors of the Belle Poule; and its place of rest under the gorgeous catafalque prepared for its reception. Then high mass was said by the Archbishop of Paris, assisted by his clergy. Mozart's Requium was sung—cannon thundered—and as the ceremony closed, the Lieutenant General and Baron Athelin raised the sword of Austerlitz from the coffin of the deceased conqueror and confided it to the guardianship of the Marshal General of the Invalides. The Marshal is reported to have kissed the sword as he received it, and to have said in a tremulous voice:—'Now I have lived long enough!' I may now add that the body of the Emperor will rest in the granite sarcophagus prepared for it under the dome; and that these remains are confided to the guardianship of the old soldiers of France.

"Gentlemen, I have done," said the Master.

"And done bravely," roared Horrocks. "Master, here's your good health!"

"And that I may preserve my health," responded the Master, pleasantly, "let me seek my bed-room taper."

And the brothers, gossiping, dispersed.

CHAPTER VII.

Brother Horrocks had been very ill-tempered all the week. His old companions were afraid to approach him. At last the Master was asked to explain the captain's irritability.

"My friends," the Master replied, "My friends, you will learn the cause at our next meeting."

The Brothers waited patiently; and when they assembled for their next reading evening, in their old hall, they turned curiously to the Master.

Said the Master,—"Gentlemen, our friend Horrocks has been somewhat irritable during the last few days; but, then, he has been very busy, preparing something to please us. He is going to take us a cruise on the Atlantic; and his responsibilities of commander of such an inexperienced crew, has weighed upon his spirits."

Loud laughter, in which the worthy captain joined.

"Well, here's the yarn," growled Horrocks. "I call it—

"ATLANTIC WAVES.

"One brisk March morning, in the year 1848, the brave steam-ship *Hibernia* rolled about in the most intoxicated fashion on the broad Atlantic, in north latitude fifty-one, and west longitude thirty-eight, fifty—the wind blowing a hard gale from the west-south-west. To most of the passengers the grandeur of the waters was a mockery, the fine bearing of the ship, only a delusion and a snare. Everything was made tight on deck; if any passenger had left a toothpick on one of the seats, he would assuredly have

found it lashed to a near railing. Rope was coiled about every imaginable item; and water dripped from every spar of the gallant vessel. Now, it seemed as though she were travelling along through a brilliant gallery, flanked on either side by glittering walls of water; now, she climbed one of the crested walls, and an abyss, dark and terrible as the famous Maelstrom, which cannot be found anywhere, yawned to receive her. The snorts of the engine seemed to defy the angry waters; and occasionally when a monster wave coiled about the ship, and thundered against her, she staggered for a moment, only to renew the battle with fresh energy.

The cooks and stewards went placidly through their several daily avocations on board this rolling, fighting, shaking craft. If they had been Belgravian servants, or club-house waiters, they could not have performed their duties with more profound unconcern. Their coolness appeared nothing less than heroic to the poor tumbled heaps of clothes with human beings inside, that were scattered about the cabins below. An unhappy wight who had never before been five miles from Boston, was anxiously inquiring of the chief steward the precise time in the course of that evening that the vessel might be expected to founder; while another steward, with provoking pertinacity, was asking how many would dine in the saloon at six, with the same business-like unconcern he might have shown had the ship been gliding along on glass. So tremendous was the tossing; so extreme the apparent uncertainty of any event except a watery terminus to all expectation, that this sort of coolness appeared almost wicked.

Then there was a monster in British form actually on deck—not braving, it was said, but tempting the storm to sweep him into eternity. He astonished even the ship's officers. The cook did not hesitate to venture a strong opinion against the sanity of a man who might, if he chose, be snugly ensconced in the cabin out of harm's way, but who *would* remain upon deck, in momentary danger of being blown overboard. The cook's theory was not ill supported by the subject of it; for he was continually placing himself in all manner of odd places and

grotesque postures. Sometimes he scrambled up on the cuddy-roof; then he rolled down again on the saloon-deck; now he got himself blown up on the paddle-box; *that* was not high enough for him, for when the vessel sunk into a trough of the sea, he stood on tip-toe, trying to look over the nearest wave. A consultation was held in the cuddy, and a resolution was unanimously passed that the amateur of wind and water (which burst over him every minute) was either an escaped lunatic or—a college professor.

It was resolved, *nem. con.*, that he was the latter; and from that moment nobody was surprised at anything he might choose to do, even while the *Hibernia* was labouring in what the mate was pleased to call the most 'lively' manner. The professor, however, to the disgust of the sufferers below, who thought it was enough to *feel* the height of the waves, without going through the trouble of measuring them, pursued his observations in the face of the contempt of the official conclave above-mentioned. He took up his position on the cuddy-roof, which was exactly twenty-three feet three inches above the ship's line of flotation, and there watched the mighty mountains that sported with the brave vessel. He was anxious to ascertain the height of these majestic waves, but he found that the crests rose so far above the horizon from the point where he was standing, that it was utterly impossible, without gaining a greater height for observation, that he could arrive at any just estimate on the subject. His observations from the cuddy-roof proved, however, beyond a doubt, that the majority of these rolling masses of water attained a height of considerably more than twenty-four feet, measuring from the trough of the sea to the crests of the waves. But the professor was not satisfied with this negative proof; and in the pursuit of his interesting object did not feel inclined to be baffled. It is impossible to know what the secret thoughts of the men at the wheel were, when the valiant observer announced his intention of making the best of his way from the cuddy-roof to the larboard paddle-box. Now he was to be seen tumbling about with the motion of the ship; at one moment clinging to a chain-box; at the next, throwing himself into

the arms of the second mate. Now he was buried in spray, and a few minutes afterwards his spare form was seen clinging to the rails which connected the paddle-boxes.

Despite the storm without, a calm, mathematical process was going on in the mind of that ardent observer. The professor knew he was standing at a height of twenty-four feet nine inches above the flotation mark of the ship; and allowing five feet six inches as the height of his eye, he found the elevation he had obtained to be altogether thirty feet three inches. He now waited till the vessel subsided fairly for a few minutes into the trough of the sea, in an even and upright position, while the nearest approaching wave had its maximum altitude. Here he found also, that at least one-half part of the wave intercepted by a considerable elevation his view of the horizon. He declared that he frequently observed long ranges extending one hundred yards on one or both sides of the ship—the sea then coming right aft—which rose so high above the visible horizon as to form an angle estimated at two to three degrees, when the distance of the wave's crest was about a hundred yards off. This distance would add about thirteen feet to the level of the eye. This immense elevation occurred about every sixth wave. Now and then, when the course of a gigantic wave was impertinently interfered with by another liquid giant, and they thundered together, their breaking crests would shoot upward at least ten or fifteen feet higher—about half the height of the monument—and then pour down a mighty flood upon the poor professor, in revenge for his attempt to measure their majesties. No quantity of salt water, however, could wash him from his post, till he had satisfactorily proved, by accurate observation, that the average wave which passed the vessel was fully equal to the height of his eye—or thirty feet three inches—and that the mean highest waves, not including the fighting or broken waves, were about forty-three feet above the level of the hollow occupied at the moment by the ship.

Satisfied at length of the truth of his observations, the professor, half-pickled by the salt water, and looking, it must be confessed, very cold and miserable, descended to

the cabin. Throughout dinner-time a conversation was kept up between the professor and the captain—the latter appearing to be about the only individual on board who took any interest whatever in these scientific proceedings. The ladies, one and all, vowed that the professor was a monster, only doing 'all this stuff' in mockery of their sufferings. Towards night the wind increased to a hurricane; the ship trembled like a frightened child, before the terrible combat of the elements. Night, with her pall, closed in the scene:—it was a wild and solemn time. Towards morning the wind abated. For thirty hours a violent north-west gale had swept over the heaving bosom of the broad Atlantic.

This reflection hastened the dressing and breakfasting operations of the professor, who tumbled up on deck at about ten o'clock in the morning. The storm had been subdued for several hours, and there was a visible decrease in the height of the waves. He took up his old position on the cuddy roof, and soon observed, that, even then, when the sea was comparatively quiet, ten waves overtook the vessel in succession, which all rose above the apparent horizon; consequently they must have been more than twenty-three feet—probably about twenty-six feet—from ridge to hollow. From the larboard paddle-box, to which the professor once more scrambled, he observed that occasionally four or five waves in succession rose above the visible horizon—hence they must have been more than thirty feet waves. He also observed that the waves no longer ran in long ridges, but presented more the form ot cones of moderate elongation.

Having so far satisfied himself as to the height of Atlantic waves in a gale of wind (the professor's estimate must not be taken as the measurement of the highest known waves, but simply as that of a rough Atlantic sea), he directed his attention to minuter and more difficult observations. He determined to measure the period of time occupied by the regular waves in overtaking the ship, their width from crest to crest, and the rate of their travelling. The first point to be known was the speed of the ship; this he ascertained to be nine knots. His next object was to note

her course in reference to the direction of the waves. He found that the true course of the vessel was east, and that the waves came from the west-north-west, so that they passed under the vessel at a considerable angle. The length of the ship was stated to be two hundred and twenty feet. Provided with this information, the professor renewed his observations. He proceeded to count the seconds the crest of a wave took to travel from stern to stem of the vessel; these he ascertained to be six. He then counted the time which intervened between the moment when one crest touched the stern of the vessel, and the next touched it, and he found the average interval to be sixteen seconds and a fraction. These results gave him at once the width between crest and crest. As the crest travelled two hundred and twenty feet (or the length of the vessel) in six seconds, and sixteen seconds elapsed before the next crest touched the stern, it was clear that the wave was nearly three times the length of the vessel; to write accurately, there was a distance of six hundred and five feet from crest to crest.

The professor did not forget that the oblique course of the ship elongated her line over the waves; this elongation he estimated at forty-five feet, reducing the probable average distance between crest and crest, to five hundred and fifty-nine feet.

Being quite satisfied with the result of this experiment, the hardy professor, still balancing himself on his giddy height, to the wonder and amusement of the sailors, found that the calculations he had already made did not give him the actual velocity of the waves. A wave-crest certainly passed from stern to stem in six seconds, but then the ship was travelling in the same direction, at the rate of nine geographical miles per hour, or 15·2 feet per second; this rate the professor added to the former measure, which gave 790·5 feet for the actual distance traversed by the wave in 16·5 seconds, being at the rate of 32·67 English miles per hour. This computation was afterwards compared with calculations made from totally different data by Mr. Scott Russell, and found to be quite correct.

With these facts the professor scrambled from the lar-

board paddle-box of the *Hibernia.* He had also made some observations with regard to the forms of waves. When the wind blows steadily from one point, they are generally regular; but when it is high and gusty, and shifts from point to point, the sea is broken up, and the waves take a more conical shape, and assume fantastical crests. While the sea ran high, the professor observed,—now and then, a ridge of waves extending from about a quarter to a third of a mile in length, forming, as it were, a rampart of water. This ridge was sometimes straight, and sometimes bent in a crescent form, with the central mass of water higher than the rest, and not unfrequently with two or three semi-elliptical mounds in diminishing series on either side of the highest peak.

When the wind had subsided, a few of the bolder passengers crawled upon deck in the oddest imaginable costumes. They had not much to encounter, for about a third part of the greater undulations averaged only twenty-four feet, from crest to hollow, in height. These higher waves could be seen and selected from the pigmy waves about them, at the distance of a quarter of a mile from the ship.

The professor had been very unpopular on board while the stormy weather lasted, and the ladies had vowed that he was a sarcastic creature, who *would* have his little joke on the gravest calamities of life; but as the waves decreased in bulk, and the wind lulled, and the sun shone, and the men took off their oil-skin coats, and the cabin-windows were opened, the frowns of the fair voyagers wore off. Perfect goodwill was general before the ship sighted Liverpool: and even the cook, as he prepared the last dinner for the passengers, was heard to declare (in confidence, to one of the stokers) that, after all, there might be something worth knowing in the professor's observations.

When the professor landed at Liverpool, he would, on no account, suffer the carpet-bag, containing his calculations, to be taken out of his sight. Several inquisitive persons, however, made the best use of their own eyes, to ascertain the name of the extraordinary observer, and found it to be legibly inscribed with the well-known name of Scoresby.

That his investigations may be the more readily impressed on your minds, I conclude with a summary of them. It would seem from Dr. Scoresby's intrepid investigations, that the highest waves of the Atlantic average in

Altitude	43 feet.
Mean distance between each wave . . .	559 ,,
Width from crest to crest	600 ,,
Interval of time between each wave . .	16 seconds.
Velocity of each wave per hour . . .	32½ miles.

"By jingo!" was Mr. Seesaw's expressive exclamation. "Thirty-two miles an hour—almost as fast as an express train."

"Express train!" thundered Horrocks; "he must be a downright land-lubber who talks of the grand old sea, and your plaguy steam-engines, in the same breath."

"Beg pardon," said Seesaw.

"Ugh!" replied the offended Horrocks, as he rammed his manuscript into his pocket, and shook the ashes from his Turkish pipe-bowl.

Brother Balder whispered to the Master.

"Excellent!" exclaimed this gentleman. "But, 'a few words' will not be held as a substitute for some pleasant papers Mr. Babbycomb has been good enough to promise, us. Will you oblige us?"

Babbycomb bowed, and read as follows:

"EYES MADE TO ORDER.

"Contradictory opinions prevail as to the limits that should be assigned to the privilege of calling Art to the aid of Nature. To some persons a wig is the type of a false and hollow age; an emblem of deceit; a device of ingenious vanity, covering the wearer with gross and unpardonable deceit. In like manner, a crusade has been waged against the skill of the dentist—against certain artificial 'extents in aid' of symmetry, effected by the milliner.

An opposite side argues in favour of the wig, that, in the social intercourse of men, it is a laudable object for any

individual to propose to himself, by making an agreeable appearance, to please, rather than repel, his associates. On the simple ground that he would rather please than offend, an individual, not having the proper complement of hair and countenance, places a cunningly-fashioned wig upon his head, artificial teeth in his mouth, and an artificial nose upon his face. A certain money-lender, it is urged, acknowledged the elevating power of beauty when he drew a veil before the portrait of his favorite picture, that he might not see the semblance of a noble countenance, while he extorted his crushing interest from desperate customers. It is late in the age, say the pro-wig party, to be called upon to urge the refining power that dwells in the beautiful; and, on the other hand, the depression and the coarseness which often attend the constant contemplation of things unsightly. The consciousness of giving unpleasant sensations to spectators, haunts all people who are visibly disfigured. The bald man of five-and-twenty is an unpleasant object; because premature baldness is unnatural and ugly. Argue the question according to the strictest rules of formal logic, and you will arrive at nothing more than that the thing is undoubtedly unpleasant to behold, and that therefore some reason exists that should urge men to remove it, or hide it. Undoubtedly, a wig is a counterfeit of natural hair; but it is not a counterfeit worn in deference to the sense of the world, and with the view of presenting an agreeable, instead of a disagreeable, object? Certainly. A pinch of philosophy is therefore sprinkled about a wig, and the wearer is not necessarily a coxcomb. As regards artificial teeth, stronger pleas—even than those which support wigs—may be entered. Digestion demands that food should be masticated. Shall, then, a toothless person be forced to live upon spoon-meat, because artificial ivories are denouneed as sinful? These questions are fast coming to an issue; for Science has so far come to the aid of human nature, that according to an enthusiastic professor, it will be difficult, in the course of another century, to tell how or where any man or woman is deficient. A millennium for Deformity is, it seems, not far distant. M. Boissonneau

of Paris, constructs eyes with such extraordinary precision, that the artificial eye, we are told, is not distinguishable from the natural eye. The report of his pretensions will, it is to be feared, spread consternation among those who hold even wigs in abhorrence, and consider artificial teeth incompatible with Christianity; yet the fact must be honestly declared, that it is no longer safe for poets to write sonnets about the eyes of their mistresses, since those eyes may be M. Boissonneau's.

The old rude artificial eyes are simply oval shells, all made from one pattern, and differing only in size and in colour. No pretension to artistic or scientific skill has hitherto been claimed by the artificial eye manufacturer;—he has made a certain number of deep blues, light blues, hazels, and others, according to the state of the eye-market. These rude shells were constructed mainly with the view of giving the wearer an almond-shaped eye, and with little regard to its matching the eye in sound and active service. Artificial eyes were not made to order; but the patient was left to pick out the eye he would prefer to wear, as he would pick out a glove. The manufacture was kept a profound mystery, and few medical men had access to its secrets. The manufacturers sold eyes by the gross, to retail dealers, at a low price; and these supplied patients. Under this system, artificial eyes were only applicable in the very rare cases of atrophy of the globe; and the effect produced was even more repulsive than that of the diseased eye. The disease was hidden by an unnatural and repulsive expression, which it is difficult to describe. While one eye was gazing intently in your face, the other was fixed in another direction—immoveable, the more hideous because at first you mistook it for a natural eye. A smile might overspread the face, animate the lip, and lighten up the natural eye; but there was the glass eye—fixed, lustreless, and dead. It had other disadvantages: it interfered with the lachrymal functions, and sometimes caused a tear to drop in the happiest moments.

The new artificial eye is nothing more than a plastic skullcap, set accurately upon the bulb of the diseased eye, so that it moves with the bulb as freely as the sound eye.

The lids play freely over it; the lachrymal functions continue their healthy action; and the bulb is effectually protected from currents of cold air and particles of dust. But these effects can be gained only by modelling each artificial eye upon the particular bulb it is destined to cover; thus removing the manufacture of artificial eyes from the hands of clumsy mechanics, to the superintendance of the scientific artist. Every individual case, according to the condition of the bulb, requires an artificial eye of a different model from all previously made. In no two cases are the bulbs found in precisely the same condition; and, therefore, only the scientific workman, proceeding on well-grounded principles, can pretend to practise ocular prothesis with success. The newly-invented shell is of metallic enamel, which may be fitted like an outer cuticle to the bulb—the cornea of which is destroyed—and restores to the patient his natural appearance. The invention, however, will, we fear, increase our scepticism. We shall begin to look in people's eyes, as we have been accustomed to examine a luxuriant head of hair, when it suddenly shoots upon a surface hitherto remarkable only for a very straggling crop. Yet, it would be well to abate the spirit of sarcasm with which wigs and artificial teeth have been treated. Undoubtedly, it is more pleasant to owe one's hair to nature than to Truefit; to be indebted to natural causes for pearly teeth; and to have sparkling eyes with light in them. Every man and woman would rather have an aquiline nose than the most playful pug; no one would exchange eyes agreeing to turn in one direction, for the pertest squint; or legs observing the fair proportions and lines of the perfect human form divine, for gnarled limbs, irregular as an oak-branch. And it is pleasant to know and to acknowledge, gratefully, and seriously, that science can repair many of the ravages of disease; and mend many of the fractures and cracks which the great chapter of accidents includes, as the portion of poor human nature."

"Yes, yes," cried Mr. Balder, as his friend's voice died, "but we must have your Pill paper to-day."

"Yes, yes," from the Master. "Mr. Babbycomb owes us something more important than this fragment about artificial eyes."

"He has a capital—a wicked story about a quack pill."

"Move ahead!" growled Horrocks.

Mr. Babbycomb reluctantly drew a paper from his pocket, and said, "Here's the nonsense:"—

"THE METHUSELAH PILL.

"Mr. Prattles was a poor man. He had a wife and a large family dependent on him; and his printing business brought him in only a very slender income. His neighbours often wondered how he contrived to make both ends meet. They knew nothing of the struggle that went on within the walls of Mr. Prattles' establishment. The surrounding tradesmen were his customers. He had a shrewd notion of business, however. When the grocer over the way gave him an order to print fifty copies of 'Fine Congou at three-and-sixpence,' he knew very well that the grocer down the road would soon empower him to print bills advertising 'Fine Congou at three-and-five-pence three farthings:' to which would be added the further intelligence that 'now was the time!' The keener the competition in the neighbourhood, the better for Mr. Prattles. Among other printing orders, Mr. Prattles one day received a command to strike off a thousand labels for 'Mr. Smith's Universal Pill.' No sooner had he delivered the first batch of labels, than a second order was given for five thousand more labels; and the second order was immediately succeeded by a third, and a third by a fourth.

This influx of business surprised Mr. Prattles; and he began to envy the prosperity of Mr. Smith. Presently it struck him that it was no difficult matter to manufacture a pill. But how could he hope to invent a story so plausible as that which enveloped Mr. Smith's pill-boxes. There was a difficulty here. Mr. Smith had fortified himself in every possible way. He had selected the most obscure villages of the country from the Gazetteer, and had written very characteristic testimonials from imaginary

patients residing *near* those remote localities. His pill was—these spurious documents declared—an infallible cure for every disease. He had tacked to his pill the properties of the entire pharmacopœia. Mr. Smith's pill was advertised to accomplish everything of which medical science was capable. The history of Mr. Smith's Pill was a narrative of blessings conferred upon frail mortality. By the virtues of Mr. Smith's Pill, John Dobbins of Cwyrytchcmwll, in Wales, had been cured of a bad leg, which had baffled the ingenuity of the first surgeons in the country. Mr. Smith's Pill restored Miss Brown of Briar Cottage, near Battledore-cum-Shuttlecock, to life, when the rattles were in her throat. It cured asthma, consumption, water on the brain, dropsy and influenza; it was infallible in scarlet fever, yellow jaundice, and blue cholera, gout, rheumatism, tic-doloreux, sciatica, and cancer invariably disappeared from every patient respectively and concurrently afflicted with any or all of these diseases,—after the third box.

Mr. Smith's ingenuity was not exhausted even with these arrangements. He understood his business perfectly, and felt that, in order to make his pill go down, it was necessary to secure the patronage of a peer of the realm. With this view he entered into negotiations with a poor nobleman residing abroad. The transaction was a long time pending, but at length it was signed and sealed between Mr. Smith and the Earl of Rottenborough, that his lordship should, for and in consideration of the sum of six hundred per annum, to be paid to him, the Earl of Rottenborough, by the said Mr. Smith, consent to be cured, in public advertisements, by means of Mr. Smith's Omnipotent Pill, of any disease of which the said Mr. Smith might choose to call upon him, the Earl aforesaid, to testify he had been cured. Under these auspices Mr. Smith's Pills had thrived exceedingly, but it was not till Mr. Smith conferred upon himself a diploma, and inducted himself into the chair in a college which he endowed, for that single purpose, somewhere, that the Universal Pill was found in every respectable house in the three kingdoms, as the special

and particular pill of Professor Smith, M.D., without whose signature all others were spurious.

Poor Prattles! how could he, who had not twenty pounds in the world, hope to compete with the rich Professor Smith. When he recounted the advantages which his rival possessed, and reflected upon his own moneyless condition, he was ready to give up his idea in despair. At this crisis of his fate his wife, one day in purest jest, told him that care would soon make him look as old as Methuselah. This simple remark, as he affectingly tells us to the present day, decided him. He would have a Methuselah Pill! His wife tried hard to dissuade him from embarking in so expensive a speculation;—he was deaf to her pleading. He wrote forthwith to his cousin, who was a chemist at Bath, and asked him to mix him a harmless pill. 'Let the properties it contains neutralise one another.' This was the simple direction. A bribe of a third share in the speculation decided his cousin, the chemist, to set to work immediately. The next step was to frame a very learned history of the pill—to trace its descent from Methuselah to Prattles. With this object, Prattles consulted a battered old schoolmaster of his acquaintance, whose scraps of ancient lore sufficed for the printer's purpose. In a few hours a very interesting story, narrating the history of the receipt, was fabricated and ready for the press. It ran as follows:—

It is well known to most people that the venerable Methuselah lived to the good old age of NINE HUNDRED AND SIXTY NINE YEARS. The secret of so long a life has for ages remained an IMPENETRABLE MYSTERY. In these degenerate days men seldom live to gaze upon their grandchildren; but in the days of Methuselah, matters were very different. Men lived for centuries. What potent power—what subtle elixir—held body and soul together for so long a period? 'That is the question.' About two years ago two gentlemen were travelling in THE ARID DESERTS OF ASIA MINOR. They fell in, one evening, with an encampment of Arabs. They were most hospitably received by the Mussulmen. The first peculiarity they remarked among the Arabs was that there were several men in the encampment who, though they looked very old, were nevertheless, active in their gait and lively in conversation. Our travellers entered into conversation with one of these hoary sons of the desert; the old man was very communicative.

'I was in your country many years ago, when Charles the Second was king. I played tricks before him:—he was a jovial fellow. Ah! I was young then;' and the old man heaved a deep sigh. The travellers, it may well be imagined, were surprised; and, at first, somewhat incredulous.

'There is a man, but he is very old now, who fought in Palestine when one of your king's sons helped in a foolish war—I think you Christians call it the Holy War.' The old man pointed to a figure crouched to the earth. It was that of a very old man, whose hair was white as silver. 'That man,' continued the Arab, who was addressing the travellers, 'is upwards of six hundred years old!'

'Incredible!' our travellers exclaimed.

'Hush!' the old Arab continued; 'you of the degenerate West know nothing of this matter. The secret remains with us, to you it is unknown—an undiscovered mystery. Have you ever heard of Methuselah?'

'The travellers replied in the affirmative.

'Do you know by what secret he prolonged his life to the ripe old age of nine hundred and sixty-nine years?'

The travellers confessed their profound ignorance. Forthwith the old Arab fumbled, with his ebon hands, about the folds of his turban, and presently drew therefrom a tattered piece of parchment, so dirty, besmeared with grease, and discoloured by age, that the Arabic characters written upon it could be deciphered only by the most practised Arabic scholar. One of the travellers happened to be a proficient in Arabic. He begged the old man to allow him to peruse the precious document. To this the wily Arab consented, on the conditions that it should be read in his own hands, and that he should receive a large sum of money for allowing the travellers to transcribe its contents. These preliminaries having been arranged, the party entered the nearest tent, and the travellers became possessed of the invaluable life-preserver. On their return to England, the travellers entered into a negotiation with the present proprietor of the recipe, who offers his

METHUSELAH PILLS

to the British public at thirteenpence-halfpenny per box. None are genuine unless signed by the proprietor, John Prattles. Agents wanted for every part of the world. *N.B.*—The Methuselah Pills are carefully made up after the Methuselah receipt, from particular herbs known only to the proprietor of this invaluable medicine. As a proof of the efficacy and wonderful properties of the Methusaleh Pill, Her Majesty's Government have granted to the proprietors, to the exclusion of all pretenders, the use of a splendid RED AND BLACK STAMP. All pills pretending to be Methuselah Pills—without this stamp, are forgeries;—and all imitation of it is felony.'

This notable prospectus was concocted in the back parlour of Mr. Prattles' house. Mr. Prattles had not been

a printer all his life for nothing; he had picked up, with his types, the trick of editorship; and he revised the schoolmaster's rough-draft with skill. Mr. Prattles then wore a paper cap and an apron. He published his prospectus, adding now and then new bits, to give it additional zest. At one time is was headed

'CHEAT THE UNDERTAKERS, AND LIVE SIX HUNDRED YEARS.'

A second prospectus began with

'LIFE PROLONGED TO AN INDEFINITE PERIOD BY THE METHUSELAH PILLS!'

In a few years Mr. Prattles was a man of property. In time he was even able to sneer at Professor Smith, with his tool, my Lord Rottenborough.

When some foolish old man, in a remote rural district, died at an advanced age, public attention was particularly called to Prattles' patent, by a statement on the part of the firm, that the instance of longevity in question was undoubtedly the effect of the Methuselah receipt. Prattles pocketed his shillings, and smiled at the world: he laughed and won. To make all square, as far as possible, he even went to the length of eating a few charity dinners, and subscribing a few pounds in aid of hospital and other funds.

Prattles' Pills sold prodigiously. Whenever a doubt was expressed respecting their efficacy, it was silenced by reference to the sanction of Her Majesty's Government, whose mark picturesquely adorned each box, to prove the genuineness of the Methuselah Pills; just as plate and jewellery are stamped by the assay authorities to show the standard excellence of gold or silver. Publicly, Mr. Prattles complained that the Government charged him threehalfpence per impression, for these 'Hall Marks;' privately, he whispered that to them he owed his fortune.

Like all those who have much, Mr. Prattles wanted more. After he had exported millions of his Methusaleh Pills to every corner of the Queen's Colonial dominions,

he attempted to introduce them into foreign medicine markets. To his chagrin, he found that *in no other country in the world* save in these dominions (except the United States of America) were articles of that description allowed to be vended—much less are they sanctioned for the sake of a paltry revenue. On the contrary, individuals, Mr. Prattles learned, who were discovered selling such things on the Continent, are severely punished; even newspapers who advertise them, are fined. He met with native patent medicines during his travels on the Continent, but they were real remedies; having all been submitted to a Board of Government Officers distinguished for their proficiency in pharmacy and medicine, who had decided whether the non-professional public could be safely trusted with them or not. Mr. Prattles, however, made a brilliant fortune by his gullible countrymen.'"

"And may he live to be gulled as he has gulled the public!" shouted Horrocks. "I'd have the thief swinging from the yard-arm, if I had my way."

"We are on social shams, or swindles," cried the Master;—"let us beg Mr. Seesaw to oblige us. He is ready I am told, with some very amusing experience."

"Every man to his own shop, you know," said Brother Seesaw. "I know nothing about the height of your Atlantic Waves: nor about Artificial Eyes. If I wanted to go to America, I should pay my passage like a man; and consider the sea-sickness as part of my business. If I lost an eye, I should get the best artificial one money would buy. I hate your theories and discussions. Give the best price, and you will get the best article."

"Poor thing," whispered Frowde to Mr. Babbycomb.

"Now writing—beyond business letters—is not my province," continued Seesaw; "but, since the Master has been good enough to ask me for some of my city experience, I have thrown something together, about the way

they got bubble companies up, a little time ago. Stop me, if it doesn't interest you."

"Every man's experience is interesting," said the Master.

"Except a marine's," roared Horrocks.

Amid laughter, Mr. Seesaw opened his reading.

"I have christened my paper—

"PROVISIONALLY AND COMPLETELY REGISTERED"—

he said. "Now, I proceed:—I, adopting for the time, the Royal 'we.'"

"We have a fortune within our grasp. The thing is as clear as noon-day. Twenty thousand pounds for myself, and twenty thousand pounds for my fellow promoter, Ralph Augustus Rigging. People are welcome to call us sanguine, and headstrong and foolish. Capitalists may turn their backs upon us; but we know that, very shortly, the proudest of them will be at our feet. This is how we found our fortune:

I and Rigging were having a chop in the City one sloppy afternoon, when the market was dull (that very morning, in fact, the Great North and South Pole Junction shares had dropped down to seventy-five ex. div.), when a very quiet dull man planted himself in the same box with us. He called for a chop and a sausage, and particularly directed that the sausage should be fried crisp. He had a careworn countenance; and when he placed his hat upon the table, he dropped a bundle of greasy papers into it. Little did I think at that moment my fortune was bound up in that grease.

Rigging soon broke cheerily into conversation with him. He talked about the money market. Rigging (who had, I know, only eighteenpence in the world), chattered airily and confidently about the glut of money in the City, and gave long lists of the paper done by various discount houses, whose operations he pretended to know thoroughly, at one and a half per cent. The aspect of metals, the hopes of hops, the chances of corn, the prospects of jute, the rise in B.P. sugar gradually led, from a discussion on

the bottled-beer trade, to a few words on the imperial pint question then beginning to be mooted. The mention of bottles visibly worked on the stranger's mind, and his hand wandered instinctively towards the greasy bundle of papers in his hat. He paused, and then awkwardly asked whether we had ever experienced the astonishing inefficiency of the common corkscrew? Rigging suggested that all the corkscrews he had operated with were bad, because they required labour to fulfil their purpose. Indeed he was quite prepared to extend his patronage to any new screw that would draw a cork instantly and without effort.

This intimation threw the stranger into a state of greater excitement. He grasped his bundle of adipose papers; and, as he untied them, rapidly and earnestly traced the leading points of his career. At an early age, he said, he saw that the world wanted an improved corkscrew; and he resolved to give the matter his undivided attention. He resigned the business for which his father had destined him; and, with his savings, bought every kind of corkscrew that came within his reach. He found that they were one and all based upon wrong principles; and for a long time he could not devise the right principles on which those important social instruments ought to be constructed. But he never let the subject pass from his mind. He felt convinced that an improved corkscrew would draw a colossal fortune for the inventor; and this conviction kept him true to his purpose. He said it would make our hearts ache to listen to the miseries he had suffered, in carrying out the great and glorious object of his existence. He had defied sheriffs' officers, and had serenely seen his household gods pass under the hammer of the auctioneer; he had been deceived by large and powerful bodies of people; he had wasted the fortune of his wife, in experiments; he had tried to open, on new and improved principles, upwards of thirteen thousand bottles of wine; and at last he had succeeded in manufacturing a corkscrew that drew a cork with the daintiest twirl of the tiniest lady's finger.

As he rapidly pictured these stages of his career, his

eyes dilated; his voice became tremulous; his action grew wildly animated. Mr. Rigging begged him to calm himself; but encouraged him to proceed, and to enter into full details; adding, that he had, probably, by the merest accident, met with parties who might realize all the dreams of his youth—men, who at all events could console him for years of misery by insuring him a meridian of competence, and a decline of unclouded prosperity.

Thus urged, the gentleman unfolded his plan; winding up by the declaration that all he wanted was a capitalist. Rigging smiled at this trifling desideratum; and asked, particularly, whether this was *all* the stranger required? I confess that I was a little surprised at Rigging's confident air; for I knew, to my cost, that *he* was no capitalist. But he continued to cheer the little man on until the inventor of the screw had revealed the whole of his project; concluding, by asking him what sum he required for his novel and highly remunerative invention. The stranger took out his pencil and made several elaborate calculations; while Rigging kept uttering exclamations on the wonderful luck which had brought ourselves and the inventor together.

I did not see the matter quite so clearly as Rigging seemed to see it; but I left it entirely in his hands. Presently the stranger said, in a hesitating tone—and after having exhibited in a vivid light the incalculable expenses he had borne—that he would not object to part with his entire right in his patent corkscrew, for the preposterously low sum of six thousand five hundred and fifty pounds. Rigging asked, with earnest solemnity, if, positively, he was prepared to sign an ageement to that effect? The stranger replied in the affirmative. "Better make it ten thousand," Rigging suggested.

The stranger stared. Rigging went on to show that the thing was worth ten thousand pounds, at least, if it were worth ten pence; and that it would be mere folly to part with it for less. The stranger was not slow to accede to this view of the subject.

"Now to business," Mr. Rigging suggested. He then went on to show that the scheme was one, the importance

of which was so great, that it could not be fully carried on by any private individual. A public company was the only expedient conceivably practical, and Mr. Rigging was exactly the 'party' whose influence in the City could command directors of weight and character. The stranger looked doubtingly. Mr. Rigging returned to the charge with renewed vigour. He painted in glowing colours the prospects of a public company working so important an invention. He shadowed forth colossal dividends paid at frequent intervals. He pointed to companies that were at ten, premium; and wound up by appealing to the stranger as a man of business, whether this glorious scheme had not stronger claims upon public support, than many of those then so high in the esteem of the members of the Stock Exchange. The stranger's enthusiasm expanded under Rigging's eloquence. Rigging saw this, and chose his moment to recall to us that we were not in a place for the transaction of important business. He suggested that perhaps the stranger would favour him next morning with a call at his office in Moon Alley. The stranger eagerly assented to this arrangement, and we parted.

I found Mr. Rigging at his place of business, and in company with the stranger, at the appointed minute. They were surrounded with plans, sections, together with working, isometrical, and perspective drawings of corkscrews. The stranger's dull, heavy, hopeless expression of countenance had vanished. He was in high spirits; and, at the moment when I entered, Mr. Rigging was debating with him whether they would have the Prime Minister, or the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or both, as president or presidents of the board of honorary directors. Rigging suggested that they should not make the thing too cheap; and that therefore he was decidedly of opinion that only the Prime Minister should be allowed the honour. And so it was settled. From this subject our attention was turned to the formation of a working board. Rigging proposed that two of the most celebrated wine-merchants, a leading man in the cork trade, and an influential bottle-maker, should be at once communicated with. They would, of course, assent to become directors, without a

thought of hesitation: for their very existence as manufacturers (in which designation wine-merchants were designedly included) depended upon corkscrews. Here would be four directors; Mr. Rigging would endeavour so to economise his time, as to make a fifth; and then there would be only three (with power to add to their number) wanting, to complete the board. The scheme lay in the compass of a nutshell. The stranger was asked whether he had any preference as to bankers; whether he intended to bring in his own, or any favourite solicitor; and whether he would be disposed to take an active part in the management of the Company? To these questions the stranger gave highly satisfactory answers. Whereupon Mr. Rigging, passing his hand with a graceful bow towards me, expressed the great pleasure he felt in proposing his excellent friend Mr. Scripplewick as Secretary *pro. tem.* He knew (he was so good as to add) that I should do all in my power to carry out the views of the directors, and that I should be found an efficient and intelligent officer. I was thereupon requested to proceed to the nearest stationer's shop and purchase a book. 'For,' said Mr. Rigging in a highly impressive tone, 'I make it a rule in all business matters to act from the beginning according to the strict letter of the law, and with the most scrupulous exactitude.'

"The artful villain!" cried Horrocks.

The inventor approved of this very refreshing sentiment, and I invested (out of my own capital) two shillings and ninepence in a minute-book. I was at once requested to draw up a statement of our proceedings. Accordingly I set forth, that, at a meeting, of which Ralph Augustus Rigging was unanimously voted Chairman, it was resolved, *nemine contradicente*, that the Company which the Meeting had been summoned to form, should be called and designated, and is hereby called and designated, 'The Patent Corkscrew Company.' Another resolution fixed its capital at twenty-five thousand pounds; with the option, suggested by Mr. Rigging, of increasing to one hundred thousand pounds, in two hundred thousand shares of ten shillings

each—one shilling deposit per share. The next proceeding was to decide who should be promoters, and what they (the promoters) should severally claim for their preliminary trouble, in the shape of preliminary expenses. Here the experience of Rigging was of essential service. He declared that the inventor, in this capacity, should have allotted to him six thousand free shares; and that I and Rigging should each have, as joint promoters, two thousand free shares. This self-denying arrangement was adopted; offices were fixed upon: a printer was appointed; and we proceeded to draw up the prospectus.

This was a glowing document. It described a little El-Dorado within two minutes walk of the Stock Exchange. It bristled with figures, exhibiting the number of corkscrews in use (from well authenticated data), distinguishing worm screws from barrel screws, and single-barrelled corkscrews from double-barrelled corkscrews. It tabulated, in separate columns, pocket, pantry, and pic-nic corkscrews. It dwelt on the importance of the corkscrew in the abstract, upon its indirect effect on the happiness of unborn millions; and it concluded by promising to shareholders dividends of nineteen per cent., paid quarterly. Rigging read this effusion to us with marvellous unction; and it was pleasant to see the glow of expectation that deepened every moment on the cheek of the inventor, as the reading proceeded. We wound up our proceedings for that day by sending the prospectus to the printer; and by provisionally registering the Company at the expense of the inventor; who paid five pounds to the Registry-office with sublime alacrity.

We next devoted our energies to the formation of a powerful working Board. Every day we persuaded ourselves that the matter in hand was very easy: every day Rigging had reason to believe he would obtain a first-class name. Time ran on, while we ran after Directors. After seven weeks' severe labour we booked one gentleman. I remember well, the air of triumph with which Mr. Rigging lauded the Honourable Chester Titbury, and produced him in the Board-room. I remember, to, the promises of support that gentleman lavished upon us. He would see

his friend Lord Cattegat and make him join; and if we wanted tip-top trustees, he would provide them for us. Mr. Rigging told us, after bowing out the Honourable Mr. Titbury, that now the formation of the Board was a matter of certainty; for it would be easy to get any names to join Titbury. Indeed, there would be a hot competition among the wine, cork, and bottle interests for the honour of serving upon our Board. This prospect carried us all home, I think, very comfortably to bed that night. I dreamed that I was dipping my fingers, with a noble duke, into a certain little bowl filled with sovereigns, which was always placed upon the Board on all the Board days.

Rigging used the name of the Honourable Chester Titbury most discreetly. I was always hopeful while he had a copy of the printed prospectus in his pocket, with our first and only name filling up the blank in manuscript under the head 'Directors.' Every day he called on me to report a new certainty of a first-rate Director. Every day he heard something encouraging from the Stock Exchange. Every day he was told that all the influential men in the City had their eyes upon us. Every day I went to the office flushed with hope; but every evening returned home jaded and worn with disappointment. For still Mr. Chester Titbury was our only Director. But what of that? Mr. Rigging had heard that 'they' were only holding back to see how the market went. At last we resolved to disappoint and to exclude them (whoever they were). We accepted some names we had before declined. We had Mr. Flippy of Camden Town, said to be a retired gentleman; Mr. Samuel Flick, a man of great influence in the tooth-brush trade: the Rev. Joshua Jerry, a clergyman with enlarged views and contracted means: and two or three more equally eligible members of the leisure classes. It was decided that the promoters ought to bear all the preliminary expenses; so that when the Board passed a very liberal resolution to advertise largely, I, Rigging, and the inventor had to take counsel of one another. I need not reveal the cost at which we scraped money together, to pay for long advertisements in the morning papers.

These were inserted day after day. Applications for shares came in, in prodigious quantities. Mr. Troubadub, of Pentonville wanted five hundred shares; Mr. Barleymus of Bermondsey would be glad to pay on seven hundred and fifty; Mr. Tumbledon of the Old Kent Road would feel obliged by an allotment of six hundred. Hundreds of other gentlemen were equally obliging. Sixty-two thousand three hundred and twenty-seven shares were applied for by the day the books were announced as being about to close; twenty-five thousand were judiciously allotted.

That is some time ago: calls upon only three hundred and one have as yet been paid. Our expenses have now amounted to seven hundred pounds; and at this moment the Honourable Chester Titbury has got his jewelled fingers in the little bowl of sovereigns on the Board table. When the proportion of capital prescribed by the Act of Parliament has been paid up, we hope to be completely registered. It is not, however, our intention to bring out the Patent Corkscrew until the invention is fully protected by law.

Between Provisional Registration and Complete Registration there is a long and difficult way to travel; that is to say, the intention of the law was to make this way difficult, but some knowing fellows have found out a path strewn with rose-leaves. The Patent Corkscrew Company, however, have had no easy time of it since we left them (all hopeful as young girls) enjoying the charms of Provisional Registration. Good directors would pour in. The Rothschilds and the Barings would at once see the magnificent commercial promises of the scheme, and take an early walk to the offices. The manufacturers of all old-fashioned corkscrews would tremble in their boots. Wine merchants in every part of the kingdom, would be in a painful state of expectation.

The first point to be attended to was advertising a second time. Without a shower of advertisements no company could hope to succeed. Advertising agents soon presented themselves. It was mildly suggested that the

Chelsea Banner was an important medium; that the *Juan Fernandez Gazette* was an authority on corkscrews, and had an enormous circulation; that the *Baker Street Star* would bring us two or three hundred first-rate applications for shares. The advertisements were given out very handsomely to all kinds of papers. Suburban prints informed their readers, that the Patent Corkscrew Company would make the fortune of its shareholders, and that it would be the moral duty of every honest man to have a patent corkscrew in the house. The time for application for shares had been extended. The incessant popping of corks made blissful the nights of the inventor; for, this time, the list of applications for shares included some of the most notable names in the country. Captain Bluebill, of Tanglebury Hall, Norfolk, wanted three hundred shares; Benjamin Button, of Clapham, the great silk merchant, would be glad to take up two hundred; Thomas Towling, of the Cottage, Putney, the well-known banker, would not be content with less than four hundred; Admiral Hawker, of the Grange, Somerset, who gave as his reference, one of the most respectable banking firms in the metropolis, would be obliged to the directors for an allotment of one hundred. The promoters examined these applications, and did not permit themselves to doubt the respectability of the parties. Then Thomas Match, Esq., of Piccadilly, wanted fifty shares; Tollemache Towneley, Esq., of Pall Mall, would be obliged by an allotment of seventy-five. How cheerfully the secretary filed these applications! How merrily the members of the Board talked over the extensive manufactory they would open over the water!

It was determined, that in consequence of the great influx of applications, the time allowed for further applications should be shortened. The shares applied for already amounted to three hundred thousand pounds in value. A day was appointed, beyond which no application would be received; and on that day the letters were poured into the office of the happy promoters. Now, the success of the undertaking was beyond a doubt. Alas! how slily did that seedy gentlemen grin, who appeared at the offices

the day before the directors allotted the shares ! He wanted to know whether or not the directors were prepared to buy up their own letters of allotment.

'Bless me!' replied the secretary, 'my good man, our business is not to buy our shares, but to sell them. *We* buy shares! That's very good! No, Sir, good morning.' And chuckling very merrily, the secretary turned his back upon the applicant. The seedy man said he would call again in a day or two, and departed.

How heartily Lord Ballyshannon, the worthy chairman of the company, laughed, when the secretary described the applicant and his enquiry. It was a great joke. *We* buy their own shares!

With great ceremony the Board proceeded to allot. It was really heart-breaking to see the excellent men whose applications they (the Board) were compelled to refuse. Yet it could not be helped—the applications were so very numerous. They could afford Captain Bluebill, of Tanglebury Hall, only one hundred and fifty of the three hundred applied for; the great silk merchant, Benjamin Button, of Clapham, who was eager for two hundred, could not possibly have more than one hundred and twenty-five. The public had apparently conspired to heap riches upon this most fortunate, this most promising company. But then, everybody said the thing would be a great success from the first. It was to supply a want, long felt throughout the country.

Four days were given to the happy applicants who had shares allotted to them, to pay up their deposits—four days only, and then would arrive the golden day, when the directors would be able to draw a cheque for the purchase-money of the invention.

Two days after the clerks had poured three bagfuls of allotment letters into Her Majesty's Post Office, the seedy gentleman once more made his appearance at the office of the prosperous company. On this occasion he had business of some importance to transact; and must see the secretary. The secretary condescended to give the applicant an audience—just to humour the fellow.

'Now, sir, do you wish to buy any letters?'

'My good man, I don't understand you,' replied the secretary.

'Any letters of allotment?'

'Letters of allotment! I am still more perplexed!'

'Well, then, let me tell you, sir, there are plenty to be had—and at sixpence per share.' The seedy gentleman smiled with great condescension upon the secretary. The secretary looked very foolish. The applicant drew a dirty bundle from his pocket, and continued:

'Look here, sir; here are four hundred and thirty shares I have bought at four pence per share.'

'Dear me, let me look at them!'

'O dear no: buy them, and you may do what you please with them. There are plenty of them in the market; and if you want any paid upon, I should advise you to buy them up as fast as possible."

'I cannot understand this: we allotted only to persons of the first respectability.'

'You allotted to a great many stags sir, I can tell you,' replied the seedy individual. 'Now I venture to assert sir, that unless you buy up these letters upon the market, you will not have a five-pound note paid into your bankers. Everybody who intends to pay, goes to see how the shares are upon the market, first; and if they see letters of allotment being hawked about for a few shillings, they'll not pay up. Why, it was only the other day that the Great Timbuctoo Mining Company got up thirty thousand pounds in two days. And how did they do it? Sir, they bought up any letter of allotment at any price that was offered in the market; they gave commissions to brokers to buy shares even at a premium; and so the shares were quoted at two premium on the list, and everybody rushed to the bank to pay in. Why, to-day I was offered a letter for a hundred of your shares, for half-a-crown!"

'You surprise me,' the bewildered secretary exclaimed. 'But how do these letters get into the hands of men who hawk them about?'

'They write for them. Didn't you have any stag-books when you allotted?'

'Stag-books! No. What *are* stag-books?'

'I see, sir, you have much to learn in these matters.'

This observation roused the secretary's indignation, and he began to entertain an idea that he had been duped by his informant.

'Sir,' said the secretary, with a grand air, 'we do not wish to have the knowledge you seem to possess. The Patent Corkscrew Company is not the Great Timbuctoo Mining Company. I wish you good morning. We do *not* wish to purchase letters of allotment.'

'Very well, sir,' replied the seedy gentleman, with a jaunty air, 'you will have a different story this day next week. I shall sell these at any price, and then you'll see how many you'll have taken up.' With this threat the seedy individual left the astonished secretary.

When the board met that afternoon, the directors did not look quite so gay as on former occasions. The secretary's account was not a cheerful one; and, after due deliberation, it was agreed that one of the clerks should be sent into the market to buy up a letter for one hundred and fifty shares, at the current price. Armed with this power, the clerk was not long in transacting his business. He soon returned with one hundred and fifty shares, which he had bought for seven shillings. The letter of allotment was handed to the noble chairman, who read the name, the honoured name, of Captain Bluebill. Could the owner of Tanglebury Hall stoop to this?

Three days after this purchase had been made, the seedy individual made his appearance a third time at the offices of the Patent Corkscrew Company. He saw how matters stood, at a glance. Everybody was dull. Directors were whispering together in couples; the clerks were making up their minds to secure their salaries; the secretary was drawing out advertisements for another situation.

'How much do you say has been paid into the bank, Mr Secretary?' asked the noble chairman.

'Forty-two pounds; neither more nor less, my lord.'

'That's a bore,' said his lordship, as he twirled his moustache.

At this moment the secretary recognised the seedy individual. He had a book under his arm—a stag-book belonging to the Timbuctoo Mining Company. The secretary asked the seedy individual to take a chair, and then introduced him to the directors. These gentlemen clustered about the possessor of the stag-book, and begged to look at it.

'Will you give me a list of the applicants to whom you have allotted?' This request was at once complied with. The seedy individual then set to work.

'In the first place, allow me to inform you, gentlemen, that Captain Bluebill, of Tanglebury Hall; Mr. Button, of Clapham; and the Admiral are one and the same person—one Samuel Brown, who lives at a coffee-shop somewhere in the Borough.' After a few minutes' further examination, the seedy individual showed the directors that all the great names upon which they relied were forged; and that the stags who forged them made arrangements with the servants at the great houses to which their forgeries were addressed, for the letters to be sent back to them. Thus the honourable Board of the Patent Corkscrew Company found themselves with liabilities amounting to about six hundred pounds, and, as the result of applications for three hundred thousand pounds' worth of stock, with forty-two pounds in the hands of their bankers.

The seedy individual now strongly advised the Board to extend the time of payment, by public advertisement; meanwhile to buy up all the letters in the market, and to commission brokers to buy shares. This advice was adopted, and the seedy individual was employed to buy up. In a few days, the market was cleared; the brokers created a demand for the shares by purchasing them at the bidding of the directors—in other words, by rigging the market—and the end of it was, that the Company scratched together two or three thousand pounds.

It was found that they might with the aid of a few stags, contrive to scramble to complete registration. The steps were wanted to enable them to comply with the Act, which declared that one-fourth of the capital must be subscribed for, before complete registration could be granted.

And in this the stags were useful—since they readily wrote their names upon the deed, for a few shillings.

Of the permanent prospects of the Patent Corkscrew Company it is not easy to form an estimate. Some people say it will do well, some people say it will wind up in a few months. All I know is that they have not yet produced a corkscrew, and that their lawyer's bill is as long as their board room table."

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted the jovial Horrocks.

"That's my contribution"—said Mr. Seesaw—throwing down his paper upon the table. "Don't ask me for another, that's all. It doesn't pay."

The Master bowed profoundly to ungracious Seesaw; and offered him a pipe of very fragrant tobacco. "I call it," said the Master—"I call it—it is so sweet—Lady's Breath."

CHAPTER VIII.

"There was a roystering wight resting under the snug eaves of the Crutch, upon whom the Master had long entertained designs. It was necessary, so thought the jocund ruler of the Crutch, to enliven their readings. They must have sparkling wine occasionally. And from whom could they hope for sparkle, if Brother Enough, of the sunny face, could not give it to them.

"I write! ha! ha!" cried Enough; and he laughed as though the Master had made the best joke in the world. As the Master grew serious, Enough still laughed, louder and louder. But he, finally, agreed to carry the joke into practice.

"I can just flirt about a place—some place I have seen, perhaps," said the jolly Brother. And then he laughed again. His laugh was music to his Brethren. When any Brother asked how the work proceeded, Enough grew greatly hilarious. Then he would suddenly assume a very responsible, solemn look; and vow that the author must *look* wise at any rate. A playful child of sixty; his white hair reminded me of spring snowdrops, not of winter's frost.

The ninth reading at the Crutch came in due time. Brother Enough danced into his seat; and there was sunshine upon all faces. His happy nature warmed all who came within its influence.

"Here's a bit of experience, of the years gone by, you know; told in my own odd way. Well—it's true:—I can say that for it. It is addressed to

"PERSONS ABOUT TO MARRY.

"The same Gretna Green:—before the ruthless law fell with desolating hand upon that romantic village." You see I begin graphically, thus:—

"I leave Carlisle early this fine morning, in no way matrimonially inclined. I set out to explore the recesses of Gretna Green with perfect confidence. This confidence is the result of two facts. The first, that I am a married man; the second, that bigamy is impossible, since I have no lady with me. Through dark boglands, and past prim fir-plantations, the train whisks me to the station, the name of which an unpoetical station-porter shouts into railway carriages, without a thought of the flutter into which it throws a young lady deeply veiled, who is sitting in the first-class compartment nearest the engine. I, a married man with a houseful of children, hear the word 'Gretna' with no kind of emotion; but two fellow-passengers are ready to bless the only official who announces the arrival of the train at the charméd spot. Yet I do feel a kind of nervous interest in the place. I think of the scenes which have been acted here; of the fathers who have stamped furiously upon this classic ground; of the trembling girls who have hurried hence across the Border, and to the famous Hall, to dream of unclouded happiness shining upon every step of the way, from that spot to their distant grave. I think of the cunning lovers who used to engage all the post-horses of Carlisle, so that their pursuers might not reach them before the marriage ceremony was over; of the impudent impositions of the Carlisle postboys; of the determined lover who shot the horses of his pursuer from the carriage window; and of other memorable matters with which Gretna is associated in the minds of most of us. If there be a touch of poetry in my present reflections, that touch is speedily effaced by the spirit of competition that arises before me. A couple, evidently bent upon matrimony, though they are making painful efforts to

appear at their ease, and to regard the place with a placid indifference, are addressed eagerly by one or two men of common appearance. Are these individuals making offers for the conveyance of the couple's luggage? The station-man looks on at the warm conference, with a sardonic grin; and, with a quick twitch of the head, draws the attention of the guard to the interesting group. The train goes forward, and the conference breaks up. One of the men conducts the lady and gentleman to a little red-brick hotel close by; and the others retire discontentedly. I inquire about this rivalry, and am informed that it is a clerical contest. And here I am made party to a curious local secret. This little red-brick hotel is the property of Mr. Murray. Mr. Murray also inhabits the famous toll-bar which is on the Scotch bank of the little stream that marks the borders of the country. Thus this sagacious toll-keeper pounces upon the couples at the station; removes them to his 'Gretna Hotel,' and then drives them down a narrow lane, and over the bridge to the toll bar, where he marries them. In this way it appears Murray has contrived to monopolise five-sixths of the trade matrimonial. It should be observed, however, by persons about to marry, that there is a Gretna station, and a Gretna Green station; and that the latter is the point which deposits happy couples opposite Gretna Hall. However, as I am altogether ignorant of the superior convenience of the 'Green' station, I may be pardoned the mistake, which makes a walk, in a dense shower of rain, through slippery lanes, a necessity. I advance briskly, however; pass the famous toll-bar, near which a bluff Scotch ploughboy is yoking horses to a waggon, and presently approach the Green. It is a pretty place enough, but very quiet and very muddy just now. The Green is a triangular patch of ragged turf, in front of the village church. The church is rather dirty and neglected in its appearance, than old; and from the roof hangs a stout cord, which is attached to the bell, and is now lazily rocking to and fro in the breeze. Children of various sizes, and in indescribable costumes, stare at me from various cottage-doors. It is evident that I am taken for a young man bent upon marriage. I turn to the left, and

through a gateway, to the Hall. It is evident that no marriage is going forward to-day. Desolate, and thoroughly soaked with rain, appears the large square house, flanked on one side by a farm-yard. I advance, under cover of some tall trees, to the front door. It is closed and barred. I give a perfectly metropolitan double knock. In a few minutes a man—rather a surly man, I think—begins—leisurely, to withdraw the bolts. Seeing me alone, he looks a little surprised—perhaps disappointed. I begin to feel that I ought to apologise for coming without a lady. I boldly ask whether I can breakfast at the Hall. The man does not oblige me with a direct answer; but pointing to the right, growls that he will send somebody to me, and disappears.

I advance into a long low room. It is a curious mixture of a village tap-room, with the pretensions of an hotel. At one end a massive sideboard displays a quantity of valuable plate; over the mantel-piece is an engraving after Turner; but, to the left of this production, is one of those compositions which, about a century ago, were admired in all the country villages of England, Scotland, and Ireland. A woman with a crimson lake face is looking, with a blotched expression of affection, upon a child whose head seems to have dropped casually, upon shoulders made for some other infant, and the colour of whose frock run into various surrounding objects. This production bears the following touching couplet:—

> 'Come, father's hope, and mother's glory,
> Now listen to a pretty story.'

I am hardly convinced that I am in the celebrated Gretna Hall till I have read the directions to visitors, which are pasted upon the looking-glass. 'Please not to write on the walls, windows, or shutters, &c.' Having read this direction I am convinced that I have reached a place where many curious countrymen have been before me. I turn to the windows, and at once recognise the necessity for the request. Every pane is covered with names, sorry jests, and revelations of ages, professions, and other matters. W. Thorborne, of Manchester, has, I

find, left his celebrated name, coupled with the inference that he possesses, or did possess, a diamond ring, upon one window, in company with S. Goodacre of Liverpool. But G. Howell, also of Liverpool, has recorded his visit to the Hall in two or three different places, lest the interesting fact should be lost to posterity.

Upon one window I find this instructive sentence:—'John Anderson made a fool of himself in Gretna, 1831.' It is information also that 'Sally Norton, late Sally Western,' has been here, and that the fame of the place has attracted hither 'Jane Stordy, of Stanway.' A greasy book, in shape like a ledger, marked 'Visitors' Book,' lies upon the window-sill. Many pages have been torn away; so that the only records it now contains date back only to last October. The entries consist of a series of very melancholy jokes. The first remarkable name I notice is that of Maria Manning, to which name some obliging historian has subsequently added the words, 'hanged since.' 'Brick, from London,' is the next entry, and he is followed by an 'Early Closing Quadrill Party.' It strikes me as a pity that before forming a 'Quadrill' party, the party did not form a spelling class. I next find that a wit of the North has recorded his visit in these words: 'David Rae, thief-catcher, Dumfries;' and that a lady has been carried away by the high spirits of the foregoing, to this extent: 'Mrs. Grimalkin (to be Mrs. Gabriel Grub)'—Here I am interrupted by the entrance of a widow, who announces herself as the relict of the late parson of the Hall, Mr. Linton. She offers me a substantial breakfast, and while it is preparing, is not disinclined to answer any questions I may put on the subject of the matrimonial trade. Of course, thinking with the rest of my countrymen that Gretna Green marriages are of rare occurrence now-a-days, I begin by asking how long it is since the last marriage was celebrated at the Hall. The old lady very quietly turns to her maid, who is laying the breakfast cloth, and says:—'Was it Tuesday or Monday last, that couple came?'

The maid, holding a substantial joint of cold meat in her hand, while she thinks the subject over, replies presently, 'Monday.'

I am surprised, and inform Mr. Linton's widow that it was my impression Gretna marriages were quite matters of the past. She assures me, in reply, that they have a good sprinkling still throughout the year; but not so many as twenty or thirty years ago, when her husband first began. She disappears for a few minutes. Ha! here she comes, with some heavy substance carefully tied up in an old silk handkerchief. She deposits her load upon the table (having previously brushed the place), deliberately arranges her massive spectacles, and now carefully unties her treasure. Two gaudily-bound books lie before me; I am about to open them eagerly, but the widow of Mr. Linton will not allow the volumes to suffer any desecrating touch. She gently repulses my hand, and carefully opens the thickest. The thin volume is an index to the thick one, which is a formal register of the marriages celebrated at the Hall. The entries, however, only reach back to 1826; yet the list includes many celebrated names. The widow proudly points to one or two German dukes, to Miss Penelope Smith and her princely betrothed, to the well-known name of Sheridan, to Lady Adela Villiers and her husband. Against all the notable couples, distinguishing marks are placed. Having shown me these signatures, the old lady carefully spreads out the silk handkerchief, upon which I find a rude map of England is printed, re-covers her treasure, and holds it securely in her arms while she continues to talk to me. She tells me that, in times gone by, it was by no means unusual to give the Gretna Green parson as much as one hundred pounds; and that fifty pounds, even lately, was not an uncommon marriage-fee. The parson charges according to the ostensible means of the contracting parties. 'Old Lang' was the regular village parson before the late Mr. Linton began. Mr. Linton confined his attention entirely to marrying runaway couples. She knows nothing about the blacksmith, and doesn't believe such a man ever married couples. As far as she knows, these kind of marriages began to be celebrated at Gretna about one hundred years ago.

I express a wish to see the room in which the marriages

at the Hall are celebrated. The widow of Mr. Linton directs me down a long passage, past two cases of stuffed owls, to a long room fitted up with some care; and from the bow-windows of which there is a picturesque view of the village. It is a quaint room. Over the doorway stands a huge model of a ship. The pictures exhibit an odd taste. On the one side is a painting, in which Cupid and Venus are represented; and opposite, are two large pieces of canvas, covered with horsemen, in the vigorous pursuit of the fox; upon which scenes, the placid countenance of a Quaker is serenely gazing. The bow-window is marked with the initials of various captains—the captains, I remark, strangely predominate among the visitors. Opening by a door from this room, is the bridal chamber, fitted up luxuriously with yellow satin-damask hangings. Even here, the English habit of scrawling upon furniture is indulged. I open the looking-glass drawer, and herein find these inscriptions:—'Thomas Parker to Mother Walmsley,' 'Joseph Lee to Betty Booth.'

Strangely interested in the peculiarities of the Hall, I return to the breakfast-table. I find that sentiment has not preyed upon my appetite. I do perfect justice to the fine haddock and the exquisite marmalade provided by the widow of Mr. Linton. But I am so amused with this village, that I think I will take a stroll, and return to dine at the Hall. I intimate this intention to the maid, and emerge upon the green, determined to know something more of Gretna and its marriage-trade.

A dirty road, hedged by cottages, leads to the village, which is within the same parish as Gretna, and is called Springfield. This village is larger than its more famous neighbour; the houses are bigger, there is more apparent life, and it boasts two or three inns. It appears to me highly probable that at one of these inns I shall hear much quaint gossip about Gretna marriages. I enter the most inviting. The kitchen at once forcibly reminds me of one of Wilkie's village sketches. Even the details of the scene suggest the pencil of the great Scotchman. The solid black chairs placed under the overhanging chimney; the huge black pot suspended by a powerful crane over the

fire; the mud floor; the old clock in a rude case; the milk-pails in a row upon the shelf; the limited crockery of the establishment proudly arranged in a cupboard, the door of which is intentionally open. The figures, too, are Wilkie's. Before the window is a cutting-board, upon which sits—her pretty feet dangling in the air—the village dressmaker. As I advance towards the fire, I notice the figure of a young Scot (with his broad bonnet) who is turning over the leaves of a very greasy song-book—but is chiefly occupied casting furtive glances at the young lady upon the cutting-board. These are obviously lovers, and I am obviously no welcome intruder. However, the landlord, a broad squat man, with much to say about his ale, puts a cheerful face upon matters, and stands ready to furnish anything I may request in the shape of refreshment. I order a glass of whiskey, and hope the landlord will drink one with me. My invitation is accepted. I think I may now fairly open the question of Gretna—or rather Springfield—marriages. I ask, by way of jest, whether mine host has ever married stray couples. The girl behind me titters, and the father laughs at my simplicity. 'Married any? Ay, a many of them, in this very room; and fine folk, too!'

Twirling a willow stick in his hand, and kicking his heels against the legs of a table upon which he is sitting, mine host gossips, as nearly as I can follow him, in this wise:—

'Ay! there have been a many marriages in this room. Lord Erskine was married where I am sitting—in woman's clothes; his lady held her children under her cloak the while. The people who come to be married now are mostly poor people—a great many of them from Edinburgh. They can as easily be married anywhere in Scotland; somehow they come here: the place is known for it, I suppose. But here comes Lang; he will be able to tell you more than I can.'

A spare old man, dressed, not as a simple villager, but with a pretension to gentility and to a clerical simplicity, hobbles into the room, rubbing his left leg vigorously. He is suffering an acute attack of rheumatism; yet this does not prevent him from taking his seat at a little round

table, and accepting the tumbler of whiskey which I offer him. He refuses, I notice, to spoil the spirit by the admixture of water; but continues, even when seated, to rub vigorously the calf of his leg. He apprehends at once that his experience as a parson is to be pumped from him; and he gives himself up cheerfully to the operation. He seems to know that he is an object of curiosity to all visitors, and is, therefore, not particularly flattered by the interest I appear to take in him. Of course I ask him, as an opening question, whether there is any truth in the blacksmith legend. To my astonishment, I find that the blacksmith is utterly unknown in these parts. There stands the landlord expressing unfeigned surprise. He who had lived all his life here, has never heard of the blacksmith!

'Ay, to be sure!' continues Parson Lang—vigorously rubbing his leg the while—'Old Colthard, as far as I can tell, was the first regular Gretna Green parson. He flourished somewhere about one hundred and twenty years ago. He was either a regular blacksmith or a nailer—I cann't say which. His old house is pulled down, now; it used to stand on the ground where the school now stands, or close there.' I show particular interest in the parson's narrative, which amuses the girl upon the cutting-board and her sly lover with his greasy song book. I ask Lang whether he can trace the parsons—that is to say, the regular parsons—from Colthard down to himself.

Still vehemently rubbing his leg, Parson Lang continues: 'To be sure I can. After Colthard—let me see—came Pasley and Elliot, who both flourished together: Pasley was my father's uncle. Then came my father, old Parson Lang as they called him. He lived at the Hall, and married people in the busy days of Gretna Green. After him, I came:' which advent appears to the parson to constitute the climax of the curious history. 'But,' he goes on statistically, 'weddings continued to increase up to the year 1833, when, I should say, they amounted to three hundred or thereabouts. After that they fell off. They now average about one hundred a-year.'

I make an unfortunate allusion when I enquire

whether Parson Lang is in the habit of officiating at the Hall.

'No,' the parson replies, rubbing his leg with great vehemence, and indulging in a sarcastic smile; 'no, no; I have nothing to do with the Hall; there they seem to think a shoemaker, who lives opposite, can marry as well as anybody else.'

I see at once that this is a sore point with the parson. I change the topic by asking whether the villagers of Springfield and Gretna are married at the Hall, or by Parson Lang. This question highly amuses the lovers, who interchange significant glances. 'Oh dear, no!' Parson Lang replies; 'I have been married twice, but was always asked in church; so are all hereabouts. I hardly know how Gretna first came to be celebrated for marriages; but I have heard some story like—once a queen was returning to England from Scotland with an army. Well, the soldiers were followed by a number of women who were in love with them, to the border hereabouts; and then, when they were to part with them, they all set a-greeting, which means crying; and this, folks say, gave the village the name of Greta or Gretna Green. However the queen was so touched by the distress of the women, that she made the officers act on the spot as parsons, and marry the women at once to the soldiers; and then they all went to the south together.'

The parson now begins to philosophise a little about the facilities offered in Scotland to persons about to marry; and intersperses his theories with many illustrative anecdotes. But whenever I touch upon the subject of fees, he is discreetly silent. He seems to admit that they vary considerably; I suspect from a silver coin and a glass of whiskey, to a bank-note of considerable value. He remembers that, only two years ago, a waiter at the chief Carlisle hotel, got married, at short intervals, to three of his fellow-servants; that, to this day, the fellow has been allowed to go unpunished, and that he has returned to his first love. Having gleaned these facts from Parson Lang, I begin to think about my dinner at the Hall. The parson condescends to shake hands with me, the eyes of the lovers

sparkle as they see me rise to depart, and the landlord, as I pass into the road, bids me a hearty farewell.

The widow of Mr. Linton has prepared me a very snug dinner. While I am enjoying it, she brings me a copy ot the forms filled up by the persons who are married at her establishment. While I proceed with my salmon, the reader may amuse himself with the document. Here is a literal copy of it:—

KINGDOM OF SCOTLAND.

COUNTY OF DUMFRIES,

PARISH OF GRETNA.

These are to Certify to all to whom these Presents may come, That , from the parish of , in the county of , and , from the parish of , in the county of , being now here present, and having declared themselves single persons, were this day Married, agreeable to the Laws of Scotland, as witness our hands.

Gretna Hall, this day of

Witnesses {

I find that excellent cigars are obtainable at the Hall. I attribute this to the fact that captains generally smoke. Provided with many suggestive facts, I take leave of the late parson's establishment, not dissatisfied with the method with which his disconsolate widow carries on her business. Gretna Hall—the ancestral seat of the Maxwells—has only recently ceased to be licensed to sell marriage contracts; I can assure persons not about to marry, the Hall will provide an excellent dinner for those prosaic visitors who do not pretend to live upon love altogether.

I hear the railway bell."——

"Thank you Brother" cried the Master. "But the Green has lost its glory."

"When I was there it was all sunshine" cried Enough.

"Let this be a night of experiences," said the Master; "and I turn to Brother Sands, for a little note he has made,

I know, of some remarkable races, which are held close at home.

Sands twitched his little manuscript nervously from under his gown; bowed round the table, and announced his title—

"SMITHFIELD RACES.

"Keen lovers of the glories of the turf are not to be dejected by a foggy morning. Friday opened with a cutting north-east wind, a grey sky, and a heavy atmosphere; but our glass stood at fair weather (the works having been removed, as we afterwards ascertained, by a high-spirited boy, then home for the holidays); so we assumed our sporting attire, and sallied forth, light at heart, for the enjoyments of the day. Everybody knows that the road to the races is usually enjoyed more keenly than the contests of the horses upon the course; and on this occasion the journey was not altogether a dull one. Omnibuses, loaded with well-pomatumed clerks, were crawling along the way; a few carriages, filled with 'nobs,' were here and there hemmed in by the equipages of our turf friends; and sparkling dialogues of a technical nature, as to the skill and appearance of all parties, were going forward briskly. It was a happy sight, however, to notice the real sporting boys on their way to the races, in turn-outs of various degrees of elegance. In the Blackfriars Road, particularly, the sight was one to thrill the pulses with delight. Here we noticed many animals that appeared to have undergone a severe training in omnibuses and other hackney vehicles: but some of the donkeys looked fresh, though we were afraid that the choice 'spirits' who were mounted upon them, were working them a little too fast, before reaching the ground. As the day advanced, and we neared Smithfield Racecourse (the scene of so many glories!) the clouds cleared off; and, encouraged, in all probability, by the appearance of the sun, considerable numbers of the fair sex (apples and herrings having been removed from their private trucks for the occasion) made their appearance, seated upon these elegant open vehicles,

and advanced rapidly in the direction of the exciting scene. On we went, at a splitting pace—down the Blackfriars Road:—to the New Cut we have now come again—we have reached the Bridge—crossed Fleet Street—and now, at a tremendous pace, we pass the varied beauties of Farringdon Street, and enter the spacious and delightful Smithfield—the sacred ground of the City!

The scene that met our enraptured sight was one of the liveliest description. All was gaiety—life! Near the Hospital of St. Bartholomew, a considerable trade in choice delicacies was briskly going forward. The more robust were manifesting a partiality for particularly juicy mutton-pies; and throwing occasional glances of ill-suppressed contempt at the dandies of the scene, who were flirting with the effeminate periwinkle. Gentlemen, very properly bent upon showing due attention to the gentler portion of creation, were seen to reserve a quantity of the drink, of which they had made themselves proprietors, and before handing the bright vessel, out of which their faces had recently emerged, to the nearest lady, to pass the cuff of their coat vigorously round its rim. In and near the drinking-booths, commonly called public-houses, the shouts of happy laughter sounded upon the enraptured ear. Knots of excited turf-men were eagerly balancing the virtues of various horses. As yet, however, we could see only groups of the gay visitors—the imposing length of the course was still beyond our sight. We advanced rapidly; and in a few minutes we had a noble *coup d'œil* of the entire course. Across the noble field of Smith a line was formed, flanked on either side by specimens of the 'noble animal,' so handsomely commended by Mavor in his memorable Spelling-book. From the point we had now reached, we could observe upon the character of every animal.

The various virtues of the noble steeds defy particular description; but to show the liberal spirit in which the proceedings were conducted, it is as well to state at once that the races were open to horses of twenty years old and upwards. The loss of an eye did not incapacitate an animal from appearing on the course; broken knees were

peculiarities that did not excite close attention; and lameness was only a subject for comment, when of a serious nature. All these ills to which horseflesh is heir, were fully and picturesquely developed by the animals entered for Smithfield Races. When we first arrived upon the ground, the gentlemen of the turf were engaged in the examination of the mouths, knees, and hoofs of the heroes of the day. Much money (of a copper currency) appeared to be changing hands, and many horses changed owners. Blind Tom, the property of Mr. Jem Toddles, of Fly Court, Walworth, whose exploits in that gentleman's cart are too well known to need recapitulation, was transferred to Mr. Scrubb, of Cow Lane, for the extraordinary sum of fifty shillings. We have no doubt that we shall shortly hear of Blind Tom again. Rumour, indeed, says that he is entered at a suburban pound for a considerable sum already. We always predicted great things of him. He certainly did his work at Smithfield, trotting the entire length of the course with ease—having only one man behind to urge him, and one to his head to pull—in less than a quarter of an hour. In his backing, however, lies his great strength, particularly when in harness.

It would be impossible, within reasonable limits, to particularise the exploits of all the animals on this glorious day; we must therefore content ourselves with noting down one or two of the more wonderful feats. Blind Tom had hardly been trotted away by his new owner, when a discussion began among the gentlemen of the course, as to the courage of the Camberwell Roarer. It was said by his zealous champion that he had trotted easily from Covent Garden to Rye Lane, with half a ton of potatoes at his heels, in less than forty minutes; whereas his opponents obstinately persisted in an assertion that his lame off leg would make such an accomplishment impossible. Hereupon his owner explained that the Roarer was lame in three legs, and that when he first started on a journey the off fore leg was stiff and made him limp; but that when he got warm this stiffness wore off, and then the two hinder legs began to trouble him; so that the animal must be used to these little inconveniences, and could probably do as much as

more showy beasts. We took an unprejudiced view of the Roarer, and observed that he had been well broken—especially about the knees. His most vindictive slanderers could not have said that he was overloaded with flesh. The discussion as to his merits and defects grew hot, and many emphatic compliments were interchanged by the parties at issue. That disagreeable compound known as 'wholesome truth' was bandied about without the slightest reserve; and curious legal points, as to how many times each party had transgressed the laws of his country, were graphically and pointedly raised. At last it was decided that the animal should show his quality.

His proud owner laid aside his short pipe, and proceeded to tug at the Roarer's head. Seeing that this single effort was not productive of any astonishing locomotion, an experienced bystander was kind enough to recommend the application of a stick—a recommendation which was promptly and energetically acted upon. This happy combination of incentives induced the Roarer to clear his stall, and display his proportions upon the course. Without more delay than that usually necessary for the conscientious administration of a preliminary cudgelling, the Roarer left the starting-point. He went as easily forward as the lameness in his fore-leg would allow him. Gentlemen betted familiar measures of malt and hops on his chances of surviving the day's proceedings; but, being continually reminded by the repeated threats of his owner that it was the time to display his prowess, the Roarer contrived, at more than one point, to break into a trot; shaking his entire anatomy. Without relenting for a moment, however, the Roarer's owner dogged his heels with an upraised stick, at every jerk of which the hind-quarters of the animal sank. The Roarer fetched no less than sixty shillings, including a stipulated supply of beer to be paid for by the fortunate purchaser, for the consumption of the late owner; who was supposed to be depressed by the loss of his noble property.

Considerable excitement was caused at a late period of the day, by the appearance of Solemn Joe upon the course. This jet-black steed was a particular favourite. His pace

was not so remarkable for its speed as for its evenness. He still held his head erect, and preserved all the grace of his fine contour. It was reported by malicious detractors that Joe was a bay mare that had tried 'our infallible hair-dye' only once. He was to be disposed of without reserve; his owner having relinquished the performance of funerals, and entered upon the more cheerful business of pastry-cook. Solemn Joe fetched the extraordinary sum of five pounds—a false tail being thrown into the bargain. His sire was a famous trotter in his time (as a sporting 'nob' of Smithfield confidentially informed us); and his hoofs were, after his death, carved into snuff-boxes by his grateful owner. Solemn Joe was bought by Mr. Muggins, of Clerkenwell (who had the funeral of a highly genteel 'party' on hand, and wished to create an impression in the neighbourhood), and left the ground attached to the tail-board of his new master's cart.

Other horses figured prominently in the day's sport; and it would be possible to lengthen out our notice of the scene considerably, but we prefer to enlarge upon the most interesting incidents, and to omit altogether those which would not interest the sporting world generally. The liberal minds that preside over Smithfield Races, seeing, as all enlightened men must see, that the turf is one of the most valuable institutions of this great country, and feeling that its privileges should be extended to all classes of the community, have opened their lists, not only to horses, without regard to their age, or to their personal disabilities; but also to the donkey. Hence the owners of horses—as Mr. Jem Toddles—are confronted and compelled to mix with the less fortunate possessors of that animal, libelled in the popular song, which has poetically imagined, for many years, the extreme case that 'it wouldn't go.'

We made our way to the arena—a remote corner of the ground—set aside for the exhibition of asinine prowess. Here we at once recognised many of the ladies whom we had noticed on the road, still seated upon their open vehicles; engaged, in some instances, in the vigorous administration of summary punishment to their offspring, or testing with an undisguised relish, the excellence of the

neighbouring beer-taps. The expressions of admiration that burst from the lips of the bystanders when, after severe castigation, and a few suggestive hints from a pointed stick, a donkey attained to a canter; the firmness with which certain of the animals refused to move a leg; the choice vocabulary and the keen faces of the boys who had donkies for disposal; are the prominent points of the donkey scene that occur to us at the present moment.

But the road home claims a short description. Horses of every kind, dejected by every species of ailment, afflicted with the most varied action, and presenting the most melancholy contrasts, moved away at the back of carts—were led slowly by serious purchasers—were mounted by daring urchins, whom we expected to see divided into two equal pieces every time the animals trotted—or were harnessed in the most remarkable vehicles. Pushing their way amid these varieties of horse-flesh, donkeys were seen, urged by the blows of vigorous costermongers or their wives. The general conversation with which the various travellers endeavoured to enliven the journey, was of a technical character, which few sporting men would understand. Amid this din and bustle, we were forced to remain some time, in the course of which we learned that ten pounds is a high price for a horse bought at Smithfield Races. We also learned that the races were held at the risk of many lives and limbs of Her Majesty's liege subjects. We did *not* learn that the Police, co-operating with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, were the vigilant Stewards of the Course; but we should be very happy to receive the information. It is high time that the law of kindness were extended to the Brute creation—more brutally treated, but too often, in England, than is good for an Englishman's heart or an Englishman's pride."

"I volunteer a passage from my experiences—because it made a profound impression upon me at the time," said Brother Horrocks, directly Brother Sands had folded his paper. "It is not a sea yarn," added the volunteer. "I call it —

"RUINS WITH SILVER KEYS.

"We are on our way to inspect some fine historic ruins —they are Simpson's ruins. Through hop grounds, over hills, here and there affording pleasant glimpses of the sea, the road winds to the slope where the memorable battle of Pumkinfield was fought. Here a fine old king fell, and here a tyrant first made his footprint sink into the soil of England. Schoolboys are still shown terrible pictures of the battle. The village lies in the valley, near the ruins of the Abbey founded by the conqueror of Pumpkinfield, to celebrate his victory.

We know all about the ruins. We have read of the terrible deeds that have been done there. We are prepared to shudder in the *debris* of the dungeons. We ask what manufacture is carried on in the village;—in reply people point to the ruins. The few grey stones support the village folk:—the children are learned in the relics of the battle-field. Simpson and Pumpkinfield are the two rallying cries of the village. Simpson is a considerable man in his county. It is asserted that he ought to be a baronet. A solemn whisper travels about that he is the rightful heir to a certain peerage. His name is now inseparably connected with Pumkinfield. There is an air of antiquity about the place, however, which we are inclined to enjoy without hearing anything about Simpson. The mind is forcibly carried back to the time when Pumpkinfield was strewn with dead warriors; and then to the period when sallow monks cooled their shorn heads perhaps under the very oaks that now shadow us. We are beginning to feel that really and truly Hume and Smollett's History is not a fiction. We should hardly be surprised to clear the clash of the battle-axe, and the whistle of an arrow, with death on its point.

On alighting before the great village hostelry, we are informed that, as a preliminary to our visit to the ruins, we must have an interview with the postmaster. We have no objeccion to an interview with this official; if it is his ambition to see all the strangers who come to wander

about a spot that is rife with the romance of history. Accordingly, we make our way to the post-office. We exchange salutations with the man in the shop, and declare our intention of exploring the ruins of the Abbey. We love ruins, for they recall the past—they assure us of the times gone by. We talk of the pleasure of dwelling upon old historic ground; and with pardonable vanity hint that we are intimately acquainted with the history and fortunes of the Abbey. Hereupon, the face of the post-office dealer saddens, we think; at all events, he asks abruptly the number of our party. We conclude, that Simpson is anxious to keep an exact account of the number of visitors to his property. We declare our party to consist of eight individuals, including three children. Forthwith two cards are placed in our hand, together with a guide; and in a sharp decided voice, that betrays no remorse—no twinge of conscience—we are informed that six shillings and sixpence is the sum required by the noble owner of the broken Abbey walls, before he will admit us. We may sneak in for five shillings and sixpence, if we refuse the guide book; but our young friends clamour for it, and we pay the entire sum demanded.

This payment alters the train of our reflections. A few questions to be put to Simpson, instantly rush to our mind. We experience an irresistible inclination to ask him how it is that he has not erected a high wall round the entire battle-field, and advertised—'The Field of the Battle of Pumpkinfield on View; entrance half-a-crown. The Abbey Ruins one shilling extra, including a peep at the Exhibitor's Drawing-room. Schools half-price.' This would be making the most of the property—or, at least of those historical associations which are its only attractions—which are *not* the property of the noble inhabitant of the modern Abbey, and wanting which, excursionists would never press the grass of Pumpkinfield. We try to reason ourselves into a good humour again; but no—the romance is fled, and we feel that we are on our way to Simpson's Exhibition.

Armed with the tickets, we have a sense of a critical

vocation, which refuses to depart from us. As we glance at the grey walls of the standing structure, we involuntarily look out for the check-taker's box. We expect to find placards pasted over the gothic gateway. We speculate as to the success of the show. We reflect that it can cost the speculator nothing for gas, to begin with. We tap the walls to assure ourselves that they are not painted canvas. As we approach the doorway, it falls back, and a portly female attendant, with palms exquisitely made to receive shillings, curtseys to us. We are about to ask whether our tickets admit us to the reserved seats—but we refrain in time. We think we hear a cry of 'Apples, oranges, and ginger-beer!' but it is only our vexed brain at work, after its particular fashion. We advance into the enclosed space.

On our left is a range of buildings—grey with the weather-beating of some hundred years—but forming no part of the original structure; indeed, not a stone of the hero of Pumpkinfield's building is now to be seen. We advance into the hall, which is remarkable for a bad painting of the battle of Pumkinfield, some portraits of the Simpson family, and a few Vandykes. Hence we are admitted to a room with a low vaulted roof, now carpeted and used as a drawing-room, where our antiquarian knowledge is enriched by the inspection of an Argand lamp at least a year old, and the undisturbed examination of a silver donkey with panniers. A sharp-eyed boy follows us about, close at our elbow, evidently to satisfy himself that our unholy fingers touch none of the Simpson jewellery. Under these flattering auspices, we leave the room, take no notice of the boy's expression, which has an unmistakeable pecuniary tendency; and depart from the building through the door from the hall, which is opened by a second official, with an equally greedy eye. Bits of ruin are scattered about the grounds; and finding that cloisters, the crypt, and the refectory remain to be inspected, we proceed on our way with the intention of thoroughly examining them. We have contrived to gain admittance to the enclosure with a six-shilling-and-sixpenny silver

key; but the ruins—all that is worth seeing—are separated from us by a door, which no official can open without another silver key, to be given to an authorised guide.

We are by no means at liberty to roam about the ruins alone, and at our leisure:—to think of the monkish days gone by:—to hold communion with the spirits of the past that dwell amid the lichen and the mould. No: we must follow a guide. We give him his silver key, and dog his heels. He is an old, grey man, with the marks of some sixty summers upon him. He seems to travel over the ground mechanically, and to halt before little odd relics with the precision of an automaton. He recalls the romances of the past with the enthusiasm of a speaking doll. He pauses near the stables of the owner, to show us the remains of a stone coffin, and points to the cutting in the stone shaped to receive a head; and then he hurries forward into the gardens of the Abbey. He walks into a space enclosed on three sides by crumbling walls pierced with unglazed apertures, like eyeless sockets: this is the refectory. We pass some fine cedars (to one of which a hammock is slung, and in it a luxurious gentleman lies at full length, smoking his cigar), and then we halt before some scattered stones, called the ruins of the Abbey church. As even the ground-plan of the building is hardly distinguishable, we hasten forward once more, and soon arrive at the cloisters and the crypt. Here we certainly find some very fine old arches spanning the space;—which space is filled with agricultural implements. Now we have seen all that remains of the Abbey of Pumpkinfield!

We are not impressed with our visit. The ruins are so far gone, that they have lost all claims to the picturesque, and are attractive only as the crumbling remnants of one of the greatest of those old mysterious abbeys, upon which the unscrupulous hand of the eighth Henry fell, in the sixteenth century. They are still visited, not because they have any claim upon the artist's eye, but because they are linked with the history of that past upon which our present has been raised. Associations that recall the struggles we have survived, the religious tyrannies we have vanquished, the grovelling superstitions that have been trodden under

foot, gather about these damp, grey stones, and are hardly scared away even by the frigid, systematic old showmen by whom they are introduced to visitors.

It must be confessed that we have a hearty dislike to approach ruins by means of silver keys. Our moral sense is offended. We feel that the scene of the battle of Pumpkinfield, and the Abbey raised to commemorate the struggle, belong to all Englishmen. The soil has its owner; and, may his crops be abundant; but to all of us belong the associations that draw pilgrims to it. The dawn of tyranny recalled by Pumpkinfield is not a memory dear to Englishmen; and the Abbey is not visited with the same feelings which attract the traveller to Runnymede; but it is the scene of one of the most important events that have happened on the island, and for this reason is the highway to it a well-beaten track. To whom, then, does the historic association belong? We apprehend, to all Englishmen, and not to the power that requires silver keys to open the Abbey ruins.

Undoubtedly the law is on the side of Simpson, and he is at liberty to hide the ruins from the public eye altogether; but it is hardly honourable to barter the associations which belong to all Englishmen—to turn a few paltry pence upon the popular recollection of a great Saxon struggle. We have not the pleasure of Simpson's acquaintance. We find that a Simpson was painted by Vandyke; but our visit to Pumpkinfield had no reference to this interesting discovery. In the early part of last century Simpson was a name unknown in Pumpkinfield. Simpson, therefore, has no historic halo flitting around him. His title to the soil and the ruins is, we are told, indisputable; and we also learn that he gave a round sum for the property; but then Simpson did not buy all the legends and all the romances which cling to the mossy granite, and attract pilgrims to his eleven-acre field, now burnished with sun-kissed corn.

Well, after all, Simpson only follows the example of his betters—for many of the historic relics of old England open only with silver keys; and many solemn peers of Belgravia are, in their respective counties, speculating showmen."

Hereupon followed an animated conversation on historic castles and show mansions, to which the public were admitted with silver keys. Lebord, who had been a great traveller in his day, vehemently denounced the greed exhibitions of which he had seen when he had made tours in provincial England. "There are dignified housekeepers," said he, "who take sovereigns only. There are great houses which levy a revenue for high servants, by showing the family portraits."

"Suppose we close with a little useful paper from our serious and statistical Brother Phœnix," the Master suggested.

"Statistics, ugh!" replied Horrocks; who was not in the habit of disguising his feelings.

"I agree with our worthy Master," from Brother Babbicomb; "the more cordially, because I have the pleasure of knowing something of the subject of my friend's communication."

Horrocks sulkily filled his pipe, and threw himself back in his chair—resigned and stern.

Brother Phœnix, without noticing the old sailor's ill-humour, announced that the title of his paper was—

"PROTECTED CRADLES."

The Brother read as follows:—

"When the child of the Lancashire or Yorkshire operative first sees the light, it is assailed by every possible disadvantage that can stunt its growth and enfeeble its intellect. It is disarmed for the battle of life at the threshold of existence,—its limbs are palsied by drugs, and deformed by careless nursing, sometimes by criminal nursing. The expence of providing for her family drives the mother to the factory, and leads to the employment of an ignorant hireling nurse, who, to earn a pittance with a minimum of trouble, journeys to the chemist's shop, and

purchases Godfrey's Cordial. With this notable mixture she returns to her charge, stupifies it, and so buys 'peace and quietness.' Gradually she finds that the Cordial has not the old effect,—that it is not strong enough; to remedy this, she adds a little laudanum, or, mayhap, some crude opium, to the mixture, and again is her charge as quiet, almost, as death. She extends her nursery; 'takes care of,' perhaps, eight or nine infants, and becomes a good customer to her neighbour, the chemist.

Indisputable facts prove the extent to which this system is adopted. Walking about Manchester and Birmingham, advertisements of 'Mothers' quietness,' 'Soothing Syrup,' arrest the attention at every turn. It is easy to perceive that the druggists are driving a good trade—that the quiet homes of the poor reek with narcotics. The Report of the Board of Health furnishes some appalling facts on this head. In Preston, twenty-one druggists sold, within the space of one week, no less a quantity than sixty-eight pounds of narcotics, nearly all of which were for the use of children; and the calculation of the quantity of Godfrey's Cordial sold in Preston, gave a weekly allowance of half an ounce to each family! Generally, Godfrey's Cordial is mixed in the proportion of one ounce and a half of pure laudanum to the quart;—and the stronger it is the faster it is sold. It may be had at public-houses and from general dealers, as well as at druggists'; and on market-days the people from the surrounding neighbourhoods regularly provide themselves with this 'mothers' comfort,' as they purchase other household provisions. About two thousand gallons of Godfrey's Cordial are sold in Manchester alone every year. Mr. F. C. Calvert, at a meeting at Manchester, once stated that in one chemist's shop in Deansgate, two hundred and fifty gallons were sold in the course of a year, the same quantity in a second shop, one hundred gallons per annum in another, the same quantity in a shop in Hulme, and twenty-five gallons each in two shops in Chorlton-on-Medlock.

These nurses, to whom the children of the factory people are entrusted, are either laundresses or superannuated crones. The more they drug the children

entrusted to them, the greater number they can undertake to manage. This consideration acts as a powerful incentive to drug.

That wholesale death is the result, is fully proved. Among the gentry in Preston, for instance, the average number of deaths of children under five years old was seventeen per cent.; among tradesmen, about thirty-eight per cent.; and among operatives, fifty-five per cent. Of every one hundred children born among the gentry, ninety-one reach their first year; eighty among the trading classes; and sixty-eight among the operatives. The vital statistics of Preston for six years show that no less than three thousand and thirty-four children were swept away before they had attained their fifth year, who, had they been the offspring of wealthy parents, would have survived that period of their childhood.

But of all the localities specified in the Return of the Board of Health, Ashton is the most fatal. The proportion of infant deaths in this Godfrey's stronghold is thirty-four per cent. In Nottingham it is thirty-three per cent.; in Manchester, thirty-two per cent.; Bolton, thirty-one per cent.; Leicester, Salford, and Liverpool, thirty per cent. These towns may be classed as the head-quarters of factory labour—the localities where mothers are away from their children from sunrise till after nightfall. In London the proportion of infant deaths is twenty-three per cent.; in Plymouth, twenty-one per cent.; and in Bath, Shrewsbury, and Reading, twenty-one per cent. In these places mothers generally attend to their own offspring. A vast proportion of the mortality in Manchester is that of children under the age to labour in the mills. More than forty-eight per cent. of the deaths in Manchester are those of sufferers under the age of five years; and more than fifty-five per cent. are under the age of ten years; while in the aggregate of purely rural districts the proportion is not more than thirty-three per cent. Dr. Charles Bell, in the course of a speech delivered in Manchester, at a meeting convened to consider the propriety of establishing Day-Nurseries in that town, stated, that 'thirty-eight per cent. of poor children died, who

would not die if they were properly attended to.' Mr. Clay's investigations showed, that, out of about eight hundred families of married men employed in the mills of Preston, the children living in each family averaged 2·7, dead, 1·6; and that seventy-six out of every hundred had died under five years of age. Yet this calculation does not give us a full conception of the ravages which death makes amongst the children of the poor; inasmuch as the investigator declares, that, of the eight hundred families he examined, only one hundred and thirty-three mothers appeared to be working.

We have adduced sufficient evidence, however, to prove two important facts; namely, that an extensive system of careless nursing and criminal drugging is pursued in the manufacturing towns of England; and that, amongst those classes by whom this system is carried on, the rate of mortality is thirty-eight per cent. higher than amongst those classes where children are properly clothed, fed, and cared for. Absence of sanatory precautions, insufficient food, and, in many cases, the nature of their employment, increase the rate of mortality amongst the artisan classes; but these, it would appear, from the mass of authentic evidence which lies before us, are influences of minor importance when taken in relation to the streams of laudanum and aniseed which stupify their childhood. Much has been lately written on the degeneration of race in our manufacturing towns. Many writers have placed this physical decline to the account of the loom; but it is fair to interpose the drugs upon which weavers are suckled. It is reasonable to attribute the stunted forms, the bloodless cheeks, the nerveless limbs, which are to be met in the great factories of England and France, to the forsaken cradle rather than to the labour of the workshop. Mr. John Greg Harrison, one of the factory medical inspectors, thus describes the effect of the drugging system:—

'The consequences produced by the system of drugging children, are, suffusion of the brain, and an extensive train of mesenteric and glandular diseases. The child sinks into a low torpid state, wastes away to a skeleton

except the stomach, producing what is known as pot-belly. If the children survive this treatment, they are often weakly and stunted, for life. To this drugging system, and to defective nursing its certain concominant, and not to any fatal effect inherent in factory labour, the great infant mortality of cotton towns must be ascribed.'

Those who regard the rapid increase of the population with dismay, and are prone to foster any system which tends to diminish the great circle of the human family, will perhaps be inclined to throw a veil before this child-slaughter, and to let the deadly system effect an extensive emigration of souls from this world; but to those whose human sympathies are quickened at a tale of grievous social wrong committed upon helpless childhood, who acknowledge fully the sanctity of life—that life is to be cared for before all other human considerations — the drugging system, of which we have faintly sketched an outline, will appear as an evil and a public stigma, to be removed at any risk or cost.

As it is impossible, in the present state of things, to remove the mother from the factory, the point to which attention must be concentrated, is to the means of providing the safest custody of her infant during her absence. The solicitude with which maternal duties are discharged, cannot, perhaps, be hired at any cost, from a stranger; yet, as we shall show, a well-regulated system of nursing, under scientific and other responsible supervision, may supply all the physical requisites of which infancy stands in need. Motherly tenderness cannot, perhaps, be guaranteed at so much per kiss, but a judicious selection of experienced and well-disposed nurses, under the control of ladies' committees, may be safely relied upon to provide all that is positively necessary to the health of unconscious infancy.

Some few years ago, M. Marbeau, who is known to political students as the author of various works on political economy, was employed by the civil authorities of France to report on the state of the infant schools of Paris. He pursued his investigations with enthusiasm. He saw how well the state provided for children from two to six years

old; how admirably the primary schools for more advanced children worked, and finally the national gratuitous adult classes abounded, where the poorest—the pauper and the workman — might acquire sound and invigorating knowledge.

This admirable machinery struck him, however, as being essentially and radically defective. It provided for the mental growth of children above two years old; but where was the provision for the first two years of existence? In whose hands were the infants of those poor women who were employed from home throughout the day? His investigations into this matter, disclosed a system of infant training, that sufficiently accounted for the large proportion of deaths amongst the children of the poor. He forthwith submitted to the authorities a scheme for the establishment of *crèches* (or cribs) in the different suburbs of Paris. These institutions were to be Day-Nurseries for the children of the poor. With the help of a few charitably disposed individuals, M. Marbeau opened the first public *crèche*, which he describes in his work on the subject:—*

'The superior of the Sœurs de la Sagesse provided, near the house of refuge, which is under her care, a very humble place, but one which sufficed for our first attempt. This place was put at our disposal on the 8th, and on the 18th of November our *crèche* was opened. Its furniture consisted of a very few chairs, some baby chairs, a crucifix, and a framed copy of the rules of the establishment. The cost of its fitting up was barely three hundred and sixty francs (nearly fifteen pounds). At first there were but eight cradles; but Charity soon furnished means sufficient for twelve; and linen was plentifully supplied.

'The superintending committee chose two nurses among the poor women out of work; both were mothers, and worthy the confidence of other mothers. Agreeably to the rules laid down, the committee refused to admit any other children than those whose mothers were poor, well conducted, and who had work at a distance from their

* I quote the passage as I find it translated, by a lady, in an interesting pamphlet, entitled *Day-Nurseries.*

own homes. At first there were scarcely twelve children, but this number was soon exceeded. When the Crèche St. Louis d'Antin was opened, there was not one child registered there ; a week afterwards there were six candidates, and a month after that, eighteen. The authorities were obliged to enlarge it. There can be nothing more interesting than the sight of this little *crèche*, between two and three o'clock, when the mothers come and suckle their children for the second time in the day ; they seem so pleased to embrace their little ones, to rest from their work, and to bless the institution which procures them so many benefits. One of them used to pay seventy-five centimes (sevenpence-halfpenny) a day—half her own earnings—and the child was badly attended to ; she now only pays twenty (twopence), and he as well taken care of as the child of a rich man. Another kept her little boy, eight years old, from school, to look after the baby, and now he is able to attend school regularly. Another is pleased to tell you that her husband has become less brutal since she has paid ten sous less for her child—ten sous a day make such a difference in a poor family !

'There is another, who was only confined a fortnight ago, suckling her new-born child. She is asked how she would have done without the *crèche?*

'Ah! Sir, it would have been as it was with his poor brother. I sell apples, and can scarcely earn fifteen sous a day ; I could not spare fourteen to have him looked after. Poor little fellow ! he died when he was fourteen months old, from want of care. Oh, Sir, my little angel would have been living now, if there had been a *crèche* six months ago !'

M. Marbeau's experiment has been adopted in various parts of France and Germany, with uniform success. In Paris these day-nurseries open every morning at half-past five, and close every evening at half-past eight—that is, they open half-an-hour before the time at which work is usually commenced in Paris, and close half-an-hour after the time at which work is generally over for the day. The children are required to be under two years of age, and the offspring of poor and well-conducted parents. No child

is admitted until it has been vaccinated, or while it is ill. This latter cause of exclusion proves the infancy of the institution. Day-nurseries without an infirmary or sick ward attached to them, can be only a partial boon to the industrious poor. The mother brings her child properly wrapped up and provided with linen for the day; attends punctually at appointed hours to suckle it; and fetches it before the close of the institution, in the evening. The charge paid by the mothers per diem, for one child, is two-pence, and threepence for two children. The nurses are appointed and directed by the lady managers. The room is carefully ventilated; and the diet and other arrangements are under the immediate direction of regularly appointed medical men and lady inspectors. In most of these nurseries there is a mattress in the middle of the chief apartment, where the children can be laid at any time, with perfect safety. At the present time there are about twelve of these useful institutions in operation throughout Paris. In 1846, when a report on the subject was drawn up, there existed nine institutions, the number of children in which averaged from twenty-five to eighty, at a cost averaging, for each infant, from sixty to seventy centimes per diem.

M. Marbeau's experiment has been imitated in England, and it is to its extension that we desire to draw especial attention. In March, 1850, a house was opened in Nassau Street, Marylebone, for the reception of infants; and afterwards a nursery, under the control of the parish authorities, was established at Kensington. The Nassau Street nursery contains two large airy rooms. It is furnished with wire-work cradles. All children admitted must be the offspring of respectable parents. They must be vaccinated, and be between the ages of three months and three years. The charge for daily food and attendance is threepence per child, and fourpence for two of the same family. The authors of the pamphlet entitled 'Day-Nurseries,' show very satisfactorily, that these charges are not sufficient to maintain a self-supporting nursery; but that fivepence per diem will suffice for the proper care and feeding of an infant. The Bishop of Manchester has very pertinently declared, that, 'it was not merely the awful per-centage—

the thirty-eight in every hundred who died we must bear in mind—but also the infinitely worse sixty-two who lived—lived to be trained to habits of idleness, and to be driven to habits of dissipation.' The Bishop also supports the views of the authors of 'Day-Nurseries' on the point that these nurseries should not be eleemosynary institutions, but self-supporting establishments, maintained by the co-operation of the working classes. This is a judicious and a wholesome law. According to the calculation before us, a mother might send her child to a Day-Nursery, where it would receive every comfort, including wholesome food and sound medical care, for the weekly charge of half-a-crown. Under the present drugging system, mothers usually pay the washerwoman, to whom they are obliged to commit their babes throughout the day, from four to five shillings weekly. On the score, therefore, of pecuniary economy, no less than in discharge of that sacred duty which the parent owes to the helpless being he has brought into the world, the working-man, whose wife is away from home throughout the day, is bound to aid, as far as he is able, in the immediate establishment of wholesome, well-directed Nurseries.

The Committee of influential townsmen that was formed at Manchester, to establish such Nurseries throughout their great manufacturing city, could do little unsupported by the workpeople.

It has been urged, in opposition to the establishment of Day-Nurseries, that such institutions tend to encourage the contracting of imprudent marriages, or illicit connexions. This view cannot be supported by any evidence, nor be proved by the most tortuous logic; on the other hand, experience demonstrates that the destruction of infant life has the effect of increasing population, by lightening the probable obligations of marriage. Another objection raised by M. Marbeau's opponents is, that these Nurseries will inevitably relax the strength of domestic affections. This plea is so groundless that it is wonderful to find any voices raised in its support. In the first place, the proposed Day-Nurseries are not intended to be receptacles for the children of mothers who are able to take care of their own

progeny. They are not intended to foster a system of rearing children away from home; no—the object aimed at is to provide the best and tenderest nursing for children who are *inevitably* deprived of the watchful attendance of a mother. In the place of an ignorant nurse, redolent of laudanum, it is proposed to place a skilful attendant under medical surveillance. Instead of a squalid apartment, reeking with all kinds of offensive emissions from the wash-tub, it is proposed to raise lofty, well-ventilated rooms; and, lastly, it is proposed to rock children to sleep in the careful arms of a nurse, rather than by the influence of opium and aniseed. To me, these propositions savour rather of that enlightened kindliness which we are beginning to feel for every grade of the human family, than of that carelessness, in respect of the public morals, which the narrow-minded and the bigotted would fain attach to them. The atrocious practices at present openly pursued towards children, must justify the promoters of Day-Nurseries, in the opinion of all thinkers, be they on the opposition or majority benches of any house or assembly.

Advertisements of the readiness of certain Day-Nurseries to receive tenders for the supply of 'tops and bottoms,' rattles, baby-baskets, cradles, and cots, will form a new feature in the columns of the morning papers; and it is more than probable that the vicinity of one of these establishments would not be chosen as the most quiet spot on earth, by any nervous old gentleman, when a round dozen of the young inmates were teething. It is not difficult to imagine the look of horror with which the ghost of Malthus (if such things be) will rise to witness the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of a great Day-Nursery. As the advocate of mercenery matches, this possible spirit will assuredly make some kind of demonstration on the occasion. Yet it is hardly necessary to invite the ghost, since so many still cling to his crotchets, and a few would not even dash the cup of poison from an infant's lips. There cannot be many who would leave the cradle unguarded,—the hapless babe to die by slow degrees. A regard for the future—for the generations with which our children will work and live—is that to

which the advocates of these Nurseries direct our particular attention. It is a question whether the artisan class shall dwindle, in physical stamina and in mental capacity, to poor, dwarfed images of God, under the laudanum doses of Preston and Manchester; or whether, by showing a parental solicitude for those children, whose parents are called away to the factory and the loom—by affording them, at a fair rate of remuneration, the advantages of scientific treatment and honest care, we will endeavour to give them a fair chance of becoming strong and intelligent Englishmen. The question of Day-Nurseries—the question of Protection for the Cradle—has an intrinsic importance which reaches beyond the exigencies of the hour; it is one that concerns every man, and will interest every man who acknowledges that social duty, which has never been publicly derided even in the darkest passages of the world's history—the duty of the adult to the infant."

"With one foot in the grave, we talk about the cradle!" said the Master, pensively.

"One foot in the grave!" chirped Brother Enough, "speak for yourself, good Master. I hav'nt a toe in. I never felt younger in my life. I and tops and bottoms have hardly parted company."

"Your artificial mother was not flavoured by a Godfrey," quoth Babbicomb.

"True, true!" from Enough. "Nature had a little more to do in the bringing into the world and nursing of children, in the days when I was cutting my teeth. My mother was of the homespun kirtle school:—with no fear of her figure, lying between me and the food nature had set forth for my puling infancy. My teeth have cut *me* now: yet, ha! ha! my sixty-four years have left my heart young. He spoke well, who said 'a man is as old as he feels.' I, on this principle, gentlemen, have just turned thirty."

"And so, at peace with all men: thankful that the roof that covers us has been raised by the gentle charity of the world—let us to our pillows—and, if racked by rheumatism, still keep the memory of human goodness green in our hearts. This remembrance shall make them young—even at the yawning of the grave."

With this the Master beckoned for his taper.

CHAPTER IX

"You were talking, the other night," said the Master, when the Brothers had assembled for their ninth reading—"you were talking, friend Enough, about your young heart. I thought of your cheery voice the next morning, and, happening to drop in upon Brother Frowde, the conversation turned to your happy view of life—thence to the gloomy view. And Frowde came out with his learning. An idea for a paper was born of this gossip; and I am about to call upon our friend for the result, which, I believe, he has set forth in a whimsical form."

"'Shall be delighted to listen to Mr. Frowde," responded Brother Enough.

"Let us have facts—facts," Brother Seesaw expostulated.

"In good time," said the Master.

Mr. Frowde, without a word of introduction, gave the name of his paper—

"EFFORTS OF A GENTLEMAN IN SEARCH OF DESPAIR;"—

and opened the reading:—

"Mr. Blackbrook lived in a world of his own. It was his pleasure to believe that men were phantoms of a day. For life he had the utmost contempt. He pronounced it to be a breath, a sigh, a fleeting shadow. His perpetual theme was, that we are only here for a brief space of time. He likened the uncertainty of existence to all the most frightful ventures he could conjure up. He informed

timid ladies that they were perpetually on the edge of a yawning abyss; and warned little boys that their laughter might be turned to tears and lamentation, at the shortest notice. Mr. Blackbrook was a welcome guest in a large serious circle. From his youth he had shown a poetic leaning, of the most serious order. His muse was always in deep mourning—his poetic gum oozed only from his favourite graveyard.

He thought 'L'Allegro' Milton's worst performance; and declared that Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' was too light and frivolous. His life was not without its cares; but, then, he revelled in his misfortunes. He was always prepossessed with a man who wore a hatband. The owl was his favourite bird. A black cat was the only feline specimen he would admit to his sombre apartment; and his garden was stocked with yew-trees. He revelled in the charm of melancholy—he would not, if he could, be gay. His meditations raised him so far above his family, that little sympathy could exist between them. Eternity so engaged him, that his brothers and sisters—mere phantoms—did not cost him much consideration. His youthful Lines to the Owl, in the course of which he called the bird in question 'a solemn messenger,' 'a dread image of the moral darkness which surrounds us,' 'a welcome voice,' and 'a mysterious visitant,' indicated the peculiar turn of his mind. His determination to be miserable was nothing short of heroic. In his twenty-second year a relation left him a modest fortune. His friends flocked about him to congratulate him; but they found him in a state of seraphic sorrow, searching out a proper rhyme to the urn in which he had poetically deposited the ashes of his benefactor. On looking over the lines he had distilled from his prostrate heart, his friends, to their astonishment, discovered that he had alluded to the bequest in question in the most contemptuous strain:—

'Why leave to one thy velvet and thy dross,
Whose wealth is boundless, and whose velvet's moss.'

So ran his poetic commentary. His boundless wealth

consisted of intellectual treasures exclusively, and the sweet declaration that moss was his velvet, was meant to convey to the reader the simplicity and Arcadian nature of his habits. The relation who had the assurance to leave him a fortune, was dragged remorselessly through fifty lines, as a punishment for his temerity. Yet, in a fit of abstraction, Mr. Blackbrook hurried to Doctors' Commons to prove the will; hereby displaying his resignation to the horrible degree of comfort which the money assured to him. It was not for him, however, to forget that life was chequered with woe, that it was a vale of tears—a brief, trite, contemptible matter. The gaiety of his house and relations horrified him; they interfered, at every turn, with his melancholy mood. He sighed for the fate of Byron or Chatterton! Why was he doomed to have his three regular meals per diem; to lie, at night, upon a feather-bed, and the recognised layers of mattresses; to have a new coat when he wanted one; to have money continually in his pocket, and to be accepted when he made an offer of marriage? The fates were obviously against him. One of his sisters fell in love. How hopefully he watched the course of her passion! How fondly he lingered near, in the expectation—the happy expectation—of a lovers' quarrel. But his sister had a sweet disposition—a mouth made to distil the gentlest and most tender accents. The courtship progressed with unusual harmony on both sides. Only once did fortune appear to favour him. One evening, he observed that the lovers avoided each other, and parted coldly. Now was his opportunity; and in the still midnight, when all the members of his household were in bed, he took his seat in his chamber, and, by the midnight oil, threw his soul into some plaintive lines 'On a Sister's Sorrow.' He mourned for her in heart-breaking syllables; likened her lover to an adder in an angel's path; dwelt on her quiet grey eyes, her stately proportions, and her classic face. He doomed her to years of quiet despair, and saw her fickle admirer the gayest of the gay. He concluded with the consoling intelligence, that he would go hand in hand with her along the darkened passage to the grave. His sister, however,

did not avail herself of this proffered companionship, but chose rather to be reconciled, and to marry her lover.

Mr. Blackbrook found some consolation for this disappointment in the composition of an epithalamium of the most doleful character, on the occasion of his sister's marriage, in the course of which he informed her that Jove's thunderbolts might be hurled at her husband's head at any period of the day; that we all must die; that the bride may be a widow on the morrow of her nuptials; and other equally cheerful truths. Yet at his sister's wedding breakfast, Mr. Blackbrook coquetted with the choice parts of a chicken, and drowned his sorrow in a delectable jelly.

When for a short time he was betrayed into the expression of any cheerful sentiment; if he ever allowed that it was a fine day, he quickly relapsed into congenial gloom, and discovered that there might be a thunderstorm within the next half hour. His only comfort was in the reflection that his maternal uncle's family were consumptive. Here he anticipated a fine field for the exercise of his poetic gifts, and, accordingly, when his aunt was gathered to her forefathers, her dutiful nephew laid a sheet of blank paper upon his desk, and settled himself down to write 'a Dirge.' He began by attributing all the virtues to her—devoting about six lines to each separate virtue. Her person next engaged his attention; and he discovered, though none of her friends had ever remarked her surpassing loveliness, that her step was as the breath of summer winds on flowers (certainly no gardener would have trusted her upon his box-borders); that she was fresh as Hebe (she always breakfasted in bed); that she had pearly teeth (her dentist has maliciously informed us that they were made of the very best ivory); and finally that her general deportment was most charming—so charming that Mr. Blackbrook never dared trust himself in her seductive presence. Having proceeded thus far with his melancholy duty, the poet ate a hearty supper of the heaviest cold pudding, and—we had almost written—went to bed—but we remember that Mr. Blackbrook always 'retired to his solitary couch.' He

rose betimes on the following morning, looking most poetically pale. His dreams had been of woe, and darkness, and death; the pudding had had the desired effect. Again he placed himself at his desk, and having read over the prefaratory lines which we have endeavoured to describe, he threw his fragrant curl from his marble forehead, and thought of the funeral pall, the darkened hall,—of grief acute, and the unstrung lute. He put his aunt's sorrowing circle in every possible position of despair. He represented his surviving uncle as threatening to pass the serene portals of reason; he discovered that a dark tide rolled at the unhappy man's feet; that the sun itself would henceforth be black to him; that he would never smile again; and that in all probability, the shroud would soon enwrap his manly form. He next proceeded to describe, minutely, the pearly tears of his cousins, and the terrible darkness that had come over their bright young dreams. An affecting allusion to his own unfathomable grief on the occasion, was concluded by the hope that he might soon join his sainted aunt, though he had never taken the least trouble to pay her a visit while she lived in St. John's Wood. This touching dirge was printed upon mourning paper, and distributed among Mr. Blackbrook's friends. The death of an aunt was an affecting incident, but still it fell short of the brink of despair. Mr. Blackbrook's natural abiding-place was the edge of a precipice. His muse must be fed on heroic sorrows, hopeless agony, and other poetical condiments of the same serious nature. The course of modern life was too level for his impetuous spirit; but in the absence of that terrible condition to which he aspired, he caught at every incident that could nerve the pinion of his muse for grander flights. A dead fly, which he found crushed between the leaves of a book, furnished him with a theme for one of his tenderest compositions. He speculated upon the probable career of the fly,—opined that it had a little world of its own, a family, and a sense of the beautiful. This effusion met with such fervent praise, that he followed it up by 'Thoughts on Cheese Dust,' in which he dived into the mysteries of animalculæ, and calculated the myriads of lives that were sacrificed to

give a momentary enjoyment to the 'pampered palate of man.' His attention was called, however, from these minor poetic considerations, to a matter approaching in its gravity, to that heroic pitch of sorrow which he had sought so unsuccessfully hitherto.

His cousin was drowned by the upsetting of a pleasure-boat. At such a calamity it was reasonable to despair—to refuse comfort—to leave his hair uncombed—to look constantly on the ground—to lose all appetite—to write flowing verse. Mr. Blackbrook entered upon his vocation with a full sense of its heroism. At least one hundred lines would be expected from him on so tremendous an occasion. The catastrophe was so poetical! The sea-weed might have been represented entangled in the golden tresses of the poor girl, had the accident happened only a little nearer the Nore; and the print of her fair form might have been faintly traced upon 'the ribbed sea-sand.' This was unfortunate. In reality the 'melancholy occurrence' took place at Richmond. Mr. Blackbrook began by calling upon the willows of Richmond and its immediate vicinity, to dip their tender branches in the stream in token of their grief. Mr. Blackbrook, felicitously remembering that Pope once lived not far from Richmond, next invoked that poet's shade, and begged the loan of his melodious rhythm. But the shade in question not answering to the summons, all that remained for the sorrowing poet to do was to take down his dictionary of rhymes, and tune his own lyre to its most mournful cadences. He set to work. He called the Thames a treacherous stream; he christened the wherry a bark; he declared that when the pleasure party embarked at Richmond Bridge, Death, the lean fellow, was standing upon the beach with his weapon upraised. Asterisks described the death; and some of his friends declared this passage the best in the poem. He then went on to inform his readers that all was over; but by this expression the reader must not infer that the dirge was brought to a conclusion. By no means. Mr. Blackbrook had made up his mind that his state of despair required at least one hundred lines to give it adequate expression. He had

devoted twenty to the death of a fly—surely, then, a female cousin deserved one hundred. This logical reflection spurred him on. He pulled down the blinds, and in a gloom that well became his forlorn state of mind, he began a picture of his condition. With the aid of his dictionary, having asserted that the shroud enwrapped a cousin's form, he reflected that he envied the place of the winding sheet, and was jealous of the worm. He felt that he was warming into his subject. He tried to think of the condition in which the remains of his relative would speedily be; and having carefully referred to an eminent medical work as to the length of time which the human body requires to resolve itself into its original earth, (for he was precise in his statements,) he proceeded to describe, with heart-rending faithfulness, the various stages of this inevitable decay. That was true poetry. He declared that the worm would crawl upon those lips that the lover had fondly pressed, and that the hand which once touched the harp so magically, was now motionless for ever. Having brought this tragic description to a conclusion, he proceeded to number the flowers that should spring from his cousin's grave, and to promise that

'——— from year to year,
Roses shall flourish, moistened by a tear'

This vow evidently eased his heart a little, and enabled him to conclude the poem in a more cheerful spirit. He wound up with the reflection, that care was the lot of humanity, and that it was his duty to bear his proportion of the common load, with a patient though bruisèd spirit. He felt that to complete his poetic destiny he ought to wander, none knew whither, and to turn up only at most unseasonable hours, and in most solemn places. But unhappily he was informed that it was necessary he should remain on the spot for the proper management of his affairs. Fate would have it so. Why was he not allowed to pursue his destiny? He was one day mentally bewailing the even tenour of his way, when a few kind friends suggested that he should publish his effusions. At first he firmly refused. What was fame to him—a hope-

less despairing man on the brink of the grave! His friends, however, pressed him, in the end, into compliance; and in due time Mr. Blackbrook's 'Life-Drops from the Heart' were offered to the public for the price of ten shillings—little more than one shilling per drop.

An eminent critic wrote the following opinion of our friend and his poetry:—

'We notice Mr. Blackbrook as the representative of a school—the Doleful School. He draws terrible pictures; but what are his materials? He does not write from the heart, inasmuch as, if he really felt that incessant agony, which is his everlasting theme, we should find in his performance some original imagery—something with an individual stamp. We rather hold Mr. Blackbrook to be a very deliberate, vain, and calculating being, who takes advantage of a domestic calamity to display his knack of verse-making; who composedly turns a couplet upon the coffin of his mistress; whose sympathy and sensibility are only the ingenious masks of inordinate self-esteem. His view of the poetic is only worthy of an undertaker. He sees nature through a black-crape veil. He describes graves with the minuteness of a body-snatcher; and when he would be impressive, is disgusting. You see the actor, not the poet. He admits you (for he cannot help it) behind the scenes. His rhymes are not the music of a poetic faculty; but rather the jingle of a parrot. He is one of a popular school, however; and while the public buy his wares, he will continue to fashion them. Materialist to the back-bone, he simpers about the littleness of human dealings and human sympathies. He who pretends to be melted with pity over the fate of a fly, would use his mother's tombstone as a writing-desk. He deals in human sorrow, as his baker deals in loaves. Nervous dowagers, who love tears and 'dreadful descriptions;' who enjoy 'a good cry;' and who have the peculiar faculty of seeing the dark side of everything, enjoy his dish of verses amazingly. To sensitive young ladies there is a terrible fascination in his inventories of the tomb and its appendages; and children are afraid to walk about in the dark, after listening to one of his effusions. The followers of his

school include one or two formidable young ladies, who enter into descriptions of death—that is to say, the material part of death—with a minuteness that must excite the envy even of the most ingenious auctioneer. When bent upon a fresh composition, these terrible young poetesses, having killed a child, proceed to trace its journey to the tomb—its return to earth. How they gloat over the dire changes!—how systematically the painful portrait is proceeded with! In this they rival Chinese artists. And people of ill-regulated sympathy, who, containing within them all the elements of spiritual culture, are yet affected only by sensual appeals, regard these doleful effusions as the outpourings of true human suffering.

'Mr. Blackbrook and his disciples are hapless materialists, verse-makers without a sense of the beautiful. They are patronised by those to whom they write down; and the effect of their lucubrations is to enchain the imagination, to debase the moral capacity, to weaken that spiritual faith which disdains the horrors of the churchyard. Mr. Blackbrook's adventures in search of despair were undertaken, to our mind, in a cold-blooded spirit. A resolute determination to discover the gloomiest phase of every earthly matter, a longing for the applause of a foolish clique, and a confused idea that Chatterton was a poet because he perished miserably, while Byron owed his inspiration to his domestic unhappiness—make up that picture of a verse-writer which we have endeavoured to delineate. When extraordinary vanity is allied to very ordinary ability, the combination is an unwholesome, ascetic, weak and deformed mind:—such a mind has Mr. Blackbrook. He endeavours to drag us into a vault, when we would regard the heavenly aspect of death. Ask him to solve the great mystery, and he points to the fading corpse. His tears suggest the use of onions; and his threats of self-destruction, remind us of the rouge and Indian ink of an indifferent melo-dramatic actor. We have no respect for his misfortunes, since we find that he esteems them only as opportunities for display; we know that despair is welcome to him. He turns his back to the sun, and rejoices to see the length of shade he can throw

upon the earth. Nature to him is only a vast charnel-house—so constructed that he may sing a life-long requiem. He would have us journey through life with our eyes fixed upon the ground, scenting the gases of decay. But wiser men—poets of the soul—bid us look up to heaven, nor disdain, as we raise our heads, to mark the beauty of the lily—to gather, and with hearty thanks, the fragrance of the rose.'"

"Aye, aye, that's it—that's it," cried Brother Enough. "I emphatically refuse, on all occasions, and under any circumstances, to smell the mould above the rose."

"It seems to me," said the Master, "that the little paper which I shall now have the honour of reading to you, is in its proper place here. Under this roof—raised by the charity of one good man—before whose time-worn tomb I daily lift my hat—under this roof which covers a temple of pure charity, we may draw a contrast between those who do good by stealth, and the vainglorious who give to the beat of drum. The advertisement columns of the morning papers, have suggested to me an analysis of

"A SUBSCRIPTION LIST."

Here are my observations. Make free with my tobacco pouch while I read:—

"It has been declared, with truth, that public charity accomplishes more in this country than in any other in the world. The inference to be deduced from this fact must be carefully drawn. Many influences swell the amount of 'charitable donations;' and it is by arriving at something like an estimate of the pure charity, to be generally traced in a subscription list, that we must measure the extent of public Heart-benevolence. Let us take up a list at random. Here is a subscription in aid of a Hospital. The first name we find is that of—

Miss Letitia Latterday, of Latterborough Hall . . . £10

Doubtless this lady is sincerely desirous that the hos-

pital thus patronised should be a couple of beds the better of her contribution; yet the conspicuous advertisement of Miss Latterday's name and euphonious address at full length, betrays an anxiety that her benevolent desires, together with the fact of her being the possessor of Latterborough Hall, should be extensively known to the public at large. The next lines on the list are:—

John Pampas, Esq.	£5
Mrs. John Pampas	5

If Mr. Pampas be solely anxious to extend the usefulness of the hospital, why did he not subscribe at once without dragging in his wife? Is he pleased to see his name prominently repeated in the list; or has Mrs. Pampas insisted upon seeing herself in print? We suspect that the Pampases look upon the matter rather as a bit of cheap distinction, than as a real goodness performed by them. Mr. Pampas, we are told, was very particular about having his name properly spelt.

The expedient for spreading a small amount of charity over a large surface of publicity is more strikingly exemplified by the next entries:—

The Right Honourable Lady Bittern . . .	10*s*.	0*d*.
The Honourable Blanche Bittern	7	6
The Honourable Fanny Bittern	5	0
The Honourable Alicia Bittern	2	6
The Honourable Jemima Bittern	2	6
The Honourable Charles de Brandenburgh Bittern	2	6

Lady Bittern is an economist. No one knows better than her ladyship how to lay out thirty shillings in charity, with profit to the reputation of her numerous family. What a miracle of precocious munificence is exhibited to those people who happen to know that Charles de Brandenburgh Bittern has not yet arrived at the dignity of being short-coated!

The next name worthy of note is that of our friend—

Johnson Tomlinson, Esq., of Topperton Hall . .	£25

We happened to be present when this subscription was solicited. Tomlinson, an exemplary sharebroker, had re-

cently bought 'the place' advertised above. The first question he asked the begging secretary was—not as to the object of the fund in course of formation; how it would be applied; what amount of suffering it would mitigate; how many new patients would be relieved—but, 'Whom have you got?' The secretary unfolded his list; 'Well, Sir,' he began, 'we have the Lord Lieutenant (fifty guineas), the High Sheriff (fifty pounds), Lord Bramble one hundred and five pounds. You see, Sir?' continued the wily solicitor, knowing his man, and remembering his initial, 'We do not make up our list *alphabetically*, but according to amounts.'

'Hum!' considered Tomlinson, melting to the cause, when he remembered how completely out of sight the 'T's' were stuck in former advertisements; 'How much has Sir Skinner Flint put down?'

'Twenty pounds, Sir.'

'Very well; put down twenty-five opposite to my name. You see,' was Tomlinson's aside speech to us, 'one must do the thing a little handsome as a new comer into this aristocratic part of the country, or one gets looked on freezingly by these people: I may say, blown upon.'

It is a sorry inference, then—but alas, a true one—that Tomlinson's money was not put forth to fend off suffering from the sick poor, but as a golden shield for himself against the cold shoulder of the rich.

'Sir,' said the secretary, when he called on the chief proprietor of the Chronicle. 'We spend twelve hundred a year in newspaper advertising; besides two hundred per annum in printing circulars. You could not have a better medium for making your excellent publication extensively known to the public. Let me say five.' But as the person appealed to, knew that the notification would be repeated in just as many impressions for less money, we find it stand thus:

Proprietors of the Chronicle £2 2

Could the price and day of publication have appeared, the donor candidly owned he would have been glad to give the five.

Glancing the eye over other parts of the subscription list, we do not find it wholly a record of pomps and vanities. There are a few scarcely perceptible entries almost overshadowed by the big letters of the great subscribers. They are simple initials set against small sums ; the smallest, however, is greater than either of Lady Bittern's family offerings. 'A Friend' occurs more than once, and then, ten shillings bestowed by 'an Old Patient.' Such contributions speak true charity out of the fulness of genuine gratitude.

Our former instances are, we reluctantly own, not overcharged demonstrations of what goes by the name of charity, in a great many cases. A new ward is to be built in a hospital. Experience proves that to demonstrate the necessity and utility of such an addition, is but a secondary necessity. The promoters know, that to succeed, they must get the undertaking graced with the names and patronage of half-a-dozen peers, a sprinkling of the House of Commons, and a judicious selection from wealthy neighbours. The list is published, and subscriptions flow in. Why do they flow in? Because the undistinguished rich—the mob of gentlemen who pay with ease—have, too often, a morbid desire to find their names ranged alongside those of Dukes, Earls, and M.P's.

The truth is, deep, sympathising, effectual benevolence does not often find its way into the subscription list at all. Neither does it go about in mysterious melodramatic disguise, on purpose to be found out and be all the more blazoned; but, with unostentatious earnestness, gives its intellect and its time, as well as its money, to the needy and suffering. It discriminates, inquires, and affords judicious help, rather than unqualified alms, which may bless the giver, but seldom the receiver.

Meek Charity never thrusts her hand into her purse with the bouncing let-me-know-what-I-have-to-pay,-and have-done-with-it, profusion of a rich 'subscriber.' She is a great economist; for had she millions, she could not cover and heal all the sores of poverty that cover the land. She knows that unwise profusion to one case is

gross injustice to many others, that must be, consequently, neglected.

It may be argued that whatever be the motives of the advertisers, for their seeming charity, the result is good. They give their money and that is usefully applied.

As a general rule, we doubt this. The regular charities, of which routine advertisements are constantly appearing in the Spring, are, many of them, gigantic jobs; operating less for the excellent objects pretended in them than for the payment of large salaries to their officers and managers. Most of the subscribed capital goes to build magnificent palaces for a few children, who are supposed to be born in hovels; to pay the bills of treasurers, who manage to get elected because they are printers, or contractors for articles used in the institution, and enormously over-charged. The purest we believe to be medical charities; but some of these are full of abuses—abuses often occasioned by their very affluence, and which they have attained by means of a clever and constant working of THE SUBSCRIPTION LIST."

"Just a little harsh, good Master, "quoth Brother Babbicomb."

"Not in the least," shouted Horrocks. "Have at shams, with Nasmyth's hammers, if you can get hold of them. Send broadsides into them: rake them fore and aft."

"We have little time for discussion, this evening," the Master interposed. "There is a third paper before us. It is in Brother Sands' usual style."

Mr. Sands blandly accepted the Master's description of his production as a compliment. The little man bowed and simpered. It was only a slight sketch—but if he had not already intruded too often on their attention, he would venture to read it:

"THE CONSTANT READER."

"It is vain to contradict anything I may choose to affirm

—for I know everything. I am the Constant Reader. The post is no sinecure, since my work is unceasing and my reward *nil*. All the world may, if it pleases, be enjoying itself. Jones may take his sweetheart to Picnics: Jobson may treat his wife and family to Margate; Smith may sail to Jersey; Robinson to Jericho; the Premier may be flying paper balloons in gusty Scotland, to please his children; the Chancellor of the Exchequer may be shooting partridges in Berkshire; but for me there is not one moment's respite. When I hear about the calamities and poverty of the writers of the olden time, I chuckle with a savage mirth, for I know that they enjoyed a comparative condition of clover. Not that their clover was not occasionally very hard lying, but that my lying is still harder.

I said lying, but I must correct myself, since I never lie down. The horizontal position in which most people indulge for some time, once in four-and-twenty hours is impossible for me. I had occasional snatches of rest a long time ago, when wholesome restrictions were exercised towards the press; but now it would be madness to think of devoting five minutes to the indulgence of physical repose. Hercules has been talked about from generation to generation; but he never performed a labour half so formidable as that I am in the habit of knocking off daily, —and without making any particular noise or hubbub about it, either.

My acquirements are illimitable. I can read and write at one and the same moment. Most authors can write only on one question at a time: I can tackle fifty. When the public bear in mind that I read every journal of the habitable globe, without ever missing a paragraph, and that I have daily communication with nearly every editor in Christendom, the necessity of reading and writing at one and the same time, will be obvious. Nothing escapes me, from a misdemeanour to murder; from tittle-tattle to high treason. I am, it is well known, competent to discuss the merits of every question that ever engaged the attention of mankind. I have been known to be writing simultaneously, a solemn remonstrance to the editor of the 'New Zealand Champion;' a letter to the 'Times' on Aldermanic Polish;

a denunciation of a Board of Railway Directors; a Word of Warning to the Protectionists; a Solemn Rebuke to Free Traders; a Suggestion for the Better Government of Her Majesty's Colonies; a Mild Hope that we should have War to the Knife with Russia; and a Word in Defence of the Czar. While my pens (I write with all my fingers at once) are employed on all these subjects, I read the 'Times,' the 'Morning Chronicle,' the 'Daily News,' the 'Examiner,' the 'Pekin Gazette,' the 'Antipodes Daily Advertiser,' 'Punch,' a file of Indian journals, the 'Chop-away Tomahawk,' and all other American prints, and every one of the Paris papers. There is not a journal in existence of which I am not a constant reader, and to which I have not contributed.

In the course of the year I wear out the sleeves of three hundred coats; my paper-makers supply me by the ton; I keep a large flock of geese on my premises to supply me with quills; my inkstand is the size of an ordinary bucket; my wafers are brought to me in a clothes-basket; and I employ a strong horse and cart to convey my writings to the post. When all my pens are in full work, the scratching is so offensive to the neighbours, that they have threatened indictments. I keep a flock of carrier-pigeons, on the roof of my house, to convey my effusions to distant parts. I stack my papers, as farmers stack hay. Sometimes I refer to a very old number of a journal; on these occasions fifty men are employed to search after the particular passage I require. I drink gallons of strong tea, night and day, to prevent the least tendency to drowsiness. It is now about fifteen months since I have risen from my seat. I am here, a fixture, with a little pipe in my mouth, through which I imbibe the best Pekoe. Without all these arrangements (which may at first appear strange to the uninitiated), how could I go through all my work? How could I, without some attempt at order and economy of time, correspond with every newspaper in the known world, on every conceivable subject?

Having, modestly and moderately, I trust, stated the nature and extent of my labours, I may perhaps be forgiven for adding my testimony to the base ingratitude of

the public. I am known, certainly, wherever an alphabet is known. I have written on all subjects—and treated all subjects from every possible point of view. I have agreed and disagreed with every editor under the sun. I have been referred to in Parliament; the printers of my effusions have been indicted for libel; I have been printed in every language that commands type; I have been reproduced for private circulation; I have been favourably criticised a thousand times; and yet am I a neglected, forlorn individual.

This is the first time that anything like a history of my labours has been made public. People have read my effusions under every circumstance and through every channel; and no person has been sufficiently curious to institute inquiries respecting me. Yet the agony I have suffered is incalculable. Papers which no other person would approach, I have patiently perused and written for; subjects the most uninviting have 'engaged my serious attention for years;' and I have 'ventured to trespass' upon 'valuable columns,' of which it was given to me alone to understand the value. Then, who has not noticed the 'feelings of unmixed regret,' or the "deep satisfaction,' with which I have 'ventured to address' the editors of countless journals? Nobody. I am even more forlorn than the gentleman who had an obliging echo to answer his queries—in the affirmative. My boundless knowledge—my intimacy with the private concerns of the Sultan and the iniquities of the Nizam—my correct information as to the prices of starch in the Prussian markets, and the probability of receiving monies on account of the Pennsylvanian Bonds, only aggravate the hardship of my obscure position. Even now, while I am writing this account of myself with my first finger, my second is employed upon an urgent remonstrance with the discontented party at the Cape; while my thumb is upon the South Western Railway. I have long nursed the hope of finding a finger unemployed, that I might write my autobiography; but the pressure of events; the bubble rising in the South of Europe, upon which I have the one-and-twentieth part of my eye; the doings of the Americans in

California, upon which another fraction of my eye reposes; the anger simmering in France, upon which another small proportion of my optic rests;—these, and many other events, warn that unhappy elf, the Constant Reader (who is as constant a writer) to give up his long-cherished idea, and be content with the most cursory record of his career.

Posterity will do me justice. My writings would fill one hundred thick octavo volumes; whereas (such is the fate of genius in this country) they now fill the shops of cheesemongers, and weigh down the scales of grocers. Who has not read a few of my works? Yet who knows anything about me?—whether I am grey with age, or in the prime of life; whether I am five or six feet high; whether I live like a prince or like a beggar; whether I adopt any extraordinary costume, or dress simply like any ordinary English gentleman. Ah! it is hard to have performed gigantic labours, and yet to remain personally unnoticed. I have had my imitators, like most great men. There is that base knave, the 'Subscriber from the Beginning.' But, compared with mine, what are his performances? I remember his letter to the editor of the 'Sledge Hammer' (in the second number of that inoffensive journal), but there was nothing in it. The measure of public contempt will be filled to the brim, when I declare that he could write only on two subjects at once. 'A Constant Admirer,' too, was one of my imitators, but he soon died off. 'Veritas' has tried to disturb my status, and the 'Enemy to Humbug' has endeavoured to jostle me out of the field. And here I am at last, still hard at work, and still without public acknowledgment of my services. A few sagacious people, only, have deigned, from time to time, to express some wonderment with regard to the variety of my reading and writing, and my constant appearance in every journal, both English and foreign.

It is for the satisfaction of these in particular, that I have employed the short leisure of one of my fingers, in giving a description of the pains I have been at, and the devices I have found it necessary to adopt, to contribute daily articles of some importance towards the newspaper

literature of my country. The finger I have been using upon this sketch is now called upon to perform another duty;—the nineteenth section of one of my eyes having caught an erroneous report (which the finger must correct on the spot) published in the "War Whoop," a New Zealand paper, published by the natives for the suppression of cannibalism, and to discountenance,—particularly, the consumption of 'Missionary Pie.'"

"Even the Constant Reader must rest, friends," said the Master, rising; "and there is lead upon my eyelids now. Will any Brother dip into my pouch, before I put it into my pocket? No! Then sunny dreams for all. Good night!"

"Aye," said Horrocks, "an open sea and a fair wind—with the ship making for home—that shall be my dream."

"Mine," said Seesaw, "that everything is at a premium."

"And mine," cried Balder, looking reproachfully at Seesaw—"that I havn't an enemy in the wide world."

And after a few minutes, lights shone through the windows of the Brothers' bed-rooms.

CHAPTER X.

"We dedicate this night, gentlemen," said the Master, as he took the chair to preside on the tenth meeting of the Brothers—"we dedicate this night to two of our city Friends:—to Brothers Phœnix and Seesaw—with just a lively little paper from Brother Balder—as a night-cap. I call upon Brother Phœnix to begin. His subject is interesting just now, when we are talking about commercial treaties with France."

"Commercial treaties with Mounseer," cried Horrocks, "ugh!"

Brother Phœnix, modestly, began:—

"THE QUEEN'S BAZAAR."

"The articles displayed for sale at the Queen's Bazaar are brought together under peculiar circumstances. Some of them are handed over by Her Majesty's Revenue officers, who obtain them from passengers as they step ashore from foreign steamers. Some are thus unwillingly contributed by full-figured dowagers; by young ladies carrying poodles; by well-cloaked gentlemen; or by obese individuals encumbered with protuberating brandy-bottles, formed like the 'stuffing' adopted by actors when they play Falstaff.

It is, however, a pity that the smuggling propensities of Mrs. Brown, Miss Robinson, or Mr. Bombigs, should be a cause of annoyance to the thousands of passengers who land weekly on our coasts. It is a pity, that because Miss Bumble cannot resist the temptation of secreting a bottle or two of Eau de Cologne between the folds of her packed-

up draperies; that because Mr. Fitz-Fink must put Galignani's edition of 'Astoria' in his hat-box; their fellow-passengers should be subjected to the annoyance of having their wardrobes tumbled out upon a counter, for the amusement of the curious. It is distressing to witness the performance of the searcher's duties. Mrs. Tiplip's boxes are thrown upon the counter, uncorded, unlocked. The searcher commences by removing huge piles of silk dresses; Mrs. Tiplip looking on in a state of the greatest excitement. The searcher vigorously rams his arm to the bottom of the trunk, and by a dexterous twist tumbles its contents into a condition of the most picturesque confusion. Mrs. Tiplip feels that she will faint, if the man does not desist at once. But, he regards neither her confusion nor her expostulations. He rolls a dozen pairs of stockings upon the counter; he rattles her jewel-case and asks for the key; he minutely inspects her supply of linen; he brings to public light all kinds of little secret cosmetics and artifices, which gentlemen are not usually privileged to see. He hopes that there is no contraband article secreted in her needlecase. He trusts that there is nothing but cotton in her work-box; and having chalked a huge hieroglyphic upon the trunk, pushes the whole tumbled, exposed heap from before him, and turns to another victim. Now and then he ruthlessly seizes a bottle of brandy, a few yards of lace, or a pair of new shoes; but generally, he finds nothing worth touching. The value of his contributions to the Queen's Bazaar scarcely covers the amount of his salary.

In another part of the Custom House are officials keeping up the Queen's Bazaar stock, by mulcting the merchants. It is necessary to prevent importers from understating the value of goods upon which an *ad valorem* duty is charged. To check this tendency, a system has been adopted of buying those goods which the Custom House officers hold to be undervalued. Thus, when a merchant declares the value of a bale of goods, and the officer believes the declaration to be understated, he pays the value the merchant has declared, to the owner, and retains the goods. This course furnishes the chief articles

which figure at the periodical Custom House sale. Very often, Her Majesty loses by these transactions. Thus, a merchant imported a quantity of soiled goods lately, which he declared at the value he honestly believed they would fetch. This declaration being, to the mind of the officials (who disregarded the damaged condition of the goods), understated, they paid the merchant his price on the part of Her Majesty, and subjected them to the hammer, in the expectation that a round sum would be realised by the bargain. It turned out, however, that the merchant had rather overstated the value; and, the consequence was, that the goods were sold for about one hundred and fifty pounds less than the Custom House authorities had paid for them. As a large proportion of the goods sold under the authority of the Customs' Commissioners are detained and paid for as undervalued, the bazaar is in some sort a Government speculation; and one, probably, that does not return a large per centage of profit. The pickings from trunks, form items which it is easy to trace:—the articles wrenched from the grasp of professional smugglers are for the most part either tobacco or spirits.

Having thus briefly reviewed the systems which fill Her Majesty's Bazaar with all kinds of valuable commodities, we may enter the Queen's Warehouse, situated on the groundfloor of the Custom House. The Queen's Warehouse is not an imposing apartment, either in its decorations or extent. It is simply a large square room, lighted by an average number of windows, and consisting of four bare walls, upon which there is not the most distant approach to decoration. Counters are placed in different directions, with no regard to order or effect. Here and there, masses of drapery for sale, are hung suspended from cords; or, to all appearance, are nailed against the wall. Across one corner of the room, in the immediate vicinity of a very handsome inlaid cabinet, two rows of dilapidated Bath chaps are slung upon a rope. Close under these delicacies, stands a rosewood piano, on which a foreign lady, supported by a foreign gentleman, is playing a showy fantasia. The effect of her brilliant and vehement performance is, however, unhappily marred by the

presumption of a young gentleman who, is trying a gross of accordions (situated at the further end of the row of chaps), by playing the first few notes of the National Anthem upon each, with utter disregard of time and tune. At the elbow of this young gentleman an old gentleman is rubbing some raw silk—as though he longed to wash it—and then stroking it with a touching fondness. He carries a catalogue in his hand, and when he has completed his inspection, hastens to make some hieroglyphics in it.

Advancing a little more into the bazaar, and edging our way between all kinds of men in earnest conversation:—who 'think one and a quarter enough,' or who 'wouldn't mind taking the damaged with the sound,' or who are confident 'there is no longer any home market for such goods'—we reach the first long counter. Here, we discover a rich assortment of objects, piled about in hopeless confusion.

Eighty-nine opera glasses: three dozen 'companions'—more numerous than select, perhaps. Forty dozen black brooches—ornamental mourning, sent over probably by some foreign manufacturer, relying in the helplessness of our old Woods-and-Forests-ridden Board of Health, and in the death-dealing fogs and stenches of our metropolis. Seventeen dozen daguerreotype plates, to receive as many pretty and happy faces. Eighty dozen brooches; nineteen dozen pairs of ear-rings; forty-two dozen finger-rings; twenty-one dozen pairs of bracelets! The quantities and varieties are bewildering, and the ladies cluster about in a state of breathless excitement, or give way to regrets that the authorities will not sell less than ten dozen tiaras, or half a dozen clocks.

The French popular notion, that every Englishman has an exhaustless store of riches, seems to hold as firmly as ever; for, here we find about three hundred dozen *porte monnaies*, and countless purses, evidently of French manufacture. Presently we are shown what Mr. Carlyle would call a 'gigantic system of shams,' in five hundred and thirty-eight gross of imitation turquoises. We stroll on, amused by the variety of the scene—the intent looks with which men are peering into all kinds of packages, testing

all kinds of manufactures in all sorts of ways, and making notes eagerly, in their catalogues. We pause before seven crosses, and nine crucifixes, 'mounted.' A particular interest attaches to these gaudy ceremonial trinkets of Berlin ware. They were put up to auction with a cigar-holder, and eleven finger-rings, for the sum of three pounds fifteen shillings. At the farther end of the long counter before which we have been pausing, are some very finely-executed bronzes, and Dresden, and other vases, marked at exceedingly low prices. Yet, according to the catalogue, they have all been undervalued, and the sale of them is a Government speculation.

To realise an idea of the Queen's Bazaar on the morning of sale, it is necessary to have a vivid sense of the unpleasantness of hearing every imaginable air played at short intervals, on every kind of instrument, by performers of various degrees of skill. We were suddenly attracted to the second counter in the room by a few loud notes piped upon an oboe, by a short gentleman with a long moustache. The counter was loaded with brass instruments, lying in confused heaps: some packed in papers, some bursting through their covers, and others glittering in the sun, in all the nakedness of polished brass. We began to think that a brass band had been seized by the ruthless searchers of the Custom-house; but, on referring to our catalogue, we learned that this heap of cornopeans, clarionets, ophicleides, trombones, clarions, violoncelli, and guitars, had been undervalued, according to the Custom-house authorities, and had been bought on behalf of Government. An organ with sixteen barrels had also fallen into the hands of Government, for something under fifty-three pounds. A solitary drum had been resigned to the authorities, as an undervalued article: it was the only instrument which remained untouched.

Near these musical instruments, lay a great variety of china, from all parts of the world. Designs the most graceful, and distortions the most grotesque, were huddled together. Two salt-cellars, which had been undervalued, were inside two butter-boats, that had been similarly treated; while two egg-cups, detained by the majesty of

English laws, stood modestly beside some of the splendid pottery of Dresden. Near all this china, were about one hundred and twenty party-coloured Chinese lamps, in the immediate neighbourhood of twenty-eight cottages (dolls'), napkin-rings, pincushions, nut-crackers, paper-knives, &c., all of the celebrated Swiss carving, of which some splendid specimens appeared in the Great Exhibition.

Tired with the endless variety of the Government Bazaar, we must pass over—seventy-six dozen scissors, seventeen dozen bellows, and even ninety-five coffee biggins; to say nothing of nineteen larding-skewers, thirteen scoops, fifty thousand tickets in sheets, and one thousand box tops —to come to a few parcels over which we saw many gentlemen pause, and to which ladies hastened with eager steps. Here they are;—sixty thousand gross of buttons! Two hundred and fifty-two dozen inkstands; hundred and fifty gross of hair pencils! Of the stacks of shawls, barèges, and handkerchiefs, we do not pretend to say anything; but it appears rather trifling to squabble over the value of two embroidered aprons, and one scarf. However, the authorities appear to be excellent judges of the value of a light crust, and the cost of confectionary; inasmuch as they thought fit to detain, as undervalued, no less than fifty-five *patés de foie gras*, and a very promising consignment of *caviare.*

Among the seizures which we find in the Queen's Bazaar, is a muslin dress skirt, embroidered; one robe with body; one scarf; twelve collars; innumerable dress pieces; and three bonnets. The agony of the respective owners of these elegancies need not be dwelt upon. But, perhaps the most melancholy lot in the Government Bazaar was a packet of pamphlets, 'weighing one hundred-weight, two quarters, twenty-one pounds,' according to the catalogue, to be sold for the 'benefit of the Crown.' This direct appeal from the Commissioners of Customs to the trunk-makers of the country, cannot be contemplated by any lover of literature with other than feelings of strong antipathy. Various old trunks, boxes of old clothes, hundreds of tattered volumes, scores of pairs of dice, clocks innumerable, countless watches, rivers of wine, spirits; tons

of tobacco, may be added to our list of the stock which Her Majesty has periodically on sale. On the particular occasion to which we have been all along referring, three hundred gross of lucifer matches figured in the Bazaar, beside several acres of East India matting; forty-nine gallons of Chutney sauce: eighteen gallons of curry paste; thirty millions of splints; seventy-seven hundred-weight of slate pencils; sixty-eight gallons of rose-water; one package of visiting cards; one ship's long-boat; and '*four pounds*' of books in the English language!

Truly, the gentlemen who test the prices of these various articles of commerce—who can hit upon the precise value of slate pencils and caviare, dolls' houses and fat liver patties—must have extraordinary experience! That they are, after all, human, and are suject to mistakes like the rest of us, is indisputable.

The Queen's Bazaar is a specimen of the profitableness and policy of the whole system. Smuggling, of which it is the parent, is not looked upon by the community with much horror; on the contrary, by some, as rather a meritorious means of making bargains. 'To pretend to have any scruple about buying smuggled goods,' Adam Smith tells us, 'would in most countries be regarded as one of those pedantic pieces of hypocrisy which, instead of gaining credit with anybody, serve only to expose the person who pretends to practise them, to the suspicion of being a greater knave than the rest of his neighbours.'

The danger of maintaining laws which it is held by many well-meaning persons, not inglorious to break, has forced itself upon the governments of most countries, and it may be safely stated that the reduction of duties on foreign goods has done more to put down smuggling, than fleets of revenue cutters, armies of coast guards, and the quick eyes of searchers. It is now believed that 'whenever duties exceed thirty per cent. *ad valorem*, it is impossible to prevent a contraband trade.' The experience of the present time points to this conclusion, and further tends to show that, economically, high duties are less productive to the revenue than low duties; inasmuch as to levy high duties, a large protective force must be maintained, where-

as, with low duties, smuggling sinks to a losing game, and is quickly abandoned. In 1831, Lord Congleton estimated the cost of protecting the revenue, at from seven hundred thousand to eight hundred thousand pounds. In 1832, upwards of one hundred and eighty-one thousand pounds were expended in building cottages for the officers and men of the Coast Guard in Kent and Sussex. Yet, while duties are imposed, however paltry in amount, people of an economical turn will do a little smuggling on their own account—as much for the popular glory of defrauding the revenue, as for the irresistible impulse of saving a few shillings."

"Good, good," cried the Master.

"Let us hear Mr. Seesaw," growled Horrocks. "Hang the smugglers! Many's the squally nights I've been kept out of my berth for them. Smuggling Frenchmen's brandy too! As old Cap'n For'top used to say, time out of mind: —'Why can't the damn'd rascals drink rum, like Englishmen.'"

The Brothers laughed, and the ale went round—the "humming ale;" and Brother Seesaw opened his paper (commercial foolscap), and read:—

"SPIDERS' SILK."

"Urged by the increased demand for the threads which the silk-worm yields, many ingenious men have endeavoured to turn the cocoons of other insects to account. In search of new fibres to weave into garments, men have dived to the bottom of the sea, to watch the operations of the pinna and the common mussel. Ingenious experimentalists have endeavoured to adapt the threads which hold the mussel firmly to the rock, to the purposes of the loom; and the day will probably arrive when the minute thread of that diminutive insect, known as the money-spinner, will be reeled, thrown, and woven into fabrics fit for Titania and her court.

In the early part of last century, an enthusiastic French gentlemen turned his attention to spiders' webs. He dis-

covered that certain spiders not only erected their webs to trap unsuspecting flies, but that the females, when they had laid their eggs, forthwith wove a cocoon, of strong silken threads, about them. These cocoons are known more familiarly as spiders' bags. The common webs of spiders are too slight and fragile to be put to any use; but the French experimentalist in question, Monsieur Bon, was led to believe that the cocoons of the female spiders were more solidly built than the mere traps of the ferocious males. Various experiments led M. Bon to adopt the short-legged silk spider as the most productive kind. Of this species he made a large collection. He employed a number of persons to go in search of these spiders; and, as the prisoners were brought to him, one by one, he enclosed them in separate paper cells, in which he pricked holes to admit the air. He kept them in close confinement, and he observed that their imprisonment did not appear to affect their health. None of them, so far as he could observe, sickened for want of exercise. As a gaoler, he appears to have been indefatigable; occupying himself catching flies, and delivering them over to the tender mercies of his prisoners. After a protracted confinement in these miniature Bastiles, the grim M. Bon opened the doors, and found that the majority of his prisoners had beguiled their time in forming their bags. Spiders exude their threads from papillæ or nipples, placed at the hinder part of their body. The thread, when it leaves them, is a glutinous liquid, which hardens on exposure to the air. It has been found that, by squeezing a spider, and placing the finger against its papillæ, the liquid of which the thread or silk is made may be drawn out to a great length.

M. Reaumur, the rival experimentalist to M. Bon, discovered that the papillæ are formed of an immense number of smaller papillæ, from each of which a minute and distinct thread is spun. He asserted that, with a microscope, he counted as many as seventy distinct fibres proceeding from the papillæ of one spider, and that there were many more threads too minute and numerous to compute. He jumped to a result, however, that is sufficiently astonishing, namely, that a thousand distinct fibres proceed from each papillæ; and there being five large papillæ, that every

thread of spider's silk is composed of at least five thousand fibres. In the heat of that enthusiasm, with which the microscope filled speculative minds in the beginning of last century, M. Leuwenhoek ventured to assert that a hundred of the threads of a full-grown spider were not equal to the diameter of one single hair of his beard. This assertion leads to the astounding arithmetical deduction, that if the spider's threads and the philosopher's hair be both round, ten thousand threads are not bigger than such a hair; and, computing the diameter of a thread spun by a young spider as compared with that of an adult spider, four millions of the fibres of a young spider's web do not equal a single hair of M. Leuwenhoek's beard. The enthusiastic experimentalist must have suffered horrible martyrdom under the razor, with such an exaggerated notion of his beard as these calculations must have given him. A clever writer, in Lardner's Cyclopædia, notices these measurements, however, and shows that M. Leuwenhoek went far beyond the limits of reality, in his calculation.

M. Bon's collection of spiders continued to thrive; and, in due season, he found that the greater number of them had completed their cocoons, or bags. He then dislodged the bags from the paper-boxes; threw them into warm water, and kept washing them until they were quite free from dirt of every kind. The next process was to make a preparation of soap, saltpetre, and gum-arabic, dissolved in water. Into this preparation the bags were thrown, and set to boil over a gentle fire for the space of three hours. When they were taken out and the soap had been rinsed from them, they appeared to be composed of fine, strong, ash-coloured silk. Before being carded on fine cards, they were set out for some days to dry thoroughly. The carding, according to M. Bon, was an easy matter; and he affirmed that the threads of the silk he obtained were stronger and finer than those of the silk-worm. M. Reaumur, however, who was dispatched to the scene of M. Bon's investigations by the Royal Academy of Paris, gave a different version of the matter. He found, that whereas the thread of the spider's bag will sustain only thirty-six grains, that of the silkworm will support a weight of two drachms and a half—or four times the

weight sustained by the spider-thread. Now while M. Bon was certainly an enthusiast on behalf of spiders, M. Reaumur undoubtedly had a strong predilection in favour of the bombyx; and the result of these contending prejudices was, that M. Bon's investigations were overrated by a few, and utterly disregarded by the majority of his countrymen. He injured himself by rash assertions. He endeavoured to make out that spiders were more prolific, and yielded a proportionably larger quantity of silk than silkworms. These assertions were disproved, but in no kindly spirit, by M. Reaumur. To do away with the impression that spiders and their webs were venemous, M. Bon not only asserted, with truth, that their bite was harmless; but he even went so far as to subject his favourite insect to a chemical analysis; and he succeeded in extracting from it a volatile salt which he christened Montpelier drops, and recommended strongly as an efficacious medicine in lethargic states.

M. Bon undoubtedly produced, from the silk of his spiders, a material that readily absorbed all kinds of dyes, and was capable of being worked in any loom. With his carded spider's silk the enthusiastic experimentalist wove gloves and stockings, which he presented to one or two learned societies. To these productions several eminent men took particular exceptions. They discovered that the fineness of the separate threads of the silk detracted from its lustre, and inevitably produced a fabric less refulgent than those woven from the silkworm. M. Reaumur's most conclusive fact against the adoption of spider's silk as an article of manufacture, was deduced from his observations on the combativeness of spiders. He discovered that they had not arrived at that state of civilisation when communities find it most to the general advantage to live on terms of mutual amity and confidence; on the contrary, the spider-world, according to M. Reaumur (we are writing of a hundred and forty years ago), was in a chronic state of warfare—nay, not a few spiders were habitual cannibals. Having collected about five thousand spiders (enough to scare the most courageous old lady), M. Reaumur shut them up in companies, varying in number, from fifty to one hundred. On opening the cells, after the lapse of a few

days, 'what was the horror of our hero,' as the graphic novelist writes, 'to behold the scene which met his gaze! Where fifty spiders, happy and full of life, had a short time before existed, only about two bloated insects now remained—they had devoured their fellow spiders! This horrible custom of the spider-world accounts for the small proportion of spiders, in comparison with the immense number of eggs which they produce. So formidable a difficulty could only be met by rearing each spider in a separate cage; whether this separation be practicable—that is to say, whether it can be made to repay the trouble it would require—is a matter yet to be decided.

Against M. Bon's treatise on behalf of spiders' silk, M. Reaumur urged further objections. He asserted, that when compared with silkworm's silk, spider's silk was deficient both in quality and in quantity. His calculation went to show that the silk of twelve spiders did not more than equal that of one bombyx; and that no less than fifty-five thousand two hundred and ninety-six spiders must be reared to produce one pound of silk. This calculation is now held to be exaggerated; and the evident spirit of partisanship in which M. Reaumur's report was concocted, favours the supposition that he made the most of any objections he could bring to bear against M. Bon.

M. Bon's experiments are valuable as far as they go. Spider's silk may be safely set down as an untried raw material. The objections of M. Reaumur, reasonable in some respects, are not at all conclusive. It is of course undeniable that the silkworm produces a larger quantity of silk than any species of spider; but, on the other hand, the spider's silk may possess certain qualities adapted to particular fabrics, which would justify its cultivation. The idea of brushing down cobwebs to convert them into ball-room stockings, forces upon us the association of two most incongruous ideas; but that this transformation is not impossible, the Royal Society, who are the possessors of some of M. Bon's spider-fabric, can satisfactorily demonstrate."

CHAPTER XI.

"Brother Balder is now to give us a night-cap," said the Master.

"Is the paper so very sleepy?" asked Brother Enough. "If so, it cann't be Balder's own writing."

"If we're going to throw sugar-plums about, like children, we had better fetch our pinafores." It is hardly necessary to add that this protest was entered by Brother Horrocks.

"We are listening, Brother," the Master interposed. "It's a bit of observation—ill-natured perhaps:—but, I believe, in the main, not far from the truth.

"WHY PEOPLE LET LODGINGS."

"The contrivances and struggles of what the vulgar call 'gentility' to make two hundred pounds a-year pass for five hundred per annum, rank with the tragedies of large towns. Starvation for a month, and a sumptuous festival four times a year; a white satin dress for the mother of ragged children: a bone of mutton for the family, and grouse and truffles for visitors: hired plate for state occasions, and Britannia metal for ordinary service. Such are among the shifts and contrivances of 'poor, but genteel' establishments. The cold mutton is contentedly swallowed, when seasoned with the comforting conviction that the Tomkinses over the way, believe three courses and a dessert, are the daily comforters of the family. The Genteel do everything for other people. They never see with their own eyes, but through those of their neighbours. When Mrs. Jones surveys her best carpet, it is not with her own sight, but with that of the Prescotts next door,

and the rest of her habitual visitors. 'Insatiate vanity' and a foolish fear of the world are the mainsprings of this miserably false condition of things. It is one of the worst results of an adoration of gold:—it is a consequence of that stigma which is too generally attached to poverty, in this country. It is a result of that tendency of money-worshippers to look at a man's waistcoat rather than to his actions—to his material possessions rather than to his moral worth. He is a more considerable person in the esteem of the world who possesses fifty estates, than he who is a pattern of fifty virtues. This being so, we cannot wonder when we detect the existence of an universal system of hypocricy on the subject of riches; and a wish to appear well before the world—whatever the world's standard of excellence may be—will always be a marked trait in the national character.

There is a fashion in virtue as in dress, and now, unhappily, the virtue in vogue is—wealth. To be fashionable in this respect, a thousand sacrifices are daily made; glossy clothes are lined with sackcloth. Everything is made for show—to counterfeit wealth. It is a race to escape from the stigma of poverty; and, in the crowd, the *millionaire* is not distinguishable from the begging-letter writer. The advertising columns of the daily papers are crowded with painful instances of domestic suffering; but in no part of these columns do we find such unequivocal symptoms of the struggles of poor 'gentility,' as in that where people who let lodgings advertise the attractions of their respective households.

It is observable, that not two in a hundred of the people who let lodgings, receive lodgers for the sake of adding to their income. They scorn such a mercenary consideration. Their house is too large for them; they are anxious to add 'a few companions to their social circle;'—or they let their apartments, 'not for the sake of emolument, but to meet with a respectable tenant.' People who let lodgings are invariably accustomed to the highest society, and can give the most impressive references. The attractions they offer are overwhelming: Elysium can be nothing in comparison with the comforts to be had in an

Islington first floor, at fifteen shillings per week. The most fastidious must speedily be accommodated. It must be a real pleasure to appropriate one's first-floor to a genteel tenant, since emolument is never sought by 'people of the highest respectability.'

How happy people in lodgings must be! They may be 'surrounded with all the comforts of home without its cares' at a nominal rate of payment; they are at liberty to join 'a cheerful musical circle,' where 'rent is a minor consideration;' they may direct their luggage to a serene establishment 'where there are no children, or any other nuisances,' upon promising to pay 'the quiet and serious lady of the house' no more than the mere weekly sum of twelve shillings; and it is their own fault if they do not catch at 'an opportunity which seldom occurs' of ensconsing themselves in a family where there are 'no other lodgers, and where a man-servant is kept.'

People who let lodgings, in addition to their high respectability and carelessness as to the payment of rent, are frequently prodigies of learning. Conceive the cultivated state of that circle whence our native language is banished, and 'French is the tongue daily spoken at table.' Lodgings may not unfrequently be secured in a house that is attended by the best professors of every distinct branch of learning, where lessons in Hebrew and Greek—together with boot-cleaning—are included in the unusually low terms of one guinea per week. This magnificent offer is usually made for the sake of securing 'a fellow student for the advertiser's son;' of course the guinea per week is merely a nominal matter.

Some people let lodgings only to present advantages to happy bachelors and maidens 'deprived of a home.' For thirty shillings weekly, it is possible to rent a first floor in a highly respectable neighbourhood, of parties whose 'religious principles are in strict conformity with the Established Church.' The beatitude of occupying parlours underneath High Church people, is too evident to need a syllable of elucidation. There are also lodging-letting widows, whose only wish is to lift the responsibility of housekeeping off the shoulders of 'a respectable bachelor or widower,' and

with a touching self-sacrifice to place the burden upon their own back; benevolent housekeepers, who devote their entire attention to their lodgers, to the exclusion of every other earthly consideration; and mothers, at the lowest possible charge, for respectable young ladies 'of limited incomes.'

Words cannot adequately describe the splendour and the beauty of some of these homes. They 'are offered to a homeless public because, being furnished in the handsomest manner, with particular regard to comfort,' they are too good for the occupant; who is too well off, and benevolently wishes to share his domestic bliss with a less fortunate individual, 'whose reference will bear the strictest investigation.' Such domiciles often command extensive and varied scenery; they are, without exception, in the most fashionable locality; they are lofty and well-ventilated; they have all been recently fitted up; omnibuses pass the door every five minutes; and they are throughout, scrupulously clean. They are Utopias of elegance, comfort, learning, morality, and respectability. No wonder marriages are on the decrease in a country where a bachelor may hire a paradise, kitchen fire included, for a mere trifle.

What a devoted, self-sacrificial race must the lodging-house keepers of London be! Their virtues defy computation. They offer splendour, the highest respectability, morality, music, French, and natural solicitude, at the lowest possible figure; for 'money is no object.' They are too genteel—too easy in their circumstances—for cash to be to them, of the slightest consequence. No, they advertise their virtues and their splendour, for the Samaritan pleasure of admitting strangers to be partakers of their good fortune.

We have gathered this little history of people who let lodgings from their own modest autobiographies, as we find them in the advertising columns of the morning papers. It may, perhaps, vindicate this maligned class of persons from certain prejudices very generally entertained against them. People to whom rent is no object, will not purloin port; a serious family will not appropriate a lodger's

pomatum; no cheerful musical circle can entertain a particular regard for their lodger's lumps of sugar; no High Church family would peep into their lodger's tea-caddy; and certainly no housewife whose maternal solicitude can be had a bargain, would think it proper to appropriate her adopted child's bread-and-butter. Therefore the calumnies circulated to the prejudice of people who let lodgings, should be exposed, and the authors of them be held up to public obloquy. People who give and exchange the highest references, and who let their best rooms for the pleasure of living in the kitchen, and not with any idea of emolument, would not stoop to petty thefts of the above mean and detestable description.

Thus the cause of people who let lodgings may be vindicated. Their lodgings are let, and their gentility is not compromised."

"A fig for gentility," cried Horrocks.

"It has ruined many a man," said Phœnix: and Phœnix *knew* what he was talking about.

"Ay, what dirty things are done, every hour of each day, by your genteel people," Brother Frowde interposed. "The shabbiness, the wretched subterfuges, the little dishonesties, the bankruptcies and insolvencies that lie at the door of Mistress Grundy, should make that lady tremble."

"All will come right in due time," Brother Enough chirped.

"Perhaps that is the best way of looking at it. I cannot keep my eyes off my taper, yonder," said the Master.

The Brothers took the hint; and their lights flitted about the old cloisters, and disappeared, one by one. From one chamber the humming of an old air stole out into the darkness; and from another, the voice of an old man saying his prayers, sounded solemnly.

CHAPTER XI.

"I CLAIM precedence," cried Brother Horrocks, to-night. I cann't read late in the evening. It's a yarn supposed to have been written by a landlubber—giving his experiments for the prevention of sea-sickness. I call it—

"SCIENCE AT SEA."

Mind—the landlubber, not I, is speaking:—

"It is impossible for any sea to affect me. The boat may be 'lively', the sea 'chopping', and the most adipose of mutton chops may be presented to me, when we are in mid-channel. I and the steward have parted company for ever. The deck may be oblique, perpendicular and wet; water may pour down the cabin stairs, and the vessel may shudder in the trough of the sea, yet shall I serenely smoke my Havannah, peacefully watch the swoop of the sea-gull, and observe the land advancing to the ship's prow. Therefore shall I invest myself in the acknowledged nautical fashion. I am no longer one of those ignoble travellers whom seamen sagaciously warn to windward. I shall certainly not dine before land is out of sight. What so delicious as a snug dinner at sea! What so droll and amusing as a dancing dinner table! I have learned 'A Wet Sheet, &c.', and feel convinced that I shall be able to sing that eminently nautical ditty, as steadily and vociferously, in a 'whole gale' off the North Foreland, as I now sing it at the pianoforte of my neat little cousin and accompanist.

How have I acquired this sudden affection for nautical habiliments; this enviable defiance of the dancing waves, and the rolling, pitching steamer? How? I owe it to the

British Association for the Advancement of Science, and to the French Academy of Sciences. I owe it to Monsieur M. J. Curie, who, in the *Comptes Rendus*, has explained that sea-sickness arises from the upward and downward movements of the diaphragm, acting on the nerves of the brain, in an unusual manner. I owe it especially to the cure he recommends.—He instructs me to draw in my breath as the vessel descends, and to exhale it when the vessel ascends each billow—to keep in exact time and tune with the sea and the ship. Such is my first lesson. My second, I derive from the paper of Mr. J. Atkinson, read before the British Association at its last meeting. That gentleman declares that the chief reason of sea-sickness is because one's motions on board of ship, instead of being voluntary, are involuntary. Swinging, and riding in a carriage, often produce nausea, because the body, he says, is made tomove about, in despite of itself; while the voluntary operations performed by mechanics and labourers, involving the same kind of movements of the diaphragm, do not cause similar unpleasant results. If, then, we can introduce the voluntary system afloat, we shall obviate the most detestable incident of a sea voyage. Let, instructs Mr. Atkinson, a person on shipboard, when the vessel is bounding over the waves, seat himself, and take hold of a tumbler nearly filled with water or other liquid; and at the same time make an effort to prevent the liquid from running over, by keeping the mouth of the glass horizontal, or nearly so. When doing this, from the motion of the vessel, his hand and arm will seem to be drawn into different positions, as if the glass were attracted by a powerful magnet. Continuing his efforts to keep the mouth of the glass horizontal, let him allow his hand, arm, and body to go through the various movements—as those observed in sawing, planing, pumping, throwing a quoit, &c.—which they will be impelled, without fatigue, almost irresistibly to perform; and he will find that this has the effect of preventing the giddiness and nausea that the rolling and tossing of the vessel have a tendency to produce, in inexperienced voyagers. If the person is suffering from sickness at the commencement of his experiment, as soon as

he grasps the glass of liquid in his hand, and suffers his arm to take its course, and go through the prescribed movements, he feels as if he were performing them of his own free will: the nausea abates immediately, very soon ceases entirely, and does not return so long as he suffers his arm and body to assume the postures into which they *seem* to be drawn. Should he, however, resist the free course of his hand, he instantly feels a thrill of pain of a peculiarly stunning kind, shoot through his head, and he experiences a sense of dizziness and returning nausea.

'The reading of this paper,' says the report of it, 'caused a short discussion on the nature of sea-sickness; and some of the members promised to give it an early trial.'

Permit me modestly to state that I was one of the number who performed this promise.

Behold me on board. We are steaming down the river in gallant style! There is a fresh but gusty wind. I and the man at the helm have agreed that it will be smart work in the Channel. All the better. The boat behaves well in a rough sea, I should think. Dear me! we are only half-a-mile beyond the Nore, and the ladies begin to make precipitate retreats into the cabin. It is time to look after my sou'-wester; for ahead I see the crisp waves with fringes of foam—a sure sign of a chopping sea. Now, the vessel heaves a little. Now, she shakes and recovers herself, ashamed of being disturbed by a wave so insignificant. The flag at the mast-head stands out as stiff as a board. The men are closing the ports. I *thought* it was time to set that sail. Her head dips now, decidedly. That Frenchman has thrown his cigar overboard; I thought he would. Pshaw!—brandy-and-water already? What a pale and consumptive set of passengers we have on board! They must be excursionists from the Hospital for Consumption. A lady in a pink bonnet implores me to see her down the cabin-stairs. My head is very bad; the voyage will do me good, decidedly. I am very awkward with the pink bonnet. How she stumbles! She begs my pardon—she thought I was a sailor. She is quite right; I *am* thoroughly 'ship-shape;' but my arm is weak, and

I find it difficult to hold her. That weak ankle of mine begins to trouble me; how I stumble! It is as well to take up my position near the helmsman, and prove myself a sailor. Now, the vessel dips; I must draw in my breath. Now, she rises; I must exhale it. The helmsman wants to know what I am about, and calls my attention to 'a brig, that is behaving capitally to wind'ard;' but our vessel dips again, and again I must draw in my breath: she rises, and again I must exhale it.

Monsieur Curie is quite right; the upward and downward movements of the diaphragm act on the phrenetic nerves in an unusual manner. Yet I feel that I must take care of myself, lest I belie the anchors on my buttons. I think it would have been better to put to sea in a less noticeable costume. She dips again. Again I draw in my breath. She rises; once more I eject every 'puff' of breath out of my lungs. Now, she has settled into the trough of the sea, and I begin a survey of the brig. We rise, then sink to a terrible depth all in a minute, and I exhale my breath as we go down. That is decidedly a mistake. Our ship is too fast, and I cannot keep time. My constitutional giddiness—that giddiness which has never left me many hours from my early childhood—is returning to me. Again we descend, and again I exhale my breath, instead of drawing it in. The helmsman assures me that there is no danger. Who said there was? Who talked about danger? Why did he wear that sardonic smile? Am I not manfully trying the first part of 'A Wet Sheet, &c.?' though I am, I own, in such bad voice, that I cannot get on with it. Can it be? Yes. I *am* holding the seat with both hands. I hope I don't look frightened. Here is the steward. Dinner is ready. Very well. Who cares! Will I walk down? I think it is too early to dine, but will take a snack presently, if the steward will oblige with a glass of water at once. Why did he laugh as he left me? There is nothing extraordinary in the request; it is not unusual to drink water. How does he know that I am not a teetotaller? It would be easy enough to have the laugh of *him*. He is not a scientific man. He couldn't distinguish the diaphragm

from the phrenetic nerves. How is it possible to prove to him that I cannot be affected by the tossing of the vessel: how can I demonstrate to him that my present paleness is *not* the natural effect of the sea upon my nerves, but the deserved result of my carelessness?

The cruel eye of the helmsman is upon me: I have evidently fallen sixty per cent. in his estimation. I dare say he feels inclined to tear my anchor buttons from my jacket, and to pluck the sou'-wester from my ignoble head. I wish the steward would come with that water. The captain is approaching. *He* looks civil enough. He wants to know whether I had not better sit on the other side, with my face to the sea, and the wind at my back. What does he mean? I think I cut him short:—he will not open his mouth to me again. Here comes the steward with the water:—now it will be my turn to laugh. He waits for the glass: he cann't have it. I am not going to drink the water; I want it for a scientific purpose. Let me grasp it firmly, and endeavour to prevent the liquid running over, by keeping the mouth of the glass as nearly horizontal as possible. Now, it nearly touches the deck—now my face is reclining upon a coil of rope to my right—now, my arm is working to and fro—now, I dash it forward—now, I have it before the compass-box. I feel decidedly better, but at the expense of a performance, not unlike that of a person labouring under a severe attack of St. Vitus's dance. Now, the vessel descends tumultuously, and I throw myself almost on my back—now, she is climbing a very steep billow, and my nose threatens to test the smoothness of the deck. That helmsman is convulsed with laughter; but the recollection that Mr. J. Atkinson believes that the stomach is primarily affected through the cerebral mass, rather than through a disturbance of the thoracic and abdominal viscera, and that the involuntary motion communicated to the body by the rolling and tossing of the vessel is, by the means he adopts, apparently converted into voluntary motion—the recollection of this, nerves me to continue my novel performance. My giddiness is gone—forgotten in the concentrated attention given

to the tumbler. As yet I have not spilt a drop of the liquid. This is decidedly a triumph.

This rolling is a bore. The wildness of my motions will attract general attention. A man near me wants to know why I don't drink the water at once:—he says I have had a thousand opportunities, and that I am making myself ridiculous. But it is too late to expostulate. The tumbler has assumed the power of a magnet, and draws my nose after it, wherever it pleases. Roll I must, with the glass. My eyes are rivetted upon it; my body follows it, now to the deck, now towards the steersman, and now I lie upon my side wildly staring at it—but not a drop of the water has touched the deck. This is warm work, however. We shall be five hours before we make the port. For five hours, then, must my eyes be fixed upon the tumbler—for five hours must I roll about like a drunkard; for I am informed that, should I resist the free course of my arm and body, I shall instantly feel 'a thrill of pain of a peculiarly stunning kind' shoot through my head, and have a return of dizziness and nausea. Saw, dive, rock, and plunge, I must, then, without a momentary intermission, during five long hours. At the expense of these gigantic labours, only, can I purchase a sailor's reputation; and, after all, I shall be regarded as a very eccentric seaman—as one not altogether right about the head. Any torture, however is to be preferred to the sarcasms of that dreadful man at the helm, and that grinning steward. I feel very tired, though: I am in a glowing heat. I begin to feel that I shall never be able to drink a glass of water again. I begin to regard the tumbler as my personal enemy, and feel an almost irresistible inclination to dash it down upon the deck. Here comes that steward. He wants the glass: it is impossible to do without it. I swing about;—I am sawing the air with it—now I nearly dash the entire contents into his face. Will I drink the water, and give up the glass? I tell him to begone—that I shall require the use of the tumbler till we reach our destination; whereupon he seizes my hand and removes my enemy. I stagger, and allow that Mr. Atkinson is right: I do feel a pain 'of

a peculiarly stunning kind' in my head. Large black spots float before me; the steward becomes a dim monster: voices that are growling near me, sound as from a great distance. I make a plunge, rub my eyes hard, spasmodically drag down my waistcoat, shake back my hair, draw my cap firmly upon my head, and make an attempt to walk.

A few more ignominious moments, and the steward claims me as his own."

A shout of laughter greeted the old sailor's paper.

"Now then, who comes next?" said Horrocks, as he plugged his pipe.

"I think we're going abroad again," answered the Master, and he bowed towards Brother Lebord.

"I can give you a painting of ourselves, from the Hague," Lebord answered.

"We are all attention," was the Master's answer.

Brother Lebord unfolded an elegant manuscript, and read as follows:—

"AN OLD PORTRAIT FROM THE HAGUE."

"Here is an old portrait of our old friend the Englishman, painted by an unknown hand at the Hague, and given to the public in the year seventeen hundred and forty-seven. Strolling about the narrow streets, near the great library of Ste. Géneviève in Paris, noticing the slovenly students making their way to and from the Ecole du Droit, and glancing at the books arranged upon shelves along the dead walls, a saunterer (himself an Englishman) was suddenly stopped by two little yellow volumes in very bad condition, labelled 'Lettres sur les Anglois et François.' He invested seventy-five centimes, and became the happy possessor of two very curious portraits painted one hundred years ago. It is most probable that when these volumes were first distributed in Paris, from the library à la Plume d'or of the elder David, they created some sensation.

It appears from them, that our great great grandfathers had a reputation abroad for magnificence among the nobility, and for the abundant supply of necessaries enjoyed by the community. They were also held to be proud to a detestable pitch, to be insolent to strangers, and to be generally rude and gross in their manners. They were brave, yet so disinclined to engage in war that the title of captain was with them one of reproach, signifying usually an adventurer—as the title of abbé was given to any loose hypocrite in France—yet they had the courage to perform a good action, and to follow their own good sense, even when it was at war with conventional usage. The liberty which they enjoyed made them independent in all affairs, and prevented them from exhibiting a slavish deference towards the nobility. In this way the broad outlines of our great great grandfathers' portraits were drawn by the unknown artist at the Hague. But his details, drawn from personal observation, form the most curious part of his picture. It must be remembered that the portrait painter's brush is a hundred years old.

The happy character of an Englishman is a mixture of common sense and idleness. He has generally some imagination; but his imagination is like the hard coal he burns—it gives out more heat than light. He seldom goes abroad to seek his fortune; and it may be said, to the credit of the few who *do* venture, that not one of them ever succeeds. There are, however, excellent scientific men, and fine writers in England; and the Englishman pretends that his countrymen are more advanced in scientific pursuits than any other nation. In business he has neither the vivacity of the French merchant, nor the parsimony of the Dutch dealer; and, what is astonishing to a foreigner, he will often retire to the country when he has made a good fortune, even though he might double it by remaining at his counting-house. As a workman, he has, and justly, a good reputation. He excels in clock making, in upholstery, in saddle-making, and in other trades which I cannot at the moment call to mind; but he does not excel in the making of cutlery—being clumsy and inelegant. As an agriculturist he is always to be seen

in a close cloth coat, plush breeches, top-boots, well covered with spurs, riding invariably at full gallop. The Englishman is, however, always well dressed—a proof of his prosperity, since his clothing is, with him, a secondary consideration to his food.

I (that is to say, I the Portrait Painter at the Hague) must own one fact at once—the beauty of the Englishwoman does not touch me. She is always fair—almost white. Hers is a beautiful face without expression. It is never animated. I see a hundred beautiful women, but I do not know ten pretty ones. To me the Englishwoman's great charm is that modesty or sweet timidity, which sends the blood to her cheek at every turn, and lowers her eyelid constantly. She is always tall, has a noble presence, and enjoys the advantage of being, generally, richly dressed. But she has one great fault, that is, the neglect of her teeth—a neglect the more to be deplored, since she is accustomed to eat a great quantity of meat and very little bread. The patches she wears give her a coquettish look, though she is not a coquette. She has the reputation of a sweet disposition and a tender heart; but her want of occupation weakens her understanding, making her curious and credulous, and fond of astrology.

She has the brusquerie of her race; so that she will suddenly make a vow to marry the first man she meets in the street, and this man she will absolutely accept as her husband. In this kind of violence may be yet seen a remnant of that ferocity which is the characteristic of her blood.

To return to the Englishman. It may be said of him that he has the characteristic of the various races mixed up in his veins. He drinks like the Saxon; he loves hunting like the Danes; he cheats and plays false witness like the Normans, and he owes his love of bloody spectacles, and his fearlessness of death, to the Romans. This ferocious spirit is exhibited in the cock-fighting, and the baiting with bull-dogs, which delight him exceedingly.

At the theatre, he delights in pieces where broad allusions stand in the place of wit; and the translations he has made from Molière, show how utterly deaf he is to the

finer points of dramatic art. But then, in the place of French wit, he boasts that he has something which he calls 'Houmour.' Then this 'houmour' appears to me to be only the exercise of a perverted imagination that can displace ideas, giving to vice the mask of virtue, and making all that is good, ludicrous. It is a pity that instead of his 'houmour' the Englishman has not had a native Molière to cure him of some of his absurdities;—for instance, of his contempt for the rest of the world. Yet there is some excuse for the sombre character of the Englishman, since his history is so full of horrors, that his greatest poet, Shakspeare, has been able to dramatise most of it in tragedies. The Englishman has not much taste for music. He is delighted with the noise of trumpets, and it is amusing to watch him at one of his fashionable concerts. He looks grave and awkward: being in a place where he can neither play nor drink, and where only modest women are to be seen; but at his chocolate-house (which is more distinguished than the coffee-house), he is moody and silent also. He drinks for the pleasure of drinking, and sometimes he remains at a drinking party so long, and becomes so wild, that he will make a bet to kill the first man he meets in the street; and he will take care to win his wager. Two young men have been hanged lately for indulging in this kind of sport—yet, occasionally, he is a 'civil and sobre gentelmen.'

The Englishman always walks fast; and a walk is one of the chief pleasures of an Englishwoman. She walks straightforward with two or three female friends, seldom speaking, never looking aside. I have never seen an Englishwoman sit upon the grass or pick a flower; nor have I ever heard the faintest murmur of a song escape from her lips. She always walks out in broad daylight—probably because she can be best seen then; yet, notwithstanding this habit, and her love of wearing patches, she appears to be perfectly ignorant of coquetry, and never to understand for a moment that she can be beautiful. So modest does she appear, that I often feel inclined to tell her she is pretty, for the simple pleasure of giving her a bit of news. The Englishman does not accustom her to

that gallantry which Frenchmen pay to women,—therefore she is not so keenly on the look-out for compliments. I have known a distinguished English gentleman call for pipes and tobacco immediately after dinner, and allow the ladies to make their way out of the room, while the gentlemen were filling their first pipe. But this want of ceremony has its better side, since it humanises the Englishman's intercourse with his servants. You may see the English gentleman playing at foot-ball with artisans; and at a country dance he will call in his servants to make up the number of dancers.

I have hinted at the Englishman's love of the pleasures of the table. These pleasures he enjoys daily. They consist, for the most part, of different 'poudins,' of 'guldenpepins,' (an excellent kind of apple), raw oysters—which are delicious; and of roast beef, which is the great dish upon the King's table, as upon the artisan's. While speaking of the Englishman's pleasures, I may add that which he enjoys immensely, and which consists in rowing about the Thames, saying rude things to passers-by. These rudenesses are freely exchanged amongst all classes; and are indulged in even by the Englishwoman. Any Frenchman who appears, is certain to be called a 'French dog,' but this appellation greets him wherever he shows himself. The Englishman hates Frenchmen so intensely that to call a man a dog, and a French dog, is, I believe, to vent the full measure of a man's spite. While on the subject of dogs, I may mention the fact that the Englishman's bull-dog is perhaps the bravest animal in existence. He seldom barks; but he fights to the death. It is said that he has been known to suffer the amputation of his four legs, without leaving his hold of his enemy. The Englishman is proud of this courage, as he esteems it in himself, and will take his wife and daughter to see a prize-fight. If he be insulted in the street by a low fellow, he will instantly throw down his wig and sword, and fight him with his fists. I think I may now add the public executions to the list of the Englishman's amusements. His reputed ferocity is gratified by this pleasure, every six weeks regularly.

On the day set apart for this diversion the criminals

parade the town in carts. They are dressed in their best clothes; they wear white gloves, and, if it be the fine season, sport nosegays. Those who die gaily are said to die like gentlemen; and to gain this encomium, most of them go to their death with the most terrible insensibility, sometimes even playing the fool by the way, to divert the crowd. An instance of buffoonery occurs to me. One man on his way to the gibbet lately, stopped the cart at the door of a public-house, called out the landlord, and asked him whether he had not once missed a silver tankard. The landlord replied that one had been lately stolen from his house. 'Give us something to drink,' said the criminal, 'and I will tell you about it.' The landlord, delighted at the opportunity of recovering his property, complied. The criminal took a draught, gave refreshment to his comrades; and then, as the cart moved forward, said to the landlord, 'I stole your tankard; on my return I will give it back to you.' Some of these condemned men have been seen to put their white gloves in their pocket, while on their way in the cart, lest the rain should soil them, and spoil their appearance upon the scaffold. Altogether, these are singular exhibitions. I hear that sometimes the friends of the criminals go and pull their legs when they are hanging, to shorten the period of torture. Insensibility to the terror of death appears to me, indeed, to be the characteristic of the English race.

Lately three young women hanged themselves—being crossed in love. I expressed surprise at this; but the English were only astonished to hear that the lovers of the unhappy trio were Irishmen, who are very much despised in England. The Englishman destroys himself as quietly as he sees life destroyed in others. Lately, a gentleman hanged himself to vex his wife, by having his property thereby confiscated. 'He was tired of life,' said an English father not long since, when he was told that his son had drowned himself in the Thames.

With all these peculiarities, the Englishman has sound and good qualities. You will hear him use the word 'simple,' with pleasure, and he loves those he calls 'good-natured' people, who are, according to him, peculiar to

his country. I think it would not be difficult to justify even his 'How d'ye do.' The Englishman never talks without having something sensible to say; so that often, in society, long intervals of silence occur. It is the habit of the Englishman to break these silences by frequent 'How d'ye do's,' which people address to one another from time to time. These frequent 'How d'ye do's,' signify that the host is thinking about his guest, although he has nothing, at the moment, to say to him. The Englishman's books are like his conversation, full of sound sense, and generally free from quotations. He reads his laws—not in the spirit which dictated them—but to the letter. An instance of this habit occurred not long ago. The law of England forbids marriage with two wives. On this point it was a common saying that a man had only to take three wives to be beyond the reach of the statute. And this view was common enough, till a fellow travelled through the country, marrying all the pretty girls he met by the way; whereupon the jurisconsults met, and declared that it was impossible to marry a third wife without having been guilty of marrying two, and that, therefore, the wording of the statute was sound. The Englishman's laws are generally mild enough, but wayward and wrongly severe; so that some of the greatest rascals are punished only with the pillory, while debtors suffer the most horrible tortures—being cast into prison, and left, often, to die of hunger. No man, however, is condemned to death without having been found guilty, first, by twelve judges, or grand jurymen, and, in the second place, by twelve judges (the common jury) of his own condition. All these judges must be of one mind. A singular instance of the working of this system occurred lately. A man was tried for murder; and the proofs of his guilt were so convincing that eleven of his judges found him guilty, without hesitation. One judge, however, persisted in his opinion that the prisoner was innocent. The president tried to reason with the dissentient man, but he was inflexible. At length, the eleven judges, being unable to support the pangs of hunger any longer, acquitted the prisoner. The president, astonished at the obstinacy of the judge, asked him in private

his reason for believing the prisoner to be innocent. The judge or juryman, having bound the president by oath, not to reveal the secret, declared that he himself was the murderer; and that he would not add to his crimes, by hanging an innocent man. It is principally in the Englishman's laws regarding death punishments and his executions that I find him greviously at fault; for to judge as a stranger, you would say that he perseveres in his system of public hanging only to provide agreeable spectacles for the people; and that he encourages thieves, to provide convicted criminals.

I will now turn my attention from the Englishman to the city of which he is proud. London consists of long straight streets, which are, however, badly paved. It is now the largest city in Europe, yet it is continually increasing; and houses are built in half the time they take to build abroad. 'Whitehal,' situated on the banks of the Thames, is a commodious, but an ugly old house, the only really palatial chamber of which is the 'Banquetinhouse.' The King lives in a little house at 'Kengsington,' to avoid the thick air and smoke of the city. The park, however, is very fine. Charles the Second sent for the ingenious man who laid out the Tuileries in Paris, to lay out his park; but this man, on arriving, declared that he could not improve upon the natural picturesqueness of the ground, and persuaded the King to leave it as it was. After the park, I like the Thames as my place of diversion. A private house called in London, 'a thing to see,' is the mansion of my Lord Montaigu. All that this house requires are—furniture and company; it appears to be the palace of a prince who never lives in it. The Tower of London, full of crowns and sceptres, hatchets and clubs, lions and leopards, is worth seeing; but the most interesting building is the Temple of St. Paul, which is not yet finished, but is already in a forward state. In five or six years, this vast work will be completed. It is one of the largest edifices in Europe, and is capable of arresting all the vice of London, if the efficacy of the sermons be in proportion to the capacity of the temple. 'Westminster' is curious for its antiquity. Then there is the Monument. On the base-

ment there is an inscription, in which the Papists are accused of being the authors of the great fire. King James caused this inscription to be erased; but the stern Englishmen had it, afterwards, cut deep into the stone. The people being addicted to revolutions, it appears to me that this monument is likely to fall at last, by having its base cut through in this way.

London contains a prodigious number of ill-smelling coffee-houses: here persons loiter and waste their time; and here men of business carry on their affairs, so that people ask for a man's coffee-house, instead of his office. Coffee is not the only beverage sold in these houses.

Here also people smoke, drink, play, read the papers, and not seldom, write them. Here verdicts are passed upon the Prince, and the government, and the honour of husbands. Here a foreigner, if he can stand the atmosphere of a guard-house, may study the Englishman's character, observe his deliberate manner, and notice that he never interrupts his neighbour's speech. The public-houses are known by magnificent painted signs, some of which are equal in value to the rest of the establishment. London shops are magnificent, and the shopkeepers are remarkable for not pressing their customers to buy articles they do not want, as the custom is in France and Holland. Public carriages are cheap and abundant; and in this respect London is far in advance of Paris. The streets are dark: a few lanterns have been hung up lately, but they are of little or no use.

The country in England is very verdant; but then the Englishman, in his humid climate, has leaves instead of fruit. All the fruit he has is almost tasteless, with the exception of his 'golden pepins.' English flowers have only the faintest perfume; and English game is insipid. There are no vines in England, so that the Englishman has to trust to the foreigner for his wine. The Englishman's habits in the country, are rude enough. He gets only half-drunk at his host's table; so that he may have the pleasure of completing his inebriation with his host's servants.

Here the details of the old portrait of the Hague may be closed, and the Englishman of to-day may be left to

make his comparisons—to see himself as others saw him in the early days of the Georges. The picture is not without its instructive passages, as well as its ludicrous points. It is left exactly as it was drawn at the Hague, for the reader's examination."

"D — n this Dutch painting!" cried Horrocks. "Some of these days I shall let my brush loose upon Mounseer."

"Aye, aye!" cried Brother Lebord, "You may—upon the Mounseers, as you are pleased to call them, Captain; but there are points about them—there are institutions flourishing among them, which we might copy with advantage."

"What!" derisively from Horrocks. "Shall we copy their sailors; or give up our sailors for their *filets*?"

"Come, come, gentlemen, we have another paper from Brother Lebord to enjoy. He has been silent so long at our meetings, that he owes us another paper to-night."

"If Captain Horrocks will listen to my next little paper, I think he will agree with me, that the law which it illustrates, might be adopted with advantage, in England."

"Ugh!" surlily, from Horrocks.

Brother Lebord then read:—

"THE MILKY AND WATERY WAY."

"When the eastern sky flushed, on a certain autumn morning of last year, and the white caps of the farm-women looked very cold in the grey light, little did the surly farmers think, as they rubbed the lingering sleep from their heavy eyelids, that they might be wide awake to see the donkeys and horses loaded—little did they think that in the little town six miles off, certain angry men had laid a plot against them. The broad pans of rich milk sweetened the air, as the white fluid passed through it, into the shining buckets strapped to the sheepskin saddles of the patient donkeys. The milkwomen counted the eggs, and folded the chrome butter in damp cloths. And we thought that, amid the gabble of the servants, the shrill

cries for Cesar, Antoine, Louis, Josephine (who wore boots that were a reasonable load for any donkey), and Clementine (who was warding off the amatory advances of Cesar with a pitchfork), we certainly heard the well-known creak of the well-pulley. The farmer, who, by the time the farm-servants were fairly on the move, had fully resumed his daily remarkable wide-awake appearance, seemed also, to have very curious business in hand. It had appeared to us that the Sieur Moineau made, as forcible ladies express it, 'more fuss than enough' over the milk: and so it appeared to his enemies, as we shall presently show. Those sturdy legs of his would have failed him, even in those stiff leather gaiters, could he have peered, with those little grey eyes of his, into the future that lay but two hours a-head of the present. But as our friend Paleyanwater (a very old family) reminds us, at least twice in every twenty-four hours; it is a blessing that we cannot tell what the next five minutes may bring forth.

The Sieur Moineau, on the morning when we first made his acquaintance, went through his regular number of oaths at his men and women servants; rolled his potent R s up and down the dairy with his accustomed vigour, and, at last, saw his milk off for the market just as the sun had fairly left the horizon; with the firm conviction that Cesar, Josephine, Antoine, and Clementine would return to their midday meal, loaded with that strange jumble of bell-metal and copper, that, in France, even last year, in country districts, represented the humbler currency of the imperial dominions. Round about, in the hamlets dotted over the swell and fall of the land near the little town to which we have already alluded, and for which the Sieur Moineau's milk procession was bound, similar preparations to those we have faintly indicated, had taken place. A bird's-eye view of five or six miles around the town (let us call it Romanville) would have discovered a series of roads running into it, like needles into a circular pincushion. And upon one and all of these roads would have appeared sundry dark gray spots, relieved, as they neared the town, every moment, by flashing light. These spots were milk equipages: the flashing lights, the bright

brass-hoops of the milk-pails. The chirp of the birds—birds that were evidently sharp searchers for the early worms—was occasionally drowned by the shriller music of the milkwomen, who were indulging in reminiscences of Normandy, and, taking, to musical ears, a very unpleasant means of communicating to any person who might be at hand, their ardent desire to see it again; it being their deliberate opinion, after a comprehensive tour, that there was nothing like it. Barricaded in their seats by baskets of eggs and butter, their head and caps protected from the breeze by ample handkerchiefs, their substantial ankles cased in deep blue stockings, these parties of milk vendors were jolted on their way to Romanville. Occasionally their animals would loiter to gather a more than usually attractive thistle—a giving way to temptation which these rough Amazons punished by the prompt incision of a very substantial pin near the culprit's hind-quarters. Merrily enough many of these ladies gossiped along the road—about Baptiste, the ploughman who had jilted Jeannette, and had married Elise instead, to his cost, as he found out, and serve him right. About the prodigious number of litres yielded by the black cow; about the garde champêtre, who had spied a hare's foot peeping out of Adolphe's capacious pockets; in short, about the scandals in general of the village from which they were being jolted. And why not, pray? My lady, who spends her mornings reviewing her long list of friends—who yawns when they are praised, and exhibits animation only when something may be heard of to their disadvantage, is allowed her malignant pleasure by all the world, and is permitted as the subject of sharp reviews by all the world also. Why, then, should Virginie, the ruddy-cheeked dairywoman, as she rides to market, be condemned to love her neighbours, or be forced to be good-natured always, even to her bosom friends? Simple people, tied to the dust and smoke of towns, grow sentimental over rural life. They believe that there can be no heart-burning behind the ivy of a roadside cottage. They imagine that cottagers are necessarily better people than the spare fellows who throw the shuttle, in the gloomy lanes of great cities.

The authorities of Romanville had given it as their decided opinion that the rural entourage of their ancient city, was, in no respect better, but in every respect worse, than it should be. This had been the conviction of the inhabitants a long time, before the eventful morning, on which we enjoyed the honour of an introduction to the Sieur Moineau. The cooks who met twice a week on the Grand Place to buy vegetables, gossip about their mistresses, and realise their fair per centages on their purchases; had one and all declared that, in the long course of their protracted experience, they had never seen cheats so audacious as the villagers round about Romanville. Opinions travel rapidly in a provincial town; but, then this rapid travelling finds, perhaps, a wholesome check, in the proverbial slowness of the sous-prefêt and his subordinates. The half-dozen dozen policemen who sauntered about the triumphantly ill-paved streets, and bronzed themselves valiantly under the fierce rays of the sun at some curiously low salary, could not reasonably be expected to do more than this. They were only mortals after all, though they wore the cocked hats, so reverenced by Frenchmen generally; and insisted on, in Paris, when the new police was established. The new corps wore caps for a short time; but, we are assured, the people would pay no respect whatever to the kepis. The cocked hat is something to reverence, or, at any rate to fear.

It was on the eve of the day when we first intrusted our hand to the awful grasp of the Sieur Moineau, that a meeting took place at Romanville, in a little close bureau, originally forming one of the door-keeper's residences, under the archway of the local museum and college. In this little bureau, were those long green books: that coarse, brown tea-paper upon which French underlings write; that ample pan of sand for letter-drying; that curious inkstand, with a lump of wool in the ink; that square, red earthenware receptacle in the corner, which proved that the expectorators who paid their attentions to it, were not artillery officers; and finally that series of green card-board boxes, piled to the ceiling, which generally make up a French bureau of modest pretensions. The

pens, sharp as needles, and the blue-green ink, should not be forgotten. Everything looked greasy, of course. First, the men who were in the bureau, then the stools, then the broad black space around the door-handle. A not very acute olfactory nerve might have gathered from the atmosphere a distinct odour of garlic.

In this delightful retreat from the turmoil of the town, the entire body of the Romanville police was gathered on the eve of that eventful morning, which gave a shock to the nerves of the Sieur Moineau, under which he is labouring at the present moment. The cocked hats of the six policemen were piled upon the desk; and the shiny, closely cropped heads of the men were packed together, pressing around their chief. This chief was a very serious man indeed; a man, you saw it at a glance, with a curious story. He wore the silver star of the legion, for services performed far away from Romanville. Gossips said that his present position as chief of the Romanville constabulary, was given to him when he was disgraced. But, nobody knew what his antecedents were. He did his duty strictly, but not harshly; still, although a kind, he was not acompassionable man. You never met him walking in the streets with a fellow townsman. His right arm held behind his back in his left; his eyes wandering calmly and coldly over the prospect; he would take his solitary walk round the ramparts any evening; read the Constitutional afterwards (it was always reserved for him at the café, on its arrival from Paris); and retire to rest punctually at ten o'clock. He was a man reduced to the unvarying precision of a timepiece. He walked round the ramparts the same number of times every evening. It was at eight o'clock precisely every evening, that he opened the door of the Café de la Grande Place, and ordered invariably a choppe of Strasbourg beer.

At the meeting of his forces, in his greasy little bureau, he gave his orders in the calm, methodical speech we expected to hear from him. A sergeant of the local gendarmerie, was also of the meeting; and to him the chief more particularly addressed himself. He told him to place a mounted patrol at every octroi gate around the city, as

early as four o'clock the following morning, and to prevent every market man or woman, who carried a pail of any kind, from entering the town. The patrol would detain all pail-bearers who might present themselves till he arrived. These orders were to be communicated to the mounted patrols, on their arrival at the scene of action. The policemen were enjoined to keep the matter secret, on pain of dismissal.

We left the milkmaids merrily singing and gossiping on their way to Romanville.

'This is a droll affair,' said the gendarme posted at the octroi gates, towards which the Sieur Moineau's procession was advancing, addressing a very peppery specimen of the line, whose bayonet towered over his glazed shako.

'Very droll,' replied the little warrior, as he planted himself firmly in the middle of the road, and prepared, if necessary, to charge the entire column of Moineau's milkmaids and donkeys.

'You cannot pass,' cried the gendarme to the women as they reached the gate, 'and you are detained, till the authorities have dealt with you. Get down, and enter the octroi office.'

The reader who has not seen the French authorities deal with the French people, will be unable to realise the consternation this order created among the Moineau servants. The women grew ashy pale, and shrieked, and clasped their hands, and called upon their favourite saints, and begged for explanations from the peppery little man, who looked his sternest, and was possibly disappointed because he had not had an opportunity of poking his bayonet, at least, into a donkey. The women went chattering into the dark greasy octroi room, where they sat upon the forms and wrung their hands, and implored the octroi official to give them some clue to the mystery. But, the official was silent. Other milk parties arrived in rapid succession; and were treated, as the Moineau cavalcade had been. On each occasion the screams, and prayers, and violent gestures peculiar to French excitement, were repeated. In an hour the little bureau was full of ruddy women, and bronzed countrymen in their blue blouses,

who vented their indignation in a series of oaths, in which the letter *r* seemed to predominate.

Presently the chief of the police, accompanied by two or three officials, and two policemen, was seen approaching the barrière. The excitement in the octroi bureau became intense. The white caps of the women could be seen, in stages, one above the other, as they raised themselves on tiptoe, to catch a glimpse of the awful procession. The chief looked more than usually serious; but, on arriving before the bureau, he took no notice whatever of the crowd of country-people gathered within. it. It was evident that his business was not with them. They were not, however, left in a state of suspense; since the officials proceeded, with remarkable vigour, to drag the donkeys from the roadside, the animals' heads, and necks, stretching to a wonderful length, before their bodies yielded to the tugs of the authorities. In a few minutes the pails were untied, and arranged in a row, against the hedge. It was now obvious that the Sieur Moineau's milk was about to undergo, in company with that of his neighbours, the severe test that was thenceforth to be applied to it, from time to time, by the representatives of the law. A very serious looking gentlemen proceeded with the chemical analysis. It must have been highly unsatisfactory. Had the Sieur Moineau mixed flour, or emulsion of almonds, or the brown extract of chicory with his milk, that he might, without fear of detection by his customers, add gallons of water? The babble of tongues under which the analysis was conducted, prevented us from learning the precise reason why, pailful after pailful of the farmer's milk was sent wandering, in a broad white line, along the open sewer of the road. There was hardly a pailful that escaped. The Sieur Moineau's neighbours were not less culpable; and their milk, too, flowed in a broad white way through the streets of the town. In vain the women appealed to the policemen; in vain they assured the chief that the milk was as it came from the cows; the official chemist knew better, and tipped their pails over, one after the other, without appearing to take the least notice of their protestations. In half an hour the Moineau

servants were on their way back to their master, their empty pails jingling at their sides, and their tongues doing their utmost to drown this jingling.

From the barrière, where the Moineau procession was stopped and relieved of its burden, the chief and his officials repaired in succession, to the remaining barrières around Romanville. At each barrière the scene already described was faithfully copied. The women chattered, and prayed, and gesticulated; the pails were arranged in rows, and the milk was sent bubbling along the open sewer. Before seven o'clock, the rich fluid—rich even with its admixture of water, and flower, and chicory—whitened the long line of open sewerage across the city: a milky and watery way drawn by the authorities as a prompt and very impressive lesson to the farmers round about.

And then, when the servants with jugs, and pans, and pitchers, darted into the streets to the accustomed gateway, under which their milk-vendor usually sat, surrounded by her snow-white pails, and found that she was not there; when the rubbish carts were in the streets, and the chiffonniers were investigating the worth of the castaway vegetables, and rags and dirt piled in neat heaps before every house; when the shutters were being taken down from the tobacco-shops and the grocers' windows, and when the air was scented with the morning rolls; the excitement among the townfolk became really dangerous. The six policemen walked up and down the streets, looking appropriately fierce and uncompromising. They gave no heed to the stories of the nurses who were bringing up babies by hand, and were consequently in despair. They were unmoved by the fact that a certain old lady would be dead if she didn't get her milk-soup before ten o'clock. They disregarded the sorrows of the children, who would have to go without puddings; and of the restaurateurs who were in despair about their day's sauces. They had done their duty, they said; even their chief had been compelled to drink black coffee, and there would be pure milk for everybody to-morrow! Pure milk for everybody, at the cost of one day's milk for none! A day of fast was to procure a

year of festival. Could London milkmen only live in dread of galactometers, as now the Paris milkmen do! For, one of these days, Paris will be in like manner taken by surprise; and the produce of the forty-eight thousand three hundred and seventy cows, whose milk she consumes, will flow in curls, like wedding favours, along the Boulevards!"

"A very good plan," cried Brother Babbicomb. "Think of the harm done to thousands of little children, who are poisoned by the unblushing adulteration of London milk!"

"I think, gentlemen, we have time for another glass of ale, and a short paper from Brother Hartopp;—who has not favoured us lately," said the Master.

"Let it be English, then," cried Horrocks.

Brother Hartopp assured the old captain that his contribution referred to his native country. "I call it," said the Brother,

"FATE DAYS."

Reads:—

"It is difficult to reconcile the existence of certain superstitions that continue to have wide influence, with the enlightenment of the nineteenth century. When we have read glowing paragraphs about the wonderful progress accomplished by the present generation; when we have regarded the giant machinery in operation for the culture of the people—moved, in great part, by the collective power of individual charity; when we have examined the stupendous results of human genius and ingenuity which are now laid bare to the lowliest in the realm; we turn back, it must be confessed, with a mournful despondency, to mark the debasing influence of the old superstitions which have survived to the present time.

The superstitions of the ancients formed part of their religion. They consulted oracles as now men pray. The

stars were the arbiters of their fortunes. Natural pheno mena, as lightning and hurricanes, were, to them, awful expressions of the anger of their particular deities. They had their *dies atri* and their *dies albi;* the former were marked down in their calendars with a black character, to denote ill-luck, and the latter were painted in white characters to signify bright and propitious days. They followed the finger-posts of their teachers. Faith gave dignity to the tenets of the star-gazer and fire-worshipper.

The priests of old taught their disciples to regard six particular days in the year as days fraught with unusual danger to mankind. Men were enjoined not to let blood on these black days, nor to imbibe any liquid. It was devoutly believed that he who ate goose on one of these black days would surely die within forty more; and that any little stranger who made his appearance on one of the *dies atri* would surely die a sinful and violent death. Men were further enjoined to let blood from the right arm on the seventh or fourteenth of March; from the left arm on the eleventh of April; and from either arm on the third or sixth of May, that they might avoid pestilential diseases. These barbaric observances, when brought before people in illustrations of the mental darkness of the ancients, are considered at once to be proof positive of their abject condition. We thereupon congratulate ourselves upon living in the nineteenth century; when such foolish superstitions are laughed at; and perhaps our vanity is not a little flattered by the contrast which presents itself, between our own highly cultivated condition, and the wretched state of our ancestors.

Yet Mrs. Flimmins will not undertake a sea-voyage on a Friday, nor would she on any account, allow her daughter Mary to be married on that day of the week. She has great pity for the poor Red Indians who will not do certain things while the moon presents a certain appearance, and who attach all kinds of powers to poor dumb brutes ; yet if her cat purrs more than usual, she accepts the warning, and abandons the trip she had promised herself on the morrow.

Miss Nippers subscribes largely to the fund for eradica-

ting superstitions from the minds of the wretched inhabitants of Kamschatka; and while she is calculating the advantages to be derived from a mission to the South Sea Islands, to do away with the fearful superstitious reverence in which those poor dear islanders hold the native flea; a coal pops from her fire, and she at once augurs from its shape, an abundance of money that will enable her to set her pious undertaking in operation; but on no account will she commence collecting subscriptions for the anti-drinking-slave-grown-sugar-in-tea society, because she has always remarked that Monday is her unlucky day. On a Monday her poodle died, and on a Monday she caught that severe cold at Brighton, from the effects of which she is afraid she will never recover.

Mrs. Carmine is a very strong-minded woman. Her unlucky day is Wednesday. On a Wednesday she first caught that flush which she has never been able to chase from her cheeks, and on one of these fatal days her Maria took the scarlet fever. Therefore, she will not go to a pic-nic on a Wednesday, because she feels convinced that the day will turn out wet, or that the wheel will come off the carriage. Yet the other morning, when a gipsy was caught telling her eldest daughter her fortune, Mrs. Carmine very properly reproached her first-born for her weakness, in giving any heed to the silly mumblings of the old woman. Mrs. Carmine is considered a woman of uncommon acuteness. She attaches no importance whatever to the star under which a child is born,—does not think there is a pin to choose between Jupiter and Neptune; and she has a positive contempt for ghosts; but she believes in nothing that is begun, continued, or ended on a Wednesday.

Miss Crumple, on the contrary, has seen many ghosts, —in fact, is by this time quite intimate with one or two of the mysterious brotherhood; but at the same time she is at a loss to understand how any woman in her senses, can believe Thursday to be a more fortunate day than Wednesday, or why Monday is to be black-balled from the Mrs. Jones's calendar. She can state, on her oath, that the ghost of her old schoolfellow, Eliza Artichoke, appeared

at her bedside on a certain night; and she distinctly saw the mole on its left cheek, which poor Eliza, during her brief career, had vainly endeavoured to eradicate, with all sorts of poisonous things. The ghost, moreover, lisped,—so did Eliza! This was all clear enough to Miss Crumple, and she considered it a personal insult for anybody to suggest that her vivid apparitions existed only in her own over-wrought imagination. She had an affection for her ghostly visitors, and would not hear a word to their disparagement.

The unearthly warnings which Mrs. Piptoss had received had well-nigh spoilt all her furniture. When a relative dies, the fact is not announced to her in the commonplace form of a letter,—no, an invisible sledge-hammer falls upon her Broadwood, an unseen power upsets her loo-table; all the doors of her house unanimously blow open; or a coffin flies out of the fire, into her lap.

Mrs. Grumple, is a very economical housewife, and looks forward to the day when the moon re-appears,—on which occasion she turns her money, taking care not to look at the pale lady through glass. This observance, she devoutly believes, will bring her good fortune. When Miss Caroline has a knot in her lace, she looks for a present; and when Miss Amelia snuffs the candle out, it is her faith that the act defers her marriage for a twelvemonth. Any young lady who dreams the same dream two consecutive Fridays, will tell you that her visions will 'come true.'

Yet these are exactly the ladies, who deplore the 'gross state of superstition' in which many 'benighted savages' live, and willingly subscribe their money for its eradication. The superstition so generally connected with Friday, may easily be traced to its source. It, undoubtedly and confessedly, has its origin in scriptural history: it is the day on which the Savion suffered. The superstition is the more revolting from this circumstance; and it is painful to find that it exists among persons of education. There is no branch of the public service, for instance, in which so much sound mathematical knowledge is to be found, as in the Navy. Yet who are more superstitious than sailors,

from the admiral down to the cabin boy? Friday fatality is still strong among them. Some years ago, in order to lessen this folly, it was determined that a ship should be laid down on a Friday, and launched on a Friday; that she should be called 'Friday,' and that she should commence her first voyage on a Friday. After much difficulty a captain was found who owned to the name of Friday; and after a great deal more difficulty men were obtained, so little superstitious, as to form a crew. Unhappily, this experiment had the effect of confirming the superstition it was meant to abolish. The 'Friday' was lost — was never, in fact, heard of from the day she set sail.

Day-fatality, as Miss Nippers interprets it, is simply the expression of an undisciplined and extremely weak mind; for, if any person will stoop to reason with her on her aversion to Mondays, he may ask her whether the death of the poodle, or the catching of her cold, are the two greatest calamities of her life; and, if so, whether it is her opinion that Monday is set apart, in the scheme of Nature, so far as it concerns her, in a black character. Whether for her insignificant self there is a special day accursed! Mrs. Carmine is such a strong-minded woman, that we approach her with no small degree of trepidation. Wednesday is her *dies ater*, because, in the first place, on a Wednesday she imprudently exposed herself, and is suffering from the consequences; and, in the second place, on a Wednesday her Maria took the scarlet fever. So she has marked Wednesday down in her calendar with a black character; yet her contempt for stars and ghosts is prodigious. Now there is a consideration to be extended to the friends of ghosts, which Day fatalists cannot claim. Whether or not deceased friends take a more airy and flimsy form, and adopt the invariable costume of a sheet to visit the objects of their earthly affections, is a question which the shrewdest thinkers and the profoundest logicians have debated very keenly, but without ever arriving at any satisfactory conclusion.

The strongest argument against the positive existence of ghosts, is, that they appear only to people of a certain

temperament, and under certain exciting circumstances. The obtuse, matter-of-fact man, never sees a ghost; and we may take it as a natural law, that none of these airy visitants ever appeared to an attorney. But the attorney, Mr. Fee Simple, we are assured, holds Saturday to be an unlucky day. It was on a Saturday that his extortionate bill in poor Mr. G.'s case, was cut down by the taxing-master; and it was on a Saturday that a certain heavy bill was duly honoured upon which he had hoped to reap a large sum, in the shape of costs. Therefore, Mr. Fee Simple believes that destinies have put a black mark against Saturday, so far as he is concerned.

The Jew who thought that the thunderstorm was the consequence of his having eaten a slice of bacon, did not present a more ludicrous picture, than Mr. Fee Simple presents with his condemned Saturday.

We have an esteem for ghost-inspectors, which it is utterly impossible to extend to Day-fatalists. Mrs. Piptoss, too, may be pitied; but Mog, turning her money when the moon makes her re-appearance, is an object of ridicule. We shall neither be astonished, nor express condolence, if the present, which Miss Caroline anticipates from the knot in her lace, be not forthcoming; and as for Miss Amelia, who has extinguished the candle, and to the best of her belief, lost her husband for a twelvemonth, we can only wish for her, that when she is married, her lord and master will shake her faith in the prophetic power of snuffers. But of all the superstitions that have survived to the present time, and are to be found in force among people of education and a thoughtful habit, Day-fatalism is the most general, as it is the most unfounded and preposterous. It is a superstition, however, in which many great and powerful thinkers have shared, and by which they have been guided; it owes much of its present influence to this fact; but reason, Christianity, and all we have comprehended of the great scheme of which we form part, alike tend to demonstrate its absurdity, and utter want of all foundation."

"Amen," said the Master.

"True," said Horrocks: "but, he'd be a bold man who stepped to the fo'castle and told Jack, that all his favorite superstitions were so many evidences of crass ignorance."

"Perhaps so," said Mr. Frowde, as the Brothers wandered towards the Hall-door—"perhaps so; but Truth is a mighty bold traveller, and will reach the fo'castle, before she folds her wings up."

CHAPTER XII.

It was near Christmas time when the Brothers assembled to hold their twelfth meeting. They had met, about once a month—and they had begun early in the year. The Master had arranged to close the year with a Christmas paper. More—he had a proposition to make at the close of the evening; which shall be submitted to the reader in its proper place.

"We have three papers for this evening, gentlemen," said the Master, tapping the table to secure the attention of his audience. "And then I have an important suggestion to make to you. Holly-berries are over our heads; and we shall discuss this suggestion merrily—over a punchbowl. But, first, to business. Mr. Hartopp, I call upon you to read your little paper about—

"THE IRON SEAMSTRESS."

Mr. Hartopp read:—

"The tender stories which have gone abroad of the flesh and blood seamstress—stories of which Hood's 'Song of the Shirt' is at once the most affecting and the most poetic—have often touched the hearts of all of us. They were stories of hard work and scanty requital: of suffering widows, and forlorn orphans, doomed by necessity to ply the needle or starve utterly: of early deaths, bloodless cheeks, fleshless fingers, and sightless eyes. To the least sensitive of men these stories were often of that terrible desolation which forces sympathy, which commands commiseration. A horrible little instrument of torture has

this little needle been to thousands of poor Englishwomen! It has worn the flesh from their hands: it has driven the blood from their cheeks: it has pierced their hearts! Soft-natured people have wept abundant tears over the pictures of misery, drawn by this sharp little instrument. On all sides people asked whether the poor creatures doomed to hold it could not be befriended: whether the wages of their labour could not be increased. The manufacturer answered, that he could employ only at those prices, and that higher wages were incompatible with reasonable profits. Again, the Government contracts left so little margin to the contractor, that seamstresses must work on, and working to the last hour, find early graves. Competition so harassed the manufacturers—drove them on so relentlessly in the general race for cheapness—that they could not possibly, without incurring a loss on every manufactured article, afford their seamstresses an additional penny per day. And thus, the needle was left to do its terrible work—to furnish for the happy and the gay the embroidered robe and the flowery bonnet, while the worker grew sick and blind. Yet, at intervals, tales of misery so fearful, were forced upon public attention, that men cried aloud, this state of things must cease to be.

Needlewomen's Benevolent Societies were formed, and some few poor women were snatched from death. The cry for wives, reaching England from Australia, also brought good tidings to many faint hearts; and hundreds of seamstresses were helped to ships that would carry them to comfortable homes. Some very delicate people were shocked to think that wives should be exported like so many bales of printed cotton: though the same very delicate people were not found to object to the genteel custom of sending moneyless young ladies out to India, to shed the brightness of domestic life around the persons of many and divers wealthy gentlemen with a considerable derangement of the liver. Yet the system was pursued. Many seamstresses did embark, and are now happily married to prosperous colonists.

This change has operated for the general good in England. Here, the seamstresses are fewer, and have, of late,

commanded higher wages. Still, at the present moment, their prospects and experience are not of the brightest. Still the day's hard work brings only the coarsest food and the coldest home. While the advocates of emigration have been whispering seductive stories; while aristocratic patronesses have been forming themselves into committees in aid; the thinning (in a measure) of the human supplies has turned the attention of one or two ingenious men to the possibility of contriving some kind of seamstress that would show no pale cheeks, and demand no morsel of bread. Flesh and blood seamstresses having become insufficient instruments, it was time to see whether a seamstress could not be formed of solid iron. Accordingly, so long ago as in the year eighteen hundred and forty-six, Mr. Ellis Howe, of Boston, in the United States, saw a way of 'going ahead' in the matter. He adopted the principle of the shuttle, and conceived that, by combining this with a needle and a double thread, he could form an iron seamstress who would be entirely free from the interference of any benevolent society, and who would never lose her sight or her flesh. Mr. Howe went vigorously to work; spent much money in cranks and cog-wheels, and iron fingers, and ingenious needles, and in shuttles. He put the anatomy of his iron seamstress together in various ways: but she would not work. No school-girl was ever so lazy as this iron workwoman. At last, fairly tired out with the iron obstinacy of his seamstress, Mr. Howe gave her up as an incorrigible sloth and dunce. Other men advanced to afford to the iron seamstress that paternal protection and improvement which Mr. Howe had withdrawn from her; but all reformatory discipline appeared to fail. Her stitches were not good; her needle was never in the right place; her threads were always tangled.

Of all refractory seamstresses this iron seamstress was the worst, until the year eighteen hundred and fifty-one, when Mr. C. T. Judkins took her in hand. He had resolved upon resorting to strong measures to subdue her iron nature. He carefully examined the means which his predecessors had taken to reform her and make her an effective seamstress. After considerable labour, he so cor-

rected her revolutionary tendencies that she became docile, and began to work her iron fingers admirably.

Possibly the reformer plumed himself not a little on his cleverness :—but, certainly Mr. Howe saw the goodness of his follower's work. He forthwith laid a claim to part of the seamstress. Part of the iron lady (said Mr. Howe) might belong to Mr. Judkins; but, undoubtedly, the lady's hands—the needle and the shuttle—were the property of Mr. Howe. How *versus* Judkins hereupon joined issue, and the law decided in favour of Howe. What! must the seamstress then, but appear, like Miss Biffin, without arms! These were terrible times in the history of the metallic seamstress. But Mr. Judkins did not desert the lady in these her dark days. He forthwith proceeded to consider the possibility of adapting the seamstress to her work. He, and others have succeeded. She now proceeds to do her business in a curious, but effective way. She is, probably, not good at involved crotchet patterns, and in other mysteries of needlework; but give her plain work to sew, and you shall see her make more than five hundred tight stitches in a minute.

The iron seamstress is composed of a flat metal surface, about twelve inches square (a very comfortable little body, as it will be seen), resting on four substantial legs. From one side of the lady's flat iron surface, an arm rises to the height of about ten inches, and then, bending the elbow, passes over to the opposite side. From the end of the arm, a movable finger descends; this movable finger holds the needle. But the iron lady's needle is not like the instrument of a flesh and blood seamstress. Her needle has its eye only half an inch from the point. The lady's needle being fixed in the lady's iron finger (somehow, this is like writing about a ferruginous Miss Kilmansegg), a reel or bobbin filled with thread is placed above the lady's arm, and the thread is passed through the needle's eye;—for, the iron seamstress cannot thread her needle herself. To move the iron seamstress, a wheel is fixed to a main shaft; this wheel may be turned, either by steam or by human hands. Once in motion, it has instantaneous effect upon a lever within the arm; and the effect of this lever is to

move the needle in the iron finger up and down, through the cloth and back again, leaving a loop of thread visible under the cloth. Beneath the iron surface before described, are a second reel of thread and another needle; this needle moves horizontally, backwards, and forwards through the loops made by the vertical needle; and in this way the stitches are formed. But the horizontal needle also leaves a loop through which the vertical needle passes in its next descent; and thus, at every descent, a stitch is completed by the iron seamstress. It is true that this stern lady uses two needles, whereas the human instrument commands only one; but she works at the prodigious rate of five hundred stitches a minute! She certainly requires somebody to be constantly looking after her. She does not even hold her work herself. A servant must be in attendance to guide the cloth forward as the stitches are made in it, causing the sewing to be straight, angular, or circular, at his pleasure.

But with all these disadvantages, the iron seamstress has unquestionable recommendations. Her five hundred stitches per minute outnumber those of the human seamstress beyond all hope of rivalry. In the delicate parts of work—in those mysteries known to the erudite as flounces, gussets, frills, and tucks—in the learned complications of the herring-bone system, and the homely art of darning—we imagine that the iron lady is not proficient. We believe her to be able, at the present time, to take in only the plainest needlework. She must cede the graces of the art, as yet, to her human rivals: content to stitch and sew anything put before her, at the goodly rate of five hundred stitches per minute.

Yet, even now, the friends of human seamstresses may well begin to consider the effect this iron rival will ultimately have on human labour. Will the iron seamstress drive the seamstress of (not much) flesh and blood to more remunerative employments? The answer is not an easy one. Needlework, though poorly paid, has long been the drudgery to which women have taken, when the strong arm that shielded them has fallen suddenly away. It was work easily learned and abundantly wanted. Poor crea-

tures whose prospect was so dark that any pittance was a relief; could always, if they would accept the hard price, get the work. True, better times than those of forty-eight have dawned: and in the future, hope is placed most confidently by all men. But while we acknowledge that it is for the good of everybody that the iron seamstress should ply her double needles, we may well look around to see what field of labour may be fairly laid open to helpless women. We are told that they would make tender doctors for one another; that in walks of science and knowledge, there is room they may well fill; that in the broad ways of the world there are many honourable employments for which they are appropriately fitted. No doubt. And if we look to it a little, while the iron seamstress is practising her five hundred stitches per minute, we may take that one effective stitch in time, which is said to save nine."

"Ay, but, by my dear brother Hartopp," cried the Master, "there is a sad want of employment for women."

"There is," sighed Brother Frowde. "A poor, dear little niece of mine is a nursery governess, and I know it."

"Let them be doctors among their own sex," said surgeon Babbicomb. "They have as much firmness as men; and their patients would confide in them more freely than they can in strange men."

"Well, well," said Horrocks, "I expect we have little time for discussion to-night. I don't want to find that we have spoiled our good Master's brew by letting it stand too long. So to the next paper."

"It is a peep at some boys, feeling their feet in the world," said Brother Sands, by way of introducing

"THE BUDDING CHATHAMS."

Mr. Sands began:—

"Not long ago, five or six young men, having arrived at the conclusion that the enunciation of their several

opinions on various questions should, in common justice to mankind, take effect within the hearing of a more numerous auditory than they then commanded, resolved to assemble a club for the discussion of questions 'affecting the social, moral, and political condition of the human race.' The field of speculation was extensive, including every theory, and every range of subject. There was no bye-law in the constitution of the club that could prevent an ambitious member from disputing Newton's law of gravitation; no fine restricted him from exulting in the social and artistic perfection of the middle ages; he might attempt to prove that the French won the battle of Waterloo, or that two and two sometimes make five, with perfect impunity. Neither, if he chose to hold forth on the perfectibility of human reason, or on the relation of mind to matter in the abstract, need he dread any worse punishment than the loud dissent or the tranquil sleep of his auditors. The laws were framed to catch the eloquence of every member; or rather to allow any number of hobbies to be ridden by any number of members who were disposed for a ride.

The early days of the club were sad times. Young gentlemen, with all the wish to make speeches of interminable length, only kept themselves decently on their legs for five minutes. In those green days of the germinating orators, their rhetoric was so bound up in the bud, that it could not burst forth into flower. They burned with the *cacoëthes*, without having the *vis loquendi.* They had plenty to say, but could not say it. They boasted of hosts of ideas, but want of practice denied them the use of words. The consequence was, that the law of primogeniture was reviewed in its effects, from the Conquest up to the year 1850, in ten minutes: a republican young man 'obtained possession of the floor' at a quarter to eight o'clock, and proved, to his own entire satisfaction, that no head that had ever worn a crown had ever betrayed one sign of the commonest human virtue, before the clock had struck the hour. Although great confidence existed as to the latent talent of the members, and their capacity to deal with every vital question; yet after the experience of a few evenings, the fact that prac-

tice was wanted by the majority present, became undoubted. The two or three members who possessed greater fluency than the rest were soon promoted to leaderships, and then the disposition of parties became manifest. The Budding Chathams soon found that they had a Liberal Party, a Moderate Party, and a Tory Party. For each party a leader was found; and then the usual business of a debating club began in earnest. Young gentleman of eighteen, with crimson blushes, stammered out towards the close of the debate, that they felt a great reluctance 'in giving a silent vote on so important a question;' men who in the ordinary concerns of life were Harry and Tom, to each other became mutually 'my honourable friend.' 'Mr. Chairman' had often not attained his majority, and very often not his years of discretion; law students were referred to as 'the learned gentleman who has just sat down;' and one or two clerks connected with manufacturing firms were known to the Budding Chathams as 'distinguished partisans of the Manchester School.'

As time wore on, and practice wore away the bashfulness of unskilful members, instead of a couple of dozen speeches per night, one evening was often too short for two or three. The buds of eloquence burst into expansive flower. Discretion never told them now, when to stop. Like Baron Munchausen's frozen trumpet when it thawed, all the pent-up music of their minds' utterance burst forth. Various men adopted various styles of speaking, and had their acknowledged peculiarities. Mr. Pattens was the honourable member who divided every question he touched into three heads: Mr. Walkingame Cocker was the statistical genius of the club, and could tell off the number of committals in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, for every year since 1815. Then there was the satirical speaker, who was always listened to with profound attention. He had a reputation for reply. Throughout the evening he would note the speeches of all the heavy men; and then, just as the chairman was about to 'call upon the honourable opener for his reply,' he would rise 'to offer a few remarks on one or two points where gross blunders had been made by previous speakers. He dis-

claimed all personality, and it was far from being his wish to offend any honourable member; but he must say that he had never heard a speech more characterised by flippancy and an audacious disregard of facts, than that which he had just been called upon to hear. If the honourable gentleman who preceded him had been as accurate in his grammar as he had been ponderous in his facts, the club would have been more indebted to him; and had the honourable opener shown a little less confidence, and a greater familiarity with the subject he had professed to expound, the honourable members present would have been better able to arrive at a fair decision upon the merits of the case before them.'

Still, despite the not unusual tendency to loquacity, the Budding Chathams managed, on 'field days,' to despatch a wonderful amount of public business; and showed, as to mere rapidity, an example worthy of imitation in another place.

Statesmen have been discussing the excellencies of Free Trade and Protective systems for years; the Budding Chathams opened the question at eight o'clock one evening, and recorded their firm opinion upon it before midnight. The Catholic titular claims, which have long worried us, were negatived by the young Chathams in four hours, stoppages (viz., 'Hear, hear, hear!' 'Question, question!' 'Name, name!' 'Chair!' &c.) included. So much for the speed with which the confidence of two-and-twenty deals with vital political dogmas. These elements, mixed up with a large number of Budding Chathams who observed a discreet silence on all occasions, and voted with the best speakers, constituted a club similar in aim to thousands which exist in different parts of England.

Instituted to afford practice in public speaking to a number of young men, the club was highly successful in this object; but how far it strengthened and concentrated the reasoning faculties of 'honourable members,' is a question which would be an edifying subject for the discussion of some other club of Budding Chathams.

These clubs, it should be observed, are generally formed

by young men of intellectual tendencies—law students who burn with the hope of enjoying the softness of the woolsack—younger sons with hopes of political advancement, and, in their hearts, vague longings for Downing-street power—literary students with crude theories, the enunciation of which is a relief to their young vanity. These aspirations and faculties have a common sympathy, and consequently mingle into a very fascinating common body. The laugh with which a stranger hears the title of 'honourable member' given to his intimate associate, is rebuked by the gravity of the young men; who, in their dream-land, seem to touch, for a brief time, the realization of their ambition. At present, they are hard-working students, with little enough money to spend, and without power; but even now it is painful to have the contrast between their aspiration and their actual position ridiculed in any way. They like to be 'honourable members,' and 'Mr. Chairman.' Here is a foretaste of the importance and the power they are to win. They refer to the time when Brougham and Macaulay were members of the Edinburgh Speculative Society; and from this reference draw sundry very flattering and invigorating conclusions as to their own prospects. Many consolations, many hopes, many good resolves flow from these intellectual sparring clubs. Much vanity is corrected; for young men, particularly, are less swayed in the formation of their friendships by worldly considerations, than their elders; and by finding an immediate and considerate public ready to applaud the student in his most wearisome and thankless hours, the struggle is eased, and the loneliness and chill of student life loses much of its repulsiveness.

The Budding Chathams include many men with pale, haggard features; who, worn with the studies of long days, brighten as the Chatham discussion night approaches, when intellect will be pitted against intellect, and the strongest without servility, or any base consideration, will carry the majority with him. The decisions of the club, the votes given by certain prominent members, the arguments used by others, and the subjects proposed for future consideration, afford continual gossip to a wide circle of men. The

scorn with which ignorance of history is met; the heat with which rival schools of poetry and painting are advocated; the general acclamation with which a happy quotation is received; the unstudied respect paid to members of great acquiremenis, are manifestations which generally characterise those debating clubs which have ever shown any vitality.

He would be a bold man who would openly establish a school for the education of orators, after the fashion of those who occupy the time of the House of Commons for five hours at a stretch, or who make amendments at railway meetings: but the spontaneous formation of debating clubs in the various towns of England argues, we are inclined to think, a healthful intellectual progress in the young men of the time. The Budding Chathams may not send forth a member possessing the reputed eloquence of the distinguished statesman after whom they are christened; yet many wholesome advantages may accrue from their meetings. In provincial towns, the traveller is often surprised to find a mechanic at a local meeting expressing his ideas with logical order, and in easy Saxon English. On inquiry as to the cause of this precision, he learns that the speaker is the member of a debating club—that he is in the habit of sustaining a public argument. On further inquiry he will find that the mechanic has shrewd, well-digested notions on the prevailing topics of the day; that he is not to be carried away by the false glitter of a voluble speaker; and that he can place the men of the time in their proper relative positions. He is often critical even as to the turn of a period; and talks not of 'rounding a sentence,' but does it. He is an humble imitator of the more ambitious Chathams. As he throws his shuttle in the morning, he thinks of his evening's debate—what reasons his friend Jones will bring to bear upon the question; and how the opener will be able to answer the array of facts he has marshalled against him. At the worst, this is harmless mental exercise; and, without doubt, it is an advance upon those amusements which working men patronised some twenty years back.

Therefore, prosperity to provincial debating clubs!

Success to 'Mr. Chairman,' with his incipient moustache. Success to 'the honourable opener,' who has now seen only twenty summers. Success to 'my learned friend,' who has eaten two terms, and is already critical about the Temple wine. Success to the young author, flushed with the notices of his first work, and bright with all the glory of hope about him!"

"Kindly written, Mr. Sands," said the Master—his face dimpled with smiles.

Brother Horrocks was glancing at the punchbowl in the distance, and sniffing the pungent aroma of the lemons.

We now come to *the* reading of the evening; and with it we shall conclude this year's sittings.

"Mr. Frowde—the company is all attention."

"I've a Christmas incident, only, to offer you," said the Brother. "I call it—

"CHRISTMAS IN LODGINGS."

Reads:—

"A bachelor's life is not without its attractions. Freedom of will and action are, at least, among a bachelor's joys; but experience has taught me that, after a certain time, such absence from restraint resolves itself into that species of liberty which Macaulay touchingly likens to 'the desolate freedom of the wild ass.'

I came to London about ten years ago, to study for the bar. I was entered at the Inner Temple, and as far as the dinner-eating went, I can safely assert that I was an ornament to the Hall. I adorned the margin of my copy of 'Burn's Justice' with caricatures of the benchers; and my friends appended facetious notes to my 'Blackstone.' I went to the masquerade in my gown; and strolled down to my law-tutor's chambers for the ostensible purpose of reading, about two P.M., daily. In short, I went through the usual routine of young gentlemen of ardent temperaments and competent means when they begin life; like

most men, also, the pace of my fast days moderated in due time. About the time of my call to the bar, I began to study. My old companions, finding that I was becoming what they were pleased to designate 'slow,' dropped off. I entered into the solitude of lodgings, near Brunswick Square, and read eagerly. Still I found it necessary to relieve my legal studies with copious draughts from all the great fountains of inspiration; and I fear, that even when I was endeavouring to crack the hardest passages of 'Blackstone,' my ideas continually reverted either to the grace of Montaigne, the wit of Congreve and Pope, the sparkle and depth of Shakspeare, or the massive grandeur of Milton. By degrees my books became my dearest, my only associates. Although as a companion and friend I had decidedly fallen off, I had improved as a lodger. I kept regular hours, and paid all my bills punctually.

My landlady grew confidential, in proportion as I grew domestic. She favoured me with her history from the time of her birth. I knew how she took the measles; the precise effect of her visit to a vaccine establishment; the origin of a scar over her left eye-brow; the income of her brother in Somersetshire; the number of kittens which her cat annually produced; the character she gave her last servant; and the fond affection she had lavished upon a brute of a husband. These matters, however, were entrusted to me in confidence; and, to use an original phrase, they shall be buried with me in my grave! I had no occasion to repay my landlady's confidence with my own, because she paid herself. I could keep no secrets from her. She knew the contents of my trunks, desks, and drawers, as well as I did—better, for if I lost any little article, I never, perhaps, missed it. I was seldom allowed to wear a pair of dress gloves more than once: when a collar was not to be had, 'them washerwomen was,' I was told, 'always a losing of something or other.' I am sure the flavour of my tea, the quality of my mutton, and the excellence of my coals, were no secrets to my landlady; but she had many good qualities, so I ate what she left me in silence and in peace.

Despite my but too prying landlady, however, I got on

very well by myself; and, like men who live alone, I became egotistic and lazy. I thought of the weaver at his loom; the lawyer burning the midnight composition over his brief; the author, with his throbbing temples, hard at work; and I rejoiced quietly by my fire and in my books. There was a selfish pleasure in the conviction that my case was so much better than that of thousands of the toilers and strugglers of the earth. This I found a capital philosophy for every day in the year—except one. On that day my landlady entered my room, and, with a few words, blighted my happiness, and made me miserable as the veriest outcast.

'Beg pardon for interrupting you,' the worthy soul said, 'but I wish to know whether you dine at home on Christmas Day. Though, of course, you will be with your friends—but I thought I might as well make sure.'

The good woman must have noticed my confusion. I stammered out something in the most awkward manner; but contrived to make her understand, in the end, that I *should* dine at home.

'On *Christmas* Day, sir?' the woman repeated, with particular emphasis. 'I'm talking about Christmas Day, when every gentleman dines with his friends and relations; leastways, all the gentlemen I ever had, have done so.'

'My friends live in Scotland, where Christmas is no festival,' I replied, rather relieved by the opportunity of explaining my solitary condition.

'Well, dear a-me!' my landlady went on to say, 'that's very awkard, very awkard, sir, indeed. Dear, dear a-me, what shall I do? My table, down stairs, won't hold any thing like fifteen!'

Fifteen persons to greet my landlady on Christmas Day, and not a soul to break bread with me! I saw, at once, the tendency of her observation as to the size of her table; and willingly offered to vacate my room for her great annual festivity. This offer was eagerly accepted, and once more I was left to my solitude. From that moment my fortitude deserted me. I knew that the weaver would enjoy his Christmas feast; that the lawyer would

throw aside his brief, and abating his professional solemnity, would, on Christmas Day, make merry; and that the author would leave the pen in the inkstand, to be jolly during a great portion of those twenty-four happy hours. Let me confess that I felt sick at heart—stupidly and profoundly dejected.

On Christmas Eve the maid came into my room, and, with a beaming face, begged that I would allow her to decorate it with holly:—she said nothing about the misletoe which she carried under her apron, but I saw her dexterously fasten it above the door-way. I was very lonely that evening. The six square yards of space which I occupied were the only six square yards in the neighbourhood not occupied by laughing human creatures. The noise of my landlady and her relatives below made me savage; and when she sent up the servant to ask whether I would like to step below, and take a stir at the pudding, my 'no!' was given in such a decided tone that the poor girl vanished with miraculous celerity.

The knocks at the street-door were incessant. First it was the turkey, then the apples, oranges, and chestnuts, for dessert, then the new dinner-set, then the sirloin. Each separate item of the approaching feast was hailed with smothered welcomes by the women, who rushed into the passage to examine and greet it. Presently a knock resounded through the house, that had to me a solemn and highly unpleasant sound, although it could not have differed from the preceding knocks. I listened to the opening of the door, and heard my landlady, in a sympathetic tone of voice, declare, that 'it was only the first-floor's steak;—poor fellow!' My loneliness, then, was a theme of pitiful consideration with the people below! I was very angry, and paced my room with rapid strides. I thought I would wear cotton-wool for the next four-and-twenty hours, to shut out the din of general enjoyment. I tried, after a short time, to compose myself to my book; but, just as I was about to take it down from the shelf, the servant, having occasion to enter my room, informed me, in a high state of chuckling excitement, that 'missis's friends was a going to light up a snap-dragon!'—and the

shouts that burst upon me a few minutes afterwards, confirmed the girl's report. I was now fairly savage, and, having called for my candle, in a loud, determined voice, went to bed, with the firm conviction that the revellers below were my sworn enemies, and with the resolution of giving warning on the following morning—yes, on Christmas Day.

Brooding over the revenge I promised myself for the following morning, I went to sleep, and dreamed of the Arctic solitudes and the Sahara Desert. I was standing at a dry well, surrounded, on all sides, by endless sand, when a loud rumbling noise broke upon my dream. I awoke, and heard a heavy footstep passing my chamber. I started from my bed, flung open my door, and shouted, 'Who's there?'

'It's only me, sir, a going for to put the puddin' in the copper,' said an uncommonly cheerful voice.

Here was a delightful opening scene of my Christmas Day. I believe I muttered a wish, that my landlady's pudding were in a locality where it might boil at any time, without disturbing any lodger.

That morning I rang four times for my hot water, three times for my boots, and was asked to eat cold ham instead of my usual eggs, because no room could be spared at the fire, to boil them. I occupied my landlady's back parlour, and was intruded upon, every minute, because a thousand things wanted 'for up-stairs' were left in odd nooks and corners of the room. I had no easy chair. My books were all 'put away,' save a copy of 'Jean Racine,' which I had taken down by mistake for a volume of *the* 'Racine.' My breakfast-table could not be cleared for three hours after I had finished my meal. I was asked to allow a saucepan to be placed upon my fire. It was suggested to me that I might dine at two o'clock, in order to have my repast over and cleared away before the feast up-stairs began. I assented to this proposition with ill-feigned carelessness—although my blood boiled (like the pudding) at the impertinence of the request. But I was too proud to allow my landlady the least insight into the real state of my feelings. Poor soul! it was not her fault that I had

no circle within my reach; yet I remember that through-out the day I regarded her as the impersonation of fiendish malice.

After I had dined she came to ask me if there was anything she could do for me? I regarded her intrusion only as one prompted by a vulgar wish to show me her fine ribbons and jaunty cap; and I curtly told her that I did not require her services. To relieve myself of the load of vexation which oppressed me, I strolled into the streets; but I was soon driven back to my landlady's little parlour—the gaiety that resounded from every house, and the deserted streets without, were even more annoying than her marked attention. I sat down once more, and doggedly read the heavy verse of Jean. I called for my tea; and, in reply, I was informed that I should have it directly the dinner was over up-stairs. My patience was giving way rapidly. My tea was produced, however, after a considerable delay; and I then thought I would make a desperate attempt to forget the jovial scenes that were going forward in every nook and corner of the country—save in my desolate, sombre, close back parlour. I swung my feet upon the fender, leisurely filled the bowl of my meerschaum, and was about to mix my first fragrant cup, when that horrible servant again made her appearance, holding a dark steaming lump of something upon a plate.

'Please, sir, missis's compliments, and p'raps you'd accept this bit of Christmas puddin'?'

I could have hurled it, plate and all, into the yard below. I saw myself at once an object of profound pity and charity to the company above. Although I am extremely fond of that marvellous compound of good things eaten with brandy-sauce on Christmas Day, I could not have touched my landlady's proffered plateful for any consideration. I gave a medical reason for declining the dainty, and once more turned to my pipe and my tea. As the white smoke curled from my mouth, a waking dream stole over me. I fancied that I was Robinson Crusoe: my parrot dead, and my dog run away. I cursed the fate that had consigned me to a solitude. I recited aloud a few verses from Keats, and the sound of my voice seemed

strange and harsh. I poked the fire, and whistled, and hummed—to restore myself to the full enjoyment, or rather to the misery, of my senses. The tea on that evening only was green tea. I felt its effects. I grew nervous and irritable.

The servant once more invaded my seclusion—what could she want now?

'Please, sir, have you done with the tea-things? I'm a going to wash 'em for up-stairs.'

'Take them;' I replied, not very gracefully. The servant thanked me, as I thought, with impertinent good-nature, and cleared the table.

About this time, sounds of merriment began to resound from the Christmas party. The shrill laughter of children was mingled with the hoarse guffaws of their parents; and the house shook at intervals with the romps of both parties. In the height of my desolate agony, it gave me no little consolation to think that those children who were at their games, would probably dance to the tune of a tutor's cane at no distant interval. Such was my envy at the exuberant mirth that reached me in fitful gusts, as the doors were opened or shut, that I felt all sorts of uncharitableness. Presently there was a lull in the laughter-storm. I began to hope that the party was about to break up. A gentle footstep was audible, descending the stairs. There was a smothered call for Mary. Mary obeyed the summons; and the following dialogue was whispered in the passage:

'Did he eat the pudding?'

'No, mum—he was afraid of it: and he was *so* cross!'

'Cross! I was going to ask him to join us: do you think he would, Mary?'

'Bless you, no, mum! *He* jine! I think I see him a jining! Nothing pleases him. He's too high for anybody. I never see the likes of him!'

The feet then ascended the stairs, and after another pause of a few moments, the din of merriment was resumed. I was furious at the sympathy which my loneliness created. I could bear the laughter and shouting of the Christmas party no longer, and once more, with a determi-

nation of having my revenge, I went to bed. I lay there for several hours; and did not close my eyes before I had vowed solemnly that I would not pass another Christmas Day in solitude, and in lodgings—and I didn't.

In the course of the following year I married the lovely daughter of Mr. Serjeant Shuttleface. My angel was a most astonishing pianoforte performer, and copied high art pictures in Berlin wool with marvellous skill; but she was curiously ignorant of housekeeping; so, we spent the beginning of our wedded bliss in furnished apartments, in order that she might gain experience, gradually.

On one point, however, I was resolute; I would NOT spend a second Christmas Day in lodgings. I took a house, therefore, towards the close of the year, and repeatedly urged my wife to vacate our apartments, that we might set up for ourselves. She shrank from this responsibility with unremitting reluctance. There were, besides, innumerable delays. Carpets wouldn't fit; painters wouldn't work above one day a week; paper-hangers hung fire; and blacksmiths, charging by the day, did no more than one day's work in six. Time wore on. December came, advanced: and it seemed to be my fate to undergo another Christmas torment. However, to my inexpressible joy, everything was announced to be in readiness, on the twenty-fourth. My sposa had by this time, learned enough of housekeeping to feel ready for its duties, and on Christmas Eve we left our rooms in Bedford Square, and took our Christmas pudding, in a cab, to my suburban villa near Fulham. And a merry Christmas we made of it! I don't think I ever ate a better pudding, though I have eaten a good many since then."

"John," said the Master, addressing the porter of the Crutch, who stood respectfully behind him—"John, bring the punch."

While John was engaged, placing the fine old bowls upon the table, and arranging the glasses daintily round them, the Master made his suggestion.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I think the time has arrived when we may venture before the public. We've taken our notes—and, faith, we'll print 'em! What say you?"

"Agreed!" cried the Brothers.

"Let Brother Frowde do the needful with proofs, and all that botheration, if he's not tired of it, after the ugly tricks the world has played him," said Horrocks.

Said the Master solemnly—

> "Seven cities warr'd for Homer, being dead,
> "Who, living, had no roofe to shrowd his head."

"Hear! hear!" from all sides.

The Master lifted the punch-ladle (ebony-handled and with a Queen-Anne sovereign well welded in the silver-bowl), and cried, as he turned it round and round in the amber punch, "and now we drink success to our first volume of

'The Chronicles of the Crutch!'

May we all live—loiterers at the gates of Death, as we are, my friends—may we all live, still to read to each other of battles we have fought, through another circle of the seasons."

"In peace with all the world, I raise this glass to my lips. God be with us all, Brothers!" And the good Master bowed his silver head, lifted his velvet cap, and sipped his punch.

THE END.

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