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NETHERTON-ON-SEA.

A Story.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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NETHERTON-ON-SEA.

CHAPTER I.

THE REVELATION.

AS Emmy sped along the familiar streets, well known to her now by night and by day, she puzzled herself to remember where she could have seen the face of that man before, so curiously had it stirred within her a crowd of old reminiscences.

Wondering still why the day after the fire, and her convalescent time in the hospital, should suddenly have come into her thoughts, she reached a poor little

brick-cottage, where the cholera-stricken woman lay.

She found no one in the room below; but after ascending a very rickety flight of steps, which landed her at once in the only bedroom, she discovered the object of her search, tossing to and fro on a mattress laid on the floor, moaning feebly, and uttering now and then a word which showed she was employed in prayer.

She was by no means the sort of person you would expect to find in so dismal a place; and when Emmy had introduced herself, and made inquiries as to her sufferings and wants, she replied to her in a tone and manner that made her visitor think she must have held some respectable position, as gentleman's housekeeper or the like. Most of her patients had been amongst the very poor, and the difference struck her at once.

Her first care was to attend to the bodily wants of the patient, getting a poor neighbour to help her, and sending by her to the Rectory for whatever she wanted.

The sick woman's eyes followed her as she moved quietly about the room, bringing comfort out of discomfort in the most marvellous manner. When, having finished her arrangements, she came and sat down by the bed, waiting for the doctor, to whom she had sent, the woman looked eagerly into her face, and then said :

"I've been thinking, miss, that I can tell my secret to you ; for I see nothing but goodness in your face, and I know you wouldn't harm me and my poor old man if you could help it. Not that it's anything punishable that I have to relate, only it has taken such a hold on my

mind, that I must make it known, for I couldn't die easy without; and if another attack comes on before the clergyman gets here, I mayn't have strength to tell it then."

"I am ready to hear your story," said Emmy; "but you must not excite yourself. Had we not better wait till the doctor has seen you?"

"O no; waiting will make me worse than anything else; and the story is a long one, so I must begin now, while I feel more easy."

Emmy saw that the excitement of keeping her tale to herself was worse for her than the unburdening of it would be; so she bid her speak on, administering a cordial first to give her strength.

"Well, then, miss, my story begins a long time back, up seven-and-twenty years ago. I was just married then, and

my husband and I went to live at Tifton Castle with my Lord and Lady Tifton. I had been my Lady's maid before her marriage; and so she begged my Lord that John and I might live in the lodge, and he help about the gardens. And a very comfortable home we had there; but poor John took to his drinking ways again; and once my Lord threatened to dismiss him, only my Lady begged him off for my sake; and Lord Tifton, who doated on her, and could never say no to her, let us remain.

"My Lord was always a very curious lonely sort of man, I've heard tell, till he married her, and then she seemed to give him a new life for a bit. But it's a strange thing is life, and death too. She was the bonniest-looking lady that ever I saw, and was in high spirits that summer-time; for she was preparing her pretty

baby-clothes, and I used to go up to the castle and sit with her for hours together; for I was getting ready my first baby-clothes too, and was glad to have a hand in the little Lord's, as we used to call him; for my Lady was set on having a boy.

"But one day, when I went up as usual, I found her all in tears, and looking as pale as a ghost. It seemed that my Lord had been telling her of his troubles; how he had found out that his agent, whom he had trusted with the entire management of his estates during his wanderings abroad, had been cheating him right and left, and that his affairs would take years to set to rights again. I suppose he had stormed about it pretty well, for he had a strong temper when once aroused.

"My Lady, who was most tender-

hearted and trustful, brooded over it sadly; both out of sorrow for him, and to think there should be such wicked deceitful people in the world.

"And one afternoon she said to me, 'Janet' (for so she always called me), 'if anything goes wrong with me, mind you are faithful to my boy. I could not bear that he should be thrown among wicked people, and learn bad ways. Will you promise, Janet, to be true to him?'

"And I promised, and then tried to turn her thoughts; for I knew such grieving was bad for her. And O, miss, I often think of my broken promise, and wonder whether she looks down from heaven, and sees how false I have been to her. Do you think she knows it?"

"We cannot tell that," said Emmy gently; "but God knows you are sorry for it now.—But I hear the doctor's step,

so we must wait awhile for the rest of your story."

So saying, Emmy went downstairs to meet him, to tell him the state of his patient's mind, and to ask for his opinion after his visit, whether there was danger in allowing her to talk.

The doctor's report was favourable. The attack was, he said, a slight one, but evidently aggravated by some mental distress; if that could be allayed, and she could get a quiet night, he hoped all might be well with her.

So Emmy returned to the sick woman's bedside to hear the rest of her story. She was eagerly welcomed back; and as though fearful of some further interruption, the poor woman at once resumed.

"Well, miss, I was telling you how I promised my Lady that afternoon to be true to her boy. That was the last time I

saw her, for my poor little babe was born the next day, and before he was a week old, the neighbours came and told me that doctors were sent for from far and near, for my Lady was dangerously ill. And then the sad old story, miss; her boy lived, and she died. The poor Lord, they said, was like one demented. He stormed at himself for having vexed her with his troubles, and more still at the agent who had brought the troubles on them. He could not bear the sight of the baby, but bade them take it away. So in the difficulty, they brought the poor little thing to me. It was as fine a child as you would wish to see; such a broad forehead, and the most gladsome eyes that ever I saw. I thought how my dear Lady would have delighted in him. My own little darling was but a weakling from the beginning, and never picked up at all; so when at

the end of a fortnight he was taken from us, my comfort was my little foster-son. I couldn't have loved him more if he had been my own. His father had gone abroad, no one knew whither, directly after the funeral, leaving everything in the hands of a new agent, and never coming to see his son. But before he went, he moved us from the lodge to another house many miles away, telling us to keep up no intercourse with the people at his place, and ordering us, with threats and promises, not to let the boy know whose son he was.

"He was a very sharp lad, and often puzzled me with his questions. Of course, when he grew bigger, he got to ask awkward questions, for somehow he had it in his mind that he wasn't ours. Then I always told him how sweet and good his mother was, and that now she was an angel in heaven.

"Well, miss, so far I felt that I was keeping my promise; but there was one thing that vexed me sadly. My poor man, God forgive him! was a dreadful drunkard, and often used me and my young Lord very roughly when he was in liquor. I tried all I could to keep his hands off the boy, but he wouldn't listen to reason, and many and many's the trouble I had when he used him ill, or spoke bad language before the poor innocent. But what could I do? I see now I ought to have kept my promise even though I disobeyed my Lord, and to have written to the agent, who was, I know, a good, honest man. But I was cowardly and selfish, and held my tongue for fear my Lord should ruin us if we let out his secret. I believe he had spread the report that the young Lord had died in my lodge, and was buried quietly because of the distress the funeral

would have been to him; but the agent knew the truth, and they say he has kept things well together, so that if I could but find my poor lost nursling, he would be a great man now. But, ah me! I let him go from me once, and I have never set eyes on him since.

"Well, miss, when he was getting quite a fine little lad, who should knock at our door one night late, after the boy was a-bed, but my Lord. He wasn't dressed like a gentleman, but in queer clothes, and at first I thought he was mad. But he wasn't, unless it was madness which made him so determined that his son should not be brought up according to his station.

"He was quite violent, I remember, till he got me to promise to send the boy off by himself next day in his most ragged clothes, telling him to run away from my husband, as he would give him a beating

before night. That was how my Lord arranged it, knowing, as I told you afore, miss, what a violent drinking man my poor John was.

"I couldn't bear to let the boy leave me so, but my Lord said I needn't be afraid he'd suffer his own flesh and blood to starve—he'd fall in with him by the way, and take care of him.

"So at last I agreed to do as he bid me. And then he gave us money to buy a cow, and was very gracious to us; and I tried to stifle down my conscience that night all I could. But when it came to putting on his old clothes next day, and telling him to run away, I think I should have given in, only John came and threatened me, and said if I let myself be such a fool, he would beat the boy in good earnest before night, and I should have something to moan about.

"So half in terror of him, and half of my Lord, I packed the boy off and shut the door on him. And O, miss, to think that I have never seen him since, nor heard of him either, except once, and that was now some years ago, when John was in the hospital here for the hurt that he got that night of the fire, in passing through the town. One day the old Lord came into the ward where he lay, dressed in the same queer fashion, and when he saw that he knew him, he gave him money, and promised him more if he held his tongue about him. And so John shut his eyes to any clew he might have laid hold on then, and let the only chance we have had of undoing our wrong to my Lady and her son slip away for the sake of a few trumpery shillings!

"When I took on dreadfully about it, and begged him to tell me more, all he

could say was that he saw the old master go up and speak to a fine lad, who was lying there hurt likewise; people said he had done something noble about saving a little girl in Factory-lane, he told me; but after my Lord had given him the money, he was bound to be blind and deaf, he said.

"And O, miss, I have thought and thought it all over till I have felt distracted because I couldn't find any way out of our wickedness. I went a long journey to our old home the other day, for I heard the agent was ill, and I thought maybe he knew something about it, and that if he died there would be another chance gone. But when I arrived there he was dead; so then I got desperate, and said to John, 'I tell you what, John; we must shut up house here and go off to Netherton, and see if we can't find out about things there, for I'm sure I couldn't die happy with this secret

on my mind; and if we can't find out the truth, we can but tell the parson, or somebody; and then if we die, there will be at least someone to prove he is the rightful Lord, if he comes to light after we are gone.'

"So poor John, who has been much altered of late, brought me here, and I was taken ill all at once, miss; and that's why you find me in so poor a place."

The sick woman's strength began to fail as she brought her long story to a close: she fell back exhausted on her pillows, and Emmy, whose cheeks had become crimson and her hands very cold during the latter part of the recital, had to bestir herself, and administer the cordial with fingers trembling from repressed excitement. She longed to ask a score of questions, and to proclaim herself the little girl rescued in Factory-lane. Now she knew why the man

had reminded her of the hospital-garden. He must have himself been the tramp she had often observed taking his walk there when she too had arrived at that stage of convalescence. Conjectures and reminiscences crowded on her mind till they nearly turned her giddy. The talk she and Pak had had on the cliff when he had told her what he could remember of his early life, his foster-mother, and his running away from her brutal husband, and joining Tiffy on the road. She thought of the connection there always appeared to be between the two. Her mind seemed preternaturally clear in putting the strange story together, and making Pak the hero of it. Then with a sudden pang she remembered how long it was since she had heard anything of him; and how unlikely it seemed, if the story were to be found complete, that he would appear again at Netherton to profit by it.

The sudden excitement was too much for her over-taxed strength; and she was thankful when kind Dr. Resp came in again and carried her off to the Rectory, leaving the poor woman under the charge of a neighbour, and in a peaceful slumber.

All night Emmy tossed about on her bed in feverish excitement, thinking over what she ought to do in the matter—how Pak could be found, what had become of Tiffy—and wearying her poor brain with all sorts of conjectures and plans, till at last towards morning she fell asleep, only to pursue the same subject in her dreams. Pak had come home a great lord, and had been knocking at her window to tell her how sorry he was he could not marry her now, as she was only a carpenter's daughter.

From this depressing dream she awoke with a start, to find it late in the morning,

and the Doctor standing by her bed with a grave face.

"You must not be starting off to work again," he said kindly; "you're under my orders now; no one wants my head-nurse at present, so she must rest."

"O no, please, Dr. Resp, I'm quite well; and I have some work I *must* do to-day; pray don't make me an invalid; I was restless in the night, that made me sleep so late."

The good Doctor shook his head; but seeing how eager Emmy was to be up and doing, he did not like to thwart her, and contented himself with warning the Rector to look well after his adopted daughter.

CHAPTER II.

MARCHING ORDERS.

WHEN Emmy, having hurriedly dressed herself in out-of-door apparel, came downstairs and looked for the Rector to bid him good-morning before returning to her yesterday's patient, she found him pacing hurriedly up and down the study. He came and laid his hands on her shoulders, and looked anxiously into the flushed face.

"Emmy, my child," he said, "my place is here; but I cannot let you endanger your young life. I shall speak to the Colonel about it."

"It is not illness, dear uncle, that makes me look flushed," she said; "but I have an

anxiety on my mind that I want to tell you about, only we must keep our own counsel."

And then she told the Rector all the story, not omitting her part in it, and the talk on the cliff, and the farewell words at the window.

It was trying work at first having to speak of her secret grief to anyone, even to so kind and sympathising a listener: but there was no help for it—the matter must be sifted, and that cautiously, lest any false claimant might appear, and lest Pak himself—whose identity as the young Lord Emmy could not for a moment doubt—should wish the circumstances kept private out of respect to his father.

Emmy's eager interest carried her listener away with her. They went together to the sick woman, and questioned her and her husband more closely about the mat-

ter. There was, however, no more information to be obtained from them, save a minute description of the old Lord's face, figure, and dress on the last occasion when they had seen him, which tallied exactly with that of Tiffy when the Rector had first noticed him, soon after his arrival at Netherton.

The poor woman was greatly relieved when Emmy told her what clew they had in the matter; but was again cast down on finding that none knew of Pak's whereabout. This soon grew to be almost the only difficulty in the case; for on the Rector pursuing his inquiries, everything tended in the same direction. He applied to the Podgers, and found that Mrs. Davies had her reasons for knowing that the youngster was son to the queer old gentleman; and that from the latter always having plenty of money at his command, and fetching so

many letters from the post-office, she always supposed him to be not the man you would have taken him for. He had gone away soon after the fire, she said, and had only come again at the time of her marriage, she didn't know where from, and then had disappeared as suddenly as he had come. Her room still was nominally in his occupation, and the rent was paid quarterly at the bank. Thither also went the Rector, but they knew no more than that Mr. John Tiffin had made a deposit there on his leaving, to be devoted to this purpose, and amply sufficient for its present fulfilment. So he had recourse to the town authorities; and in this quarter his inquiries were rewarded with more success. Two of the leading members of the corporation had cognisance of the facts of the case, but had been bound to silence by Tiffy during his lifetime, he having left proofs with them of

Pak's identity, to be forthcoming in case of his death. But now, after so long a silence on the part of the old Lord, and their utter ignorance as to whether he were alive or dead, they felt themselves justified in speaking, and were ready with their facts whenever the young Lord should appear to claim them.

During the time that these inquiries took, which was considerable,—as the Rector did not run on the scent like a detective, but his efforts were desultory and far between,—Emmy continued her work as usual, spending much time with her convalescent patient, and visiting others who required her care.

But she went about it all as though in a dream, only rousing up into unnatural excitement when talking with Pak's foster-mother about their common anxiety.

The Rector, though devoting himself

to her and to the cause she had committed to him, was blind to the state of her health and spirits. Her bright colour, and quiet, uncomplaining manner, made him forget his former anxiety about her.

But this unnatural excitement could not last long. One morning the old servant came to her master with an anxious face, saying that Miss Benson did not feel strong enough to come down to breakfast. "And what's more, sir, she won't eat anything, nor hasn't taken enough these ten days to keep a mouse alive. She'll be flying away, sir, it's my mind, and leaving us altogether, if this sort of thing goes on much longer."

The Rector was thoroughly alarmed. His eyes were at once opened from his dream of all being well, and, as natural in such cases, from believing nothing but the best, he now feared nothing short of

the worst. In a few minutes Dr. Resp was in the house, and pronounced the patient to be suffering from an attack of low fever, the natural consequence, he said, of overtaxed strength.

And thus weeks went on, and passed into months, and autumn and winter had gone, and Emmy still lay on her bed in utter prostration, being only moved from it to a couch in the adjoining room during all that tedious time. The pretty child-like face was wasted to a shadow. The eyes looked unnaturally large, and the lashes longer than ever, while the small white hands that lay on the coverlid showed the blue veins through them in their transparency.

At last she arrived at such a state of weakness that nothing seemed to interest her. Lucy had been constantly with her, when not wanted at home by her father.

She had lost all dread of the infected region the moment she heard of Emmy's illness.

But even she failed to wake in the invalid any interest in external things. All she ever showed, was now and then in asking the Rector if any tidings had been heard. Of course Lucy knew all; but her friend seemed too weak or too listless to hold any intercourse on the cherished secret.

But when life-giving spring came round again, and the young buds began to unfold into leaves, then Emmy too showed signs of life. Her bodily health began to improve; by stealth, and almost against her will, her appetite grew on her day by day. The good Rector had been seen to smile, and there was a perceptible quickening in the servants' steps which moved about the house.

But her spirits were so utterly and in-

variably low, that Dr. Resp said something must be done to arouse her, else she would have a relapse, or, which would be even worse, would subside into a chronic state of apathy and listlessness.

The Colonel fretted at home about both the girls. If Emmy must be ill, and Lucy must nurse her, why couldn't it all have happened at his house, instead of at that dismal Rectory ?

The two brothers often paced the old garden by the hour together, talking of the young lives left in their charge. They were a strange contrast in every way. The Colonel, with his military bearing, and his quick, decided, almost impatient step ; and the Rector, with his bent head, and quiet meditative walk, his whole appearance speaking the man who, from long submission in disappointment, has come to quiet resignation in anxiety.

"I'll tell you what it is, Phil," the Colonel exclaimed on one of these occasions; "as soon as ever the girl mends a little, we'll all be off to the Continent at once, and spend the summer in roaming about, and the winter at Nice or Rome. There's nothing like change of quarters for thinning the sick-list; and we all want a little brushing away of cobwebs just now, I think. What d'ye say to it?"

"*I* can't go, Robert," said the Rector; but, pausing a moment, and passing his hand over his eyes, "I think you are right; it might do Emmy good. And—yes, you talk of wintering at Rome,—well, we can but try it; I don't think the child will get any life in her while she stays here, and she might—yes, she might meet him out there."

"Meet him! What are you romancing about, my worthy brother?" cried the

impetuous Colonel; "you don't expect me to go knight-hunting for our forlorn damsel, do you?"

Whereupon the Rector told his brother all the long story, adding that he could not but think anxiety on Pak's account had much to do with Emmy's illness.

"I see, I see," said the Colonel; "tell her we're going to Italy, and may, perhaps, fall in with the young runaway; and that will give her strength to be off. Once out of this dismal place, I've no fear for her recovery; and Lucy and her maid will nurse her better than any paid nurse, I'll be bound. But, my poor Phil," suddenly recollecting himself, "we can't leave you behind us; it's an impossibility."

"O yes, you can," answered the Rector, trying to speak cheerfully; "I shall have too much work to do to indulge in low spirits. Last year's business has left a

great many widows and orphans on my hands. Yes, go; and my blessing go with you. We can't talk much more about it, Robert. Let Lucy tell Emmy the arrangement; she knows all I have told you, and will be able to urge the reasons for her leaving me. If we only see her back in the spring her own bright self again, I shall be more than content."

And so this plan grew and was matured; and a few weeks after, Lucy broke to Emmy the proposed tour. At first, she smiled her thanks for their kind thought of her, quietly saying that she did not think she should ever live to accomplish the journey; and that, though of course it didn't really matter, she liked the thought of being buried in Netherton churchyard better than in a foreign land.

"O, you tiresome little creature!" cried Lucy; "you are so set upon dying, that

I don't know what to say to make you think it worth while to live—except that you might do a good turn to your friend Pak if you would condescend to remain on earth a little longer; for nothing has been heard of the truant, and we think the most likely chance of doing so is by our wandering about in the South, and wintering at Rome, as papa proposes."

This suggestion had the desired effect. A light came into the languid eyes, and Emmy held out her wasted hand to Lucy, asking forgiveness for her thankless indifference.

"You must pardon me," she said; "I hope I don't really wish to die, but it seems to me now that it would cost such an effort to live. It is wicked, I know, with so many kind friends about me, and so much to be done in the world; but I'm afraid I feel as if I didn't care to live so

much now that Pak is lost to me, only I should like to see him righted before I die."

"Why, what a romantic little heroine it is, to be sure!" laughed Lucy; "I can picture you drinking the cup of cold poison in the most philosophical manner to rid your hero of an encumbrance, or to make way for a preferred rival. Why, Emmy, I wonder you can have so low an opinion of Pak as to think his good fortune could make any difference in his love for you! Even I, with my limited opportunities, know him better than that; I saw constancy written in his face as plainly as I see self-sacrifice written in yours. So cheer up, ladybird, and we will be off on our travels; you shall be Una, and I your watchful lion; and it will be strange if the red-cross knight does not turn up somewhere on the road."

Emmy could not but smile at Lucy's determined cheerfulness; and as brightness, like dulness, is very contagious, she found herself ere long quite interested in her friend's account of the arrangements to be made prior to their leaving, and of their probable halting-places. She even kissed Lucy with one of her bright old smiles, as the latter put on her dainty little hat to return to her father's late dinner.

"Of course dear Uncle Philip will go with us," Emmy said; "it is just the change he wants; I have been a sad trouble to him, I fear."

"I wish he could, dear; I'm sure it would do him a world of good; but he and you are much of a muchness in that matter; as long as you have a leg to stand upon, you will be minding other people's business instead of your own. He says he can't leave his widows and orphans, dear good

man; *his* religion is 'pure and undefiled,' I'm sure, if anyone's is."

"Then, Lucy, I cannot leave him here all alone; indeed I can't."

"And what help would you be to him, you little goose, supposing we left you behind? No; be sensible for once: go with us, and get up your strength; and when you return, rosy and strong, you can devote yourself heart and soul to the Nethertonian sick, or even found a sisterhood, with dear uncle as spiritual director, provided the red-cross knight does not come and claim you first."

"O Lucy, Lucy, you're a shocking girl!" said Emmy, with a smiling shake of the head; "what makes you in such spirits this afternoon?"

"It is because I have seen the first smile on this dear little face for many a long day," she answered, passing her hand

caressingly over the broad white forehead; "and, moreover, you must pardon my being a little frisky, I have been good so long; I'm sure no old nurse could have been more sedate than I have been these months past; but you know, dear Emmy, my silly words are only in fun, and that from my heart I love and reverence you and uncle more than anyone else in the wide world, except my father. However, he'll be waiting for his dinner if we indulge in many more last words; so good-bye, little one."

And thus the bright, warm-hearted Lucy disappeared, leaving Emmy quite a different creature from what she had found her. The kind Rector was fully rewarded for so willingly giving her up, when, after visiting her room in the evening, and answering all her objections to leaving him, he saw the old sparkle return to her eyes, and the faintest tinge of colour to her cheeks.

Busy weeks those were that followed. Sketching-materials were to be got together, Italian grammars looked up, and all preparations made for a thoroughly enjoyable tour. The Colonel was a rich man, and could afford to do things comfortably, so there would be no roughing it for Emmy. So as soon as she picked up sufficient strength, which she did rapidly after having once begun, the party set off.

It was a lovely morning in June when they said good-bye to the Rector at his garden-gate, and, leaving Netherton, Overton, and the sea behind them, were soon whirling away in the express to the metropolis, Emmy being well packed up in shawls and rugs on the seat of the comfortable carriage.

"By the way, Emmy," said Lucy that night, as the two girls were undressing themselves in their room at the Paddington

hotel, "I had a long letter from Gerald to-day. He does not know of your illness, of course, but asks after you very forgivingly, and says you taught him a lesson of humility which he hopes he has profited by. He talks of coming home to be a comfort to his father, and adds, foolish fellow, that he hopes he and I shall be good friends as of old, before his short infatuation for you made a breach between us. I suppose he thinks I was jealous, for he adds something flattering to myself, by way of smoothing down my ruffled feathers; but he hardly knows the bird he has to deal with."

"What he says of his feeling for me, though, is quite true, I am sure," said Emmy; "it could be nothing but infatuation, and no real feeling of love, for he knew so little of me. In fact, my impression always was that you had more real influence over him than anyone else, Lucy."

"Ah, well, *nous verrons*," replied the other, shrugging her pretty shoulders: "I don't know what my good father would do without me; besides, I should make such a model spinster, that I feel it would be hardly fair to rob the world of so shining an example of single propriety; but we will sleep upon it before making rash vows, so good-night, Emmy."

And with light hearts and thankful ones, they fell asleep, to awake to the delightful excitement of a first trip abroad, to the enjoyment of which they brought all the freshness of a retired life at Netherton.

CHAPTER III.

SOUTHWARD.

THE two truant friends stood together on the bank of the Rhone at Lyons. It was early on a September morning. They were ready for their day's work of twenty-one miles to Vienne.

The western sky, on which they looked, was brooded over by a dense violet-coloured mist, through which loomed faintly the long line of yellow hill, dappled with houses and churches. Suddenly the figure of the Virgin on the summit of the Fourvières church broke into a sparkling ruby of light. As the pair gazed in silence, the

windows of the buildings, descending tier after tier, took up the glad tidings of the new-born day. It was like a burst of living gems from the rocks. At the same moment the Paris and Marseilles express shot across the long stone bridge, leaving a track of bright red vapour lingering on the still morning air.

"*Ave, sanctissima!*" exclaimed Heckswy, falling on one knee and doffing his cap down to the other. Pak did the same, and they rose to depart.

"But," said Pak, with his pertinacious logic, "is she ubiquitous? Can she hear the Holy Father at Rome, who invokes her in his pastoral letters, and us here, and the myriads of faithful all over the world? Is she, glorious and spotless as she is, more than a human creature glorified? And shall we all, when we are glorified, be everywhere, and know all things?"

"My good fellow," said the other, "how determined you are to let nothing alone! Can't you leave our Blessed Lady where the Church has put her? Isn't it enough that she is declared to have been born without sin, to account for any exceptional attributes she may possess?"

"Do you mean, then," said Pak, "that our sinfulness has altered the conditions of our human personality? Look at the consequences, if you do. If the Blessed Virgin has been removed by her sinless birth from the limits and conditions of humanity, what becomes of One who took humanity from her? I can't help wishing that the Holy Father had let alone that dogma. I'm afraid it will some day bring back Christianity to somewhere very near paganism again. I'm sure, if I've rightly read the only infallible description given of her, the very last thing she would wish would

be to be made a goddess, as they have now made her."

"Take care, my friend; what would your spiritual father the good Curé have said, who at last gave his solemn adhesion to the miracle of La Salette?"

"Yes, but how noble he proved himself in doing so! And you know he was not infallible. I asked him myself about it; he simply answered, 'On peut, jusqu'à là c'est certain:—on doit,—c'est à dire selon moi, croire au miracle.' But he added, 'si tu ne puis pas, mon enfant, tu ne dois pas.'"

And so they set out; the new convert not, like most new converts, burning with zeal, but, though thoroughly convinced in the main, yet retaining his obstinacy, and his daring logical insight; changed, perhaps, in his anchoring-ground, but not more firmly anchored than before.

So they set out: and day after day, all

that glorious 140 miles from Lyons to Tarascon, they went by the broad blue river, with the sunshine glow on the western hills in the morning, and on the eastern uplands and valleys in the evening. And when the sun fell westward, as their course advanced, they could now and then catch, up the eastward valleys, the rosy glitter of the snow far up in heaven, which told of Alpine worlds above them. And each night found them by the homely table of some *cabaret*, with the stoup of *vin du pays*, mellowing as the journey proceeded; there maintaining *causeries* with the honest peasants, or the talkative politicians of the river-side towns.

During such a walk as this, friends have much communion with each other; but ordinarily each has much more communion with himself. Talk will not last for ever; and, especially towards the end of each day,

a certain weariness, and dryness of mouth, are strong persuasives to silence. Even Heckswy's restless nature was well-tamed during the ten days from Lyons to Marseilles; and much as the friends found to say each day when they set out, and each evening after they arrived, the greater part of the day's walk each was left to his own thoughts. It is needless to say that there was in the young mind, throughout this week, much inquiring, and much ripening. As old Homer has it:

"Much wrought and seethed his spirit as he went."

Seething it might indeed be called. The hot aspirations which had first sent him on this strange journey—the new-found faith which seemed now, however antagonistic to those aspirations it might call itself, yet to underlie and bless them all—the one bright name ever in his thoughts and

dreams, and what she who bore it would say to these wonderful changes in him—these filled up all the chinks which his friend's chatter, and surrounding objects, left in his mind.

Nor were these latter neglected. The old legends which each town recalled were ever in the thoughts of a youth who had been trained in high classical culture : the dark memory of the unjust judge of the Holy One at Vienne ; the passage of the daring Carthaginian over the Rhone at St. Esprit ; the Roman arch of triumph and vast theatre at Orange; the massive palace of the popes at Avignon ; the dead and living* Roman remains at Arles,—were all in turn inspected and discussed.

During the dreary walk over the Crau,

* The beautiful and stately matrons of Arles are regarded as a bequest from the Roman colony once flourishing there.

the stony plain between Arles and Marseilles, they observed the distant land and trees as if separated from them by a glittering band of water, in which they even saw those objects reflected.

"The Mediterranean at last!" exclaimed Pak.

"Not so," said his companion; "what you see is the well-known mirage, the constant fringe of these southern arid plains. If you went there, all is as here—dry as a plank. Look to the left, down that scorching valley which separates us from those red-hot glowing hills, what a lovely lake seems to fill it like a basin! Yet not one drop of water is there."

"Ah, my friend," said Pak, with one of his arch looks, "isn't all that true of some other southern things besides dry plains and valleys?"

"We shall see," said Heckswy.

At last, through a dry ravine of yellow-and-gray rocks, the Mediterranean burst on them, calm and blue,—the bay of Marseilles with its purple islands, and far-famed Château d'If, seen over a foreground of dazzling spring green and fruit-blossoms. Pak cast himself down on a patch of dry grass, and they remained still for some minutes. What lines were running in the young head? What but those exquisite ones of Theocritus—

> "Not Pelops' realm be mine, nor treasures bright,
> Nor to be fleeter than the wind in flight:
> I'll sing beneath this rock, my arm around thee,
> Looking across my flocks to the Sicilian sea."

"Hail, Massilia!" cried Heckswy; "gulf of bearded fishes, land of tufted Frenchmen; birthplace of the wild song of republican liberty!"

"I could match your Cicero's Milo with Horace," answered Pak, "were it not that I much prefer eating Massilia's barbels to

making the Phocæans' vow never to return home."

"This doesn't look like one of the oldest cities in the world, with its 'swarming ports and humming populace,' does it?" said his friend.

"No, indeed; and how well its colours have worn! I wonder what old Gilp would say to that blue. If I ever put a bright tint into my seas, he used to say, 'Delft ware, my lad, Delft ware! That may be sea in Paradise (only there'll be none), but it won't do for sea in Europe!'"

Thus talking, they entered the city, and were soon lost in the crowd.

A few days' inquiry convinced them that it would not be for their interest to push on too rapidly—that matters were hardly ripe for action, and that the General was unwilling to wear out resources and public patience by gathering his force too

soon. This was somewhat unwelcome intelligence on other accounts, and also because the friends' resources were nearly at an end. They had used the utmost economy on the latter portion of their journey. They had not resumed their artistic occupation, partly from disinclination, partly because it would have too much delayed them.

So that a council had to be held respecting the sinews of war; and the result was, that it seemed good to both that they should not stay at Marseilles, but gradually work onward towards Italy, taking any mode of paying their way which might offer.

With this view they left Marseilles after a few days, and repaired to the works of the Messageries Impériales at La Ciotat, where they obtained a few weeks' precarious employment. After this, they pushed

on to Toulon, and there in vain canvassed the town for another situation.

In each place they put themselves in communication with the Garibaldian committee, and acted by their advice.

And that advice in the last instance was, that they should keep as near the frontier as might be, and there await the call to action, which could not be far distant.

It came, and was obeyed, once and again : and campaign after campaign saw them by the side of the Liberator, sharing his dangers and his glories. Are not both these written in history ?

And after each, when it was expedient to retire and wait, the same advice respecting the period of inaction was given and followed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SKETCH.

IT was on the afternoon of a day in the early autumn of 1867, that two English girls sat sketching in a choice spot on the beautiful shore of the Mediterranean. Their position was about two miles east of a city well known to our fellow-countrymen. This city, which ever has belonged and ever will belong to Italy, has been decreed, by those great adventurers who keep shops where the nationalities of peoples are bought and sold, to be part of the empire of—well, say Timbuctoo, for it is about as congruous as the actual fact. So alien is the population

from its new masters, that if their language be used in asking the way, the hands and shoulders are thrown up in well-acted despair. Our girls had just been holding a long Italian conversation with their driver on all kinds of forbidden speculations for the future; and having now arrived at their sketching-ground, they alighted, and were helped by him over a low wall to some rocks which invited them to sit in the shade and draw the glorious scene. The spot was just where the road turns a sudden corner to the N.E., and discloses a deep-blue land-locked harbour, with a fortified village at its head. Opposite is a low promontory, with a white lighthouse at its point. At first bare, as it trends northward it becomes clothed with olive-woods, and dotted with white cottages, while a bright line of yellow rocks fringes it on the edge of the water. At about the mid-view

a little bay forms an indentation, answering to a dip in the outline above, over which was seen, beyond a streak of blue sea clearer and lovelier than the harbour itself, the glittering gray-and-yellow rock-wall of the warm cove called *la petite Afrique*, ending in the high bluff, the *Testa del Can*, or "dog's head," beneath which lay, by them unseen, the quaint little principality of Monaco. Farther on still, lay another stretch of shore, equally lovely in colour, but varying into a creamy rose-madder inconceivable except by those who have seen southern views—a long, gracefully-wasting promontory, ending with the white houses, shining as even the extreme distance does in this Elysian land, of the palm-thicketed Bordighera. As the eye followed round still northward, it reached a long stretch of new wall, a sad substitute for the many-coloured rocks which once bordered the curve of the

harbour, but one to be well content with, seeing that it carries the railway which ere long will bring Mentone within thirty-six hours of London. Nearer still, lay the village, picked out into the decided lights and shades of a sunny day in the South. The morning had been wet after a long drought, and in consequence every colour was at its best, and every outline at its clearest. Above the village rose a high hill, dappled into bright and dark with olive-wood and irregular rock; below it lay stretched at their feet the little harbour with its sheltering wall run out into the water, which, as is well known to observers of the sea, put on a lovely emerald green as it neared the shore. On the walls of the fortifications which dominated the harbour rose several graceful palms; and the white campanile of the village prettily terminated one corner, while the rest were capped with small tur-

rets, shining out with bright-red conical roofs. The immediate foreground was furnished by the rocks above mentioned, which projected seaward from the road and its fencing-wall, and, with their rich stains of burnt-sienna and gray, relieved by bunches of glaucous-leaved valerian in full flower, formed an admirable base for the picture, throwing into strong contrast, in their shade, the sunny water some hundred feet beneath. One of our friends was putting the finishing-touches to a drawing which had evidently not now been first taken in hand. Her companion leant forward, and looked over her shoulder.

"Do you know, Emmy, I think your middle distance would be so much improved, if you would put in, and somewhat improve upon, those workmen on the railway; their red shirts and blue blouses would form a relief to the somewhat mono-

tonous olive-woods and terraced orange-gardens, and render what is now the weak part of your picture one of its most effective points."

"Well, Lucy," said the girl addressed, "so no doubt it would—you are quite right; but they are so far off, I can hardly see them. Have you the opera-glass? I can get a notion of what the groups really are, and then vary them at my own pleasure."

"Antonio," said Lucy, "just hand us the opera-glass from the front-seat of the carriage."

It was handed accordingly, and Emmy took a long reconnoitre of the bit of railway seen nearest their rock, between them and the village. But what was her companion's surprise to see her drop the glass from her hand, and, covering her face, burst into a hysterical fit of sobbing.

"Why, Emmy dear, what has happened?"

"Look, look!" was the only answer.

She did, and saw two figures in red shirts, somewhat separated from the rest, about whom there could be no doubt whatever. She saw more. At that moment the Ave-Maria bell rung out from the village campanile, and she saw the two figures devoutly cross themselves.

"Well, dear, it is he, that's certain."

But Emmy had fainted; and it required all Antonio's help to get her over the dwarf wall into the carriage. Once in motion, the fresh evening air soon revived her. Not a word was spoken as they drove back to Nice.

As soon as they arrived there, Emmy rushed to her room, and threw herself on her bed in an agony of conflicting feelings. Lucy followed her, and finding she could

be of no use at present, went at once to her father's private room, and told him all that had happened.

"Well, Lucy," said the Colonel, "this is a strange story; keep it to yourself, my lass, to-night, and we'll consider in the morning what had better be done. Meanwhile, see well to Emmy; no doubt she will prefer solitude just at present; but don't let the little soul want for any help or comfort."

A second visit to Emmy made it plain that she needed other help than Lucy could minister to her. And the Colonel at once sent for Dr. P., the well-known Anglo-Italian physician. It was of course necessary that he should be put in full possession of the situation; and on being so, he at once proffered counsel.

"Allow me, sir," he said, "to be of service to you; thus you can avoid

being compromised in this rather curious matter, and you will not have to consult officials whose ways and manners you are not familiar with. I am well known here; to-morrow morning I will go to the bureau of the railway works, and if your daughter will give me a particular description of the young men, I will try to discover more about them. But not a word of this to my patient, mind, till there shall be something to tell."

The report of Emmy was what might have been expected of her physician. Rest —the aim and object; the way of gaining it, not by prohibiting, nor by ignoring, the subject of anxiety; above all, no common-places; they only serve to wound and irritate.

"Perhaps," said Dr. P., "nothing can so properly be called the sting of grief, as the respectable green-baize-pew sort of

twaddle which is in most cases administered to people in trouble."

For what was purely physical he would send something soothing to the nerves; and so, having received from Lucy the description required, the Doctor took his leave.

The morning's report was, on the whole, good. Lucy, whose room opened into Emmy's, deposed to all having been quiet; and Emmy herself, though she would not confess to having slept at all, acknowledged that she had been, thanks to Dr. P.'s good advice and good medicine, very quiet and comfortable.

Ten o'clock brought the Doctor, and with him news. He had kindly spent the early part of the morning at the bureau, making inquiries. He had found that, as that portion of the works was nearly finished, men were being discharged continually; and that a number were so dis-

charged last night. On asking whether the names of those discharged could be ascertained, the list was produced; and among the names the Doctor had seen those of Emilio Pacco and Enrico Esqui, which he had no doubt belonged to the two persons of whom he was in search. Upon his asking the *Chef du Bureau* whether he had any knowledge of either of them, he replied that he knew them both well; that, though they went under Italian names, there could be no doubt they were English; that they were by no means ordinary workmen; that the younger of them in particular seemed to have extraordinary abilities; and he (the Chef) only wondered how they came to be that which he, on his coming, had found them. He had frequently entered into conversation with them, and their talk was much of Italy. With regard to their intentions, he

had no certain information, but had formed an idea that that country was not unlikely to be their destination. As to religion, they were certainly both Catholics; of that there could be no doubt; and their reverent deportment had been in strong contrast with the total absence of any such feeling on the part of their fellow-workmen.

Dr. P. ventured to add a conjecture of his own, that possibly their money had failed them, and that they may have taken the strange step of seeking work on the railway to obtain means for their intended journey. At all events, the Doctor's advice was, and the Colonel was entirely of the same mind, that all idea of searching on their track should be abandoned. First, as Dr. P. said, for Emmy's sake, as it would keep her on the stretch with anxiety, and might end in bitter disappointment; and secondly, as the Colonel shrewdly remarked,

because, if the young gentlemen were to be found, difficulties would commence of a far more formidable character than any at present existing.

But how about Emmy? Here again their good friend the Doctor proved a wise adviser. "Tell her all," he said; "in such a case as this, the after-clap of a discovery, if you were to deal untruly, is far more to be dreaded than a frank unbosoming. Some cases, where the worst of all news has to be told, may, perhaps, be exceptional; but deception is even in these far too indiscriminately practised; and this is not such a case. But, my good sir, don't you go and tell her yourself; such things are better transacted in a small presence than in a big one. Let her friend here have it out with her in a cosy talk; not too teary, mind. Don't take her hand in yours, as if she had something agonising to go through; and

don't lead on to what you have to say, so that her heart is leaping in her mouth before you come to it; but just go and say you are come to tell her all, and then tell it as simply and truly as possible."

What was advised, was done. Lucy's good sense caused her to lay up in her mind for future practice the Doctor's wise words; and her first essay was successfully made with her beloved friend.

Emmy bore it all with some difficulty; but Lucy's openness and simplicity nerved and supported her. At the name "Emilio," the sad face brightened; the sound was a pledge that all was not forgotten.

"And so," Lucy added, "papa says, dear, that the future must be left to the chapter of accidents."

"For which chapter," Emmy added, through her brimming tears, "we, Lucy, and your papa too, have another name also."

CHAPTER V.

EN ROUTE.

NO long time after the incident related in our last chapter, the trio pushed on for the South. The Colonel was anxious to get to Rome while the way was yet open, as there was a general expectation of some rough work there before winter. He had no fears for his young friends, for experience had taught him confidence in the safety of those who do not meddle, especially if they be English. And in case of any real peril, he had a strong presentiment of French interference sooner or later. And not only did this seem to assure ultimate tranquillity, but, from his having

served in the Crimea, his acquaintance in the French army was pretty extensive; and if chance did not turn up an old comrade, at least any general officer would have common friends and common ground whereon to found an acquaintance. So that he felt no hesitation in doing what very few of his countrymen would have done.

Added to all which, it was highly desirable for Emmy at present that her thoughts and interests should be kept occupied. Though fairly recovered from the shock of the discovery, she felt, of course, its permanent effect in an intensification of the sickness of hope deferred. She used to compare herself with Evangeline, when Gabriel and Basil floated past her as she slept on the island of the Atchafalaya. And, poor soul, she used to sit looking out on the sea, foreboding some such ending of their quest, as that one had.

The Hôtel de Paradis at Nice* stands not far from the left bank of the Paillon, in the long esplanade facing the Mediterranean. It is not one of the grand houses most frequented by the English, but a resort of old-fashioned respectability, and a sample of the thoroughly comfortable French or Franco-Italian inn. Among the names exhibited in the frame at the bottom of the avenue of exotics which flanks the staircase, figure those of Russian barons and German dowagers. And the suites of rooms hidden away among the curious labyrinthine passages are more like those in a private mansion abroad than the intensely "inny," gold-bedizened *appartements* of the Hôtel des Anglais, and the others well known to our countrymen.

Here the Colonel, old at travel, had

* Or rather, "stood." The Hotel is now moved, and has become a huge ill-served barrack at the back of the town.

taken up his quarters, desiring rather to acquaint his girls with genuine foreign life than with spurious English.

The only objection which they brought against his choice was one which did not now occur for the last time, nor did it wear out by its frequent occurrence. Perhaps it never would have been noticed but for the state of Emmy's nerves; but she felt, and by sympathy with her Lucy felt too, the continual weary pounding down of the Mediterranean waves within a few feet of them. It is a troublesome night-companion, this tideless sea. On our own coasts, if the surf is at one time of the night under the window, it is at another a quarter of a mile off, almost out of hearing; whereas at the Paradis, the plunging seemed for ever at the door, and Emmy used to lie tossing and turning, looking at that tiresome Antibes light, and count-

ing her hundreds and hundreds of recurrent waves, till her brain ached, and throbbed again.

However, all this was at an end for the present. And another thing was also at an end for the present, their railway travelling. For a space of some two hundred miles, they had to go back to the habits of our fathers, and to betake themselves to the somewhat trying, but at the same time, it must be confessed, very enjoyable, *vetturino* conveyance.

Accordingly, at the door of the hotel was to be seen, very early one October morning, the familiar form of the four-horse *calèche*, and all the bustle attending it; blue-bloused *facchini* emerging with luggage, and *vetturino* himself on the top, bringing out of his pocket all manner of cords, tying them here and there, in all imaginable places but the right one; and

Tom, who seemed never tired of feeding the carriage with small bags and heaps of wraps. At length the party emerge from the *salle* on the left hand, where the comfortable early breakfast, so difficult in England, but so easy everywhere else, had just been discussed; then the *padrone* (or head-waiter, one never knows which), with his best bow and the folded bill; and of course last, and not till after the *stalliere* had shouted "Mademoiselle!" up the stairs, Annette, a heap of bags and wraps.

Tom hands her up into the rumble behind, the carriage-door is closed, the last directions are given to shut the landward window, and leave open that to seaward; and with the inevitable "He-up, he!" and an echoing crack of the whip, they rattle out of Nice.

That heavenly bit from Turbia to Mentone was the girls' first taste of truly glo-

rious scenery. How they longed to be down in the gorges on the right, getting that splendid light and shade on the quaint old towers of Eza! For even Emmy had for the time forgotten her anxiety; and both had out their "incident-book," putting in various grand outlines, which shifted into impossible combinations as they trotted rapidly down towards Roccabruna. And then the quaint little Mònaco, now in its best morning light, glittering with its bastions and towers against the turquoise sea beyond; and that exquisite pale-green of the orange-groves fringing the feet of the glowing precipices: could they but have stayed a week, and tried their new southern colours on this scene of lavish beauty! But there was that within each breast which would not let the wish frame itself. Onward and southward—this must be their word.

So half-anglicised Mentone was passed, and as they gazed into the picturesque gorge of St. Louis, the Colonel laid a hand on each girl's shoulder, with "Now, my lasses, we're in Italy !"

All who travel by this route, read *Doctor Antonio.* It need not be said that there was something of such a kindred spirit in that touching tale, that our maidens had it almost by heart ; and as soon as Italy was entered, were carefully getting up all the bits of most minute and accurate description, ready for the moment when the scene of the upset, and the site of the Osteria, should come in view.

It had been arranged, to their great delight, that they should sleep at Bordighera. So in the morning, the *cocher* had special directions to pass slowly through the marine suburb of the town; and they were able to identify the very spot, as they

stood on it and read Ruffini's beautiful description.

So they turned their backs on the city of palm-trees, and sped on, past San Remo, and Porto Maurizio, and Oneglia, and all the gems by the sea which stud the lovely bosom of the Riviera. Two days were given to Genoa: one the day of rest, the second a day of well-arranged work among palaces and pictures; and then on again, till they drew rein and gained the railway, at the lovely Spezia. It had been, indeed, a time to be much remembered. Three mornings following, before they arrived at Genoa, they had seen the great red orb of the sun rise out of the sea.

On the first of them, the snowy heights of Corsica had been descried, basking in the rosy light; and this evening they had had an ocean sunset, compared with which

the dear old Netherton sunsets were as a picture dimmed and blurred.

"And now, my girls," said the Colonel, "we must find our way to Rome. I give you to-morrow to sketch and ramble, for this is one of the choicest spots in Europe. And meantime I must be making my inquiries."

Leaving the girls to enjoy their sketching in the beautiful ravines, with Tom keeping guard at a respectful distance, we may state the result of the Colonel's inquiries: and that was, that as to any certainty of getting on, he was about as much in the dark when he met Lucy and Emmy in the evening, as when he began. All he could ascertain was, that they must not think of going to Florence by the way, for that the main line to Rome had for some days been stopped. The only possible route appeared to be the coast-line by

Leghorn and Civita Vecchia; and even by that it was by no means clear that, owing to uncertain orders, or somebody blundering, they might not have to spend a night or two in some filthy roadside station, or to return to Leghorn or Spezia again.

The Colonel summoned Lucy to his room before dinner for a *tête-à-tête* council of war. In this, both father and daughter agreed that Emmy's failure was not in physical strength; that she seemed rather falling into the usual weakness of persons whose nerves have been tried — that of nursing and coaxing her ailment; and that adventure of the kind likely to befall them in this journey was calculated to do her good rather than harm. Therefore it was resolved to push on. And Emmy herself, even when fully informed of the probabilities, was of the three most eager for advance. Perhaps she thought that on some

stoppage of the train she might be handed out by Pak himself, and by him presented to the Liberator; or it may be that her languor was making itself irksome to her, and she was glad of an opportunity to throw it off.

The resolution, which had not been rashly taken, was not rashly followed up. The ample luncheon-basket (or canteen, as the Colonel would have it) was more than commonly replenished; and Tom and Annette were duly enjoined to provision themselves for a possible detention. This latter injunction Lucy took care to see carried out; having learnt by this time that a servant's promise of obedience to any order out of the common is very apt to end in words.

So the party were well provided; and, all rugs and pillows having been taken out loose, so as to be available in case of need,

a fair start was made in the early morning of the Thursday, by a train which ought to reach Rome that night.

Several semblances of delays occurred. Three times at least the train was stopped by police, who insisted on identifying every passenger, and inspecting every hand-bag; and at every roadside station there seemed a difficulty as to whether the station-master was empowered to forward the train.

The only really serious affair was at Montalto, the Papal frontier. The vile process of fumigation need not be described here; is it not written in every book of travel, and on everyone's memory who has at any time submitted to it? But here every puff of the engine seemed to require fresh orders from Rome. Four or five false starts were made, and after each the whole train was searched for some suspected person, who of course was not in it.

At one of these times poor Tom, with his honest West-of-England face, was had out of his second-class seat, Annette partly shrieking and partly laughing an accompaniment to the savage growls of the gendarmes; and the Colonel had to substantiate to their satisfaction that the youth was simply in his service, and knew not a word but his native English. At another, the Colonel himself went with the utmost coolness through a series of questions, and at last got off by an appeal to his luggage, which was found to have the requisite number of railway labels to agree with his statement. The girls pointed indignantly to the "Paddington, B.," which had been the first attached, and which they showed the officials tallied both with the account and with the name which had been given.

It was evident that they were in the land of terror and crooked ways, and out of

that of common sense and honesty. But the wretched rulers of Rome have an inheritance too precious even for them to spoil. The interest of humanity in their land, and in the fortunes of its people, as the Colonel pointed out, can coexist with the utter contempt in which they, and all they say and do, are held by mankind.

And so they went on to Rome. The romance of the approach has been altogether taken out by the railway; and if it had not been, our friends' entry took place in the dark, so that for them it would not have existed. Still, all was new, and they felt, if they did not see, the great cupola, and the Colosseum, and the Forum, near them and about them. The very word "Roma!", shouted on the platform, seemed like a magical sound.

It was early in October, and the height of the terror had not yet set in. The Piazza

dei Termini yet had its cab-stand; and in two vehicles, Tom and Annette well-nigh crushed by baggage in the second, they drove down by the Piazza Barberini, and the Via de Tritone, and the due Macelli, to the Europa, in the Piazza di Spagna.

CHAPTER VI.

NOTES FROM ROME.

THE Colonel, following the same plan as he had adopted at Nice, had in his choice of lodgings avoided the English quarter, and chosen comfortable apartments in the Piazza Nicosia, below the Borghese Palace, nearly half-way between the Trinita dei Monti and St. Peter's. The front windows looked over the Piazza towards the Pincian; a side view was obtained from the bedrooms of a quaint little old church, and, over it, of Hilda's tower, celebrated in Hawthorne's *Transformation*; while the back windows looked over the Tiber to the

Castle of St. Angelo and St. Peter's, with Monte Mario behind.

From this chosen abode the following letters were taken, with the Colonel's and the young ladies', to the Consulate, to be forwarded to England :

Tom to Amy.

"Dear Amey,—This comes to you from a great ways off, hoping you are well, not with standing. It is to tell you that me and the Cornel and the misses is very well. This place is one as needs a deal of reepare. But when the Cornel asked me what I thought on it, and I told him so, he said as he wouldn't have a stone on it touched for the world. And so I thought, Amey, that forrin parts alters gen'l'-folks, for you know how partic'ler neat and tidy he is at home. We goes most days into places as is downright shameful

for ruination, great blocks of building tumbled about no how, and the Cornel and the ladies don't seem never to see it. The Cornel he had a gouty foot for a bit, but he's well now, as you shall hear presently. Well, when his foot was bad and he couldn't stir, I used to go out with the misses; when we have the carriage, in course I always goes, whether the Cornel's ill or well. But other wiles I goes behind 'em a yard or so afoot. And we mostly goes to great houses full of pictures, platzos they calls 'em. And you may depend, Amey, them picters is odd ones. They've a got a way here of painting folks either getting up or going to bed, an' their things mostly off. An' at first, I thought it was rather queer for young ladies to look at; but, Amey, if they don't mind it, I don't, not with standing; and there's one place close by

St. Peter's big church, where I've a been wi' 'em five or 6 times. It's just like as if you took about ten of Warham and Wix's big factory, only you must do it afore it was burnt, and put 'em a-top of ten o' Netherton railway-stations. And you go up a precious lot of stairs. Miss Emmy used to sit down and rest at first, as she went up, but she don't now; and you come to a long place half a mile long, and full of tombstones out of church-yards, but none on 'em half so pretty as that as come down from London for poor Mrs. Bythesea, and all printed over in the right sort of letters, but I can't get no meaning out on 'em.

"And then when you've done wi' these, there's lots of smaller places, but they're large all the same, filled wi' broken bits of gods and goddesses as they used to worship here, and they're a sight better

cut, I heard the ladies say, than them as they worship now. Amey, I'll tell you all about that by and by. They *are* funny, I warrant, some of them broken-up gods. Why, if Miss Lucy and Miss Emmy didn't sit for an hour a-copying of an old chap as were broken off below his arms and above his knees, and a'most black as black wi' smut. Well, Amey, but I said I'd tell ye about the dollotry, so here it is. Close by this place as has the gods and the head-stones—I don't put the name, 'cause you wouldn't know it if I did, but all the names as I can't spell Miss Lucy writes for me—is the big St. Peter's Church. It's a fine piece of building, you may suppose, but the tower isn't to my liking like Netherton, for it's got its top corners cut off, and ends round, like a dish-cover. Well, you don't go in by a door, but there's a precious great roosha-leather mat hangs

afore the doorplace, and how ever the ladies would a got in if I hadn't been there, goodness knows. Well, when you're in, Amey, it *is* a big place, like out o' doors wi' a top on; you might a stood Netherton Church inside, and never grazed the crown of his hat, as a man may say. Well, Miss Lucy turns round to me—she's always so sharp and frisky like she is—and she says, 'Tom,' says she, 'do you think you could take that baby in your arms, there to the right by that basin?' 'Well, hardly, miss,' says I; not that I knowed a bit, for it looked like in size to any other baby, only it hadn't its things on; but you see I thought, 'Miss, I'll be as sharp as you, and you wouldn't have asked me if I could, that's why I answered so.' 'Go and try,' says she. And if it wasn't ever so much taller than me, and I'm no stump, you know, Amey. So I says to Miss Lucy,

'Well, miss, that's the cleverest thing I've seed yet, to make a big lubber of a child like that look as if you could carry it.' 'Yes, Tom,' says she, 'but don't you think it would be a deal cleverer'—I don't think she said them words, but what she did say had that sense—'to make a small baby look as if it were big?' So I laughed, 'cause I saw Miss Emmy laughing, and I said, 'Yes, miss, by a deal.' But I didn't know what she meant, for how should I? Well, we went on, on that same side, an' we saw about a dozen folks a-kneeling afore a dirty old black image, and then they'd go up one after another and kiss its toes, as was wore quite shining, like a brass door-handle. I had my thoughts, you may be sure, Amey, but I kep' 'em to myself, 'cause the Cornel, when he told me how to go on out here, said I worn't to interrupt folks at their prayers. But when we was walked

on, I said, 'Beg pardon, Miss Lucy, but would you be so kind as tell me who's that?' 'O, that's Saint Peter,' says she. 'Saint Peter, miss, is it?' says I. 'Yes, Tom,' says she, 'and it's something else too. They say as it was once an image of Jupiter, the heathen god.' 'O, miss,' says I, 'then that's the image as we read about in the Acts, as fell down from Jupiter.' Then the ladies looked at one another, and they'd a laughed I'm sure only they knew they was in a church. 'Well, Tom,' says Miss Lucy, 'I don't know about that, but the religion's come down from Jupiter straight, you may depend.'

"I didn't understand that at the time, but I do now. For, Amey, it's all images here, and folks kneeling to 'em, and kissing 'em, and the like. An' I lay awake one Sunday night, Amey, and I couldn't

make it out no how, how they did with that second Commandment, you know, as is in the Catechism, out of the twentieth chapter of Exodus, and up in the church; and 'twas on my mind, Amey, 'cause I'd heard it read that morning in our church, as is a big room outside the gates. And so next day I come to Miss Emmy, as I always asks about these sorts of things, 'cause Miss Lucy she is so keen on me; and I says, ''Cuse me, miss, but I've a thing as I wanted to ax you.' 'Ask away, Tom,' says she. And so I laid it out to her, an' I said, 'However do 'em manage, miss, 'cause it sims to me it's dead against 'em?' 'How do they manage, Tom?' says she. And she went to the book-case by the window, and she reach down a little book, and looked for something in it. 'Here, look at their Catechism.' And I did; and, Amey, it was cheek, that was,

you may depend; for I'm blessed if the second Commandment isn't cut clean out altogether! 'Well, miss,' says I, 'that is one way of being Christians.' 'Yes, Tom,' says she; 'and yours and mine is another.' 'Why, yes, miss, hope it is,' said I.

"But there's more yet, Amey. Things is very queer out here, you may depend. I was telling of our church outside the gate. Well, would you think it, last Sunday we had to go round a lot of earth-heaps as they've built up outside the gate; and it had been wet, and 'twas all slosh, and orkward for the ladies; an' all because they're afraid of Garry Baldy coming; and you mustn't stay and talk in the streets, and, Amey, you needn't, for there's most nobody to stop and talk to. And it's orkward inside as well as out; for master Pak they think he's along wi'

Garry Baldy, an' so they don't say nothing afore Miss Emmy; an' she sits, poor miss, I see her every day, an' plays with her knife and fork, an' sends away her meat, as I finds on her plate. And Neena in the kitchen—that's our Roman maid—her young man he's got mixed into it somehow; and when Annette and I begin to talk about things, she half-understands Annette, and sets up crying, poor child; so it's enough to bust one, it is, Amey, you may depend. An' there'll be old mischief soon; but don't you be frightened, we're all right.

"Well, Amey, that's about all at present, from which you will see that it is a queer place this; but we goes on uncommon comfortable not with standing. And so good-bye, Amey, an' be a good girl, an' write me as soon as you get this, an' tell me lots about every body. An' be good to the Capt'n, Amey; I'll be bound

he's kind to you. It's natural, you know, as we reads in story-books, that you should hate him like poison; only to my mind it's a deal comfortabler, an' more Christian too, to be all good friends together; and be sure you tell me how mother and the young uns gets on. And so no more at present from your old teaser,

"TOM."

Before, however, Amy's response arrived, the force of circumstances produced the following:

Tom to Amy.

"DEAR AMEY,—I never thought as I should be writing again so soon; but such a lot has happened, that I can't rest without telling you an' the folks at home. I don't hardly know were to begin, I've got

so much to tell. But I must begin some were; so here goes.

"Well, Amey, you know I was saying, when I left of, that things was in a queer way here, and so they continued; and on Tuesday Oct. 22,—I mind it 'cause it was mother's birthday, an' I'd been out an' bought a plum-cake for Annet and me and Neena, and we was eating it with our supper,—just about 9 in the evening, come a bang like to ha' blowed us out a window. 'It's Garry Baldy,' says I. So Neena she scream out, and I got up to go to see what it was. 'Don't you go,' says Annet; 'you can't understand if any body tells you,'—which I couldn't, sure enough. 'You know 'em all; you go, Neena.' 'That I will,' says she. So in about a minute we see fire and smoke a rising up near the big church, for our window looks that way. Says Neena, so

Annet told me, 'It's the barracks; it's no use my going; p'raps I shall get killed.'

"Just then the bell rung; so I went in, and the Cornel says, 'Ask the people of the house what that was, Tom.' 'Please, sir, Neena says it's the barracks; we can see 'em burning out of our window.'

"So away they come, Cornel and ladies, to look out. Miss Emmy was ter'ble nervous, I could see. 'Don't you go out, Tom,' says the Cornel. 'No, sir, I'd rather not,' says I.

"So that was our first frite, and all day next day our piatsa—that's how they call the squares here—was full o' soldiers. The Cornel he went out, leaving me with the ladies, and we could hear guns some way off. When he come back, he didn't say nothing to me; but Neena said they'd been fighting about two miles from the English church, and a many were killed.

Well, Amey, I've begun too long, and I mustn't go on at this rate; but I must cut it short about this week, and say that, what with reports of this and reports o' that, and Miss Emmy getting paler and her eyes redder, and the Cornel always a-going out, and never coming home wi' no news, our pashense was pretty near wore out.

"So it went on that week and a'most half the next; but on Wednesday, that was last Wednesday week, Amey, we had a sight, sure enough. It was about three o'clock when we heard drums* a-beating, and Neena says, says she, 'Here they are!' 'Here who are?' says Annet, and says I after her. 'Why, th' Italians,' says she. 'Nonsense,' I said, and rushed down to the piatsa to see; and so did the Cornel. 'Tom,' said he, 'it's all over.' 'Pray,

* No drums are used by the Pope's troops.

sir, how so?' said I. 'Why, they're the French,' says he. And sure enough there they come, hundreds and hundreds marching by, and all the people looking as if they could have sunk into the earth. An' I saw the men put their hands into their pockets and slope away home. But 'twas the Sunday afore it really *was* all over; and then there was a big battle at —Miss Lucy wrote it for me—Mentana, ten miles off, an' the old Pope's troops was dead beat, but the French came with a new gun the Cornel's always talking about, the Shaspow he calls it, and Garry Baldy and his men had none but old guns, and so they mowed 'em down like barley, and they was obligated to run for it. But, Amey, I heeard the Cornel say that if they'd a stood half-an-hour more it would a been the other way; for a'most all the Shaspows was done for wi'

firing so often—they was dirty and bent and ½ melted. Well, Amey, an' now I'm coming nigh that as I wants most to tell ye about. Next day—O what a sight it was, lots o' poor maimed men come in in cartloads, besides seventeen hundred prisoners; an' the wounded was all put in the orspitles. An' then, Amy, our two young ladies got a-talking. I heeard 'em half one night, 'cause their room was nearly next to mine, only I couldn't hear what they said; but they didn't get much sleep that night, I warrant. An' next morning I heeard them and the Cornel all a-talking very fast, an' a little sharp, two. An' it all come to this: he rung for me in his room, an' he says, 'Tom,' says he, 'these girls are set on going to the 'ospittles, to see the wounded men; an' I'm not sure but they're right. I shall go the first time, and I want you to come,

that you may know the way to go with them after.'

"So the Cornel he sets off first to the French common Daunt's, and gets an order for to go into the 'ospittles. So we set off that afternoon, the ladies in deep black, with veils; and, Amey, we did look solemn, you may be sure; and it was a awful sight to see the poor fellows, and how the young ladies stood it I can't think. But Miss Lucy she were as cheerful as could be, an' talked and read to some English as she found, and brightened 'em up wonderful; and Miss Emmy she went about looking very sad at first; but as she went on, I could see that she put her heart into 't, an' at last I saw her praying by a poor lad as hadn't long to live, and I was obliged to turn away for fear of breaking right down. And so we went on, Amey, for several days; an' we

went to the same place again without the Cornel, and into fresh places two. And the way was, in the fresh places, that the ladies sent me in first, and I had to find who were English, for there was some on 'em every were; and then I tell them. Well, one day we went to a new orspitle as we hadn't been to, called, as they told me, the Holy Spirit; an' it was a good name, two, Amey, for not with standing all the fighting, you never see nothing like the kindness in them places showed the poor chaps, all friends and fose alike. There was grand ladies, an' priests and cardinals and all; and the Pope hisself come one day an' talked to 'em, which made me think, Amey, that if there is different ways o' being Christians, them as goes 'em is Christians all the same. I should have said that this day Miss Emmy staid at home, as she'd been tired with

her work the day afore. Well, so I was going about looking into the beds and shakedowns, and I hadn't found that day but one Englishman, and he was a Paddy, and a'most raving wi' a hurt in his head,—when I see something that struck me like all of a heap. You must know as they wasn't all on 'em in beds, but a many was on the floor for want of room and beds enough; an' there wasn't clothes enough, either. So a'most half of 'em lay with their uniforms or what not just throwed over 'em, and not enough to cover 'em. So you'd see legs and arms sticking out all about, and had to pick your way among 'em. Well, Amey, when I was a-doing this as well as I could, I come upon a heap of uniform in a corner, and two feet straight up a-standing out at the end of 'em. Now I suppose one folk's feet is uncommon like other folk's feet,—at

least, one don't see folks's feet often, and ain't, pr'aps, no judge. But there was sommut about them feet that gave me a turn, I cou'dn't tell why. So I looked, you may be sure, to see who they belonged to. And, Amey, I seed a sight so that my pulse jumped like a frog into my mouth, they did, and my head too. There he was, sure enough, as pale as ashes, and fast asleep; there was no mistake, I tell 'e, Amey; you knowed 'un as well as me. There was his great white forehead, and mouth, and chin and all; and he breathed up and down as reg'lar as a baby. One arm was under his head as a pillow, an' t'other was all bound up and splintered; so 'twas plain where his hurt was. Well, I pick my way out again, an' looked for Miss Lucy till I found her. She were reading out of the Prayer-book to another poor chap as were dying, and

you may be sure, Amey, it was as much as ever I could wait till she were done. Then I came up, and I said, 'Miss Lucy, will you please step this way?' I suppose she saw sommut in my face; for she said, in a scared way like, 'What is it, Tom?' 'It's some one as you've seed afore, miss,' said I. 'Tom,' said she, 'it isn't *he*, is it?' 'Well, miss, you shall judge,' said I. So, Amey, she just sot down a 2nd on the corner of a bed, and then she said, 'That'll do, Tom; I can go now.' And when we nearly came, I just said, 'He's asleep, miss.' 'That's well, Tom,' said she.'

"Well, we stood and looked; and she says, 'You're right, Tom; it's hisself.' An' I could see she were crying like a child. 'Better not wake him, miss,' says I. 'By no means,' says she: 'but now we'll go home straight.' So she led out, and a'most ran to the cab-stand as is by

the big church. As she got in, she said, 'Not a word of this, Tom, to Miss Emmy at present ; we'll tell her all in good time.'

"When we come home Miss Lucy flew up the stairs ; but when Annet came to the door up in our story, she were as quiet as a mouse. An' she walked in ; and I could hear her say, very soft, but it warn't like usual, 'Papa, I want you a minute.' So they went into the Cornel's dressing-room. As soon as they was in and the door two, Miss Emmy puts out her head, and she says, 'Tom, come in for a moment ;' an' when I come in, Amey, she first went and sat down among her drawing-things, an' she said quite calm like, 'Have you found him, Tom ?' So I was at my wits' end, you may be sure. I said the best I could; 'Please, miss, I wasn't to tell you nothing.' An' that was the last I see; but I seed

she knew how 'twas, only, poor soul, she cou'dn't know how he was, an' I hope they've told her. The Cornel, he went out right away; that was four o'clock, an' now it's going seven ; an' I've been all this time a-writing to you, for Annet an' Neena they've gone to see the Barry Cades, an' I were all by myself; and the dinner's come from the cook's ever so long, an's waiting for the Cornel. I think I hear 'em now, coming up to the door.

"Nine o'clock. Amey, she knows it all, an' it were heavenly like to see her at dinner; but when I'd wrote this, the Cornel comes into our kitchen wi' a heap o' letters for me to take to the Counsel's, for the boat goes to-morrow. 'Do up yours, Tom,' says he, 'there isn't too much time. All's well, Tom; and we all ought to thank God for this day.' So no more from your old teaser, TOM.

"Miss Lucy's come out to tell me to wait five minutes. So just time to say, mind you write directly, if you haven't wrote all ready; and lots of news, mind."

CHAPTER VII.

INTEMERATA FIDES.

THE Colonel, on receiving Lucy's report, set off immediately for the French head-quarters. He there had no difficulty in obtaining a *carte-blanche* permission to deal with the young Englishman of rank — whom he described as well as he could, having no accurate knowledge of his present *nom de guerre* or his person—at his own discretion. Having thus cleared the ground in advance, he next sought the hospital, knowing that it was the time for the evening visit of the doctors. He sent in his name

by one of the attendants, and was at once admitted to the private room, where four or five medical men were assembled.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I appear before you armed with a permission to act at my discretion respecting one of your patients; but it is of course plain that my discretion must be yours, and I am prepared to obey your orders. But the strangest part of the matter is, that I have no knowledge of the present appellation, nor have I any of the person, of my *protégé*. I can perhaps tell you that which may enable you to identify him. He is a young Englishman of about twenty-five years, more or less, with a high white forehead, and his wound is in the left shoulder or upper arm. It may be some help to add, that he lies on the floor in a corner, and cannot bear his feet covered."

"Ah, signor," said a courteous elderly

medico, "it must be Colonel Emilio Pacco whom you describe."

"Doubtless," replied Colonel Bythesea, pleased both with the retention of the name he had heard at Nice, and with the military rank of his young friend.

"And now, signor, may I ask your report of him?"

"Well, sir, not altogether bad. A ball has passed through the upper arm, and has broken, without much shattering, the bone. It is a tedious though not a dangerous hurt. You can't have him yet, nor would it be wise to carry him far for a week or two; but any accession of comfort that can be gained by moving him a few yards, we may safely allow."

So the next inquiry was for a private room under the roof of the hospital. But it appeared that the only one was that in which they were then assembled, and that

was essential for the doctors to hold their consultations in.

So that was given up, and, by the knowledge and aid of another of the medical men, a room was found in the immediate neighbourhood; in fact, not twenty yards from the very corner in which the yet unconscious object of all this scheming lay.

The next matter to be managed was the patient himself. The Colonel had consulted the doctors about the recognition. Of course it was unavoidable; but ought it to be delayed? This might easily be managed by an ample and exclusive employment of Tom, and a little finessing. But the medici thought *not*. The young man was at present in a dull, dispirited state; he had lost his best friend in the battle, and whenever they visited him he spoke of nothing else. They believed the

awakening of a new interest would probably do him good. The news of his own rank had better perhaps not be imparted at the same time, but reserved for another occasion; even of this, however, they said the Colonel, with his maturer judgment, would best determine.

And so thus much was done that evening. The Colonel returned home, as above stated in Tom's postscript, and a plan was arranged for the next day.

Emmy was, as Tom described her, rather serene than joyous, but withal slightly sad. She, poor child, had a great fear,—hardly, in reality, on her mind, not shrined in her secret soul, but fluttering and troubling her, outside the inner shrine. Who would not have felt that, with the knowledge of the rank, might come other thoughts, and higher aspirations than to the Emmy of times so different? So she sat still and

brooded alone; and both the Colonel and his lively daughter had too much tact to intrude on her anxieties, but both within themselves agreed that the meeting must be as soon as possible.

The next day, immediately after breakfast, Lucy, attended by Tom, went again to the hospital. She took care to be near while Tom sought out the invalid in his corner. He found him this time not asleep, but gazing silently up to the ceiling, as if he were counting the cobwebs. The only free hand lay idly outside the heap of clothes.

Tom, who had been instructed to act as if no difference had taken place in their rank, gently laid hold of it, and thus awoke the attention of its owner. The eyes were turned quickly upon him.

"You know me, master Pak?" said Tom.

"To be sure I do," was the answer. "What in the world brought you here? How strange it seems, Tom, to see you!"

"Well, not much stranger, master Pak, than to see you a-lying here. What's the hurt?—is it a bad one?

"Not a very pleasant one: a ball through my shoulder, that's all. But O, Tom, I'm worse hurt than that. My poor friend Heckswy's killed; as good and brave and dear a fellow, Tom, as any man ever called friend! And I'm all alone in this dreadful place; but they're very kind and good to me, though I did fight against them. Still, I'm sad and lonely, Tom."

"You mayn't be so much alone as you think, master Pak. Here's some one else as you know, I'm thinking."

And Lucy came forward, and sat down on the corner of the next bed. She could see at a glance that the eyes were for a

moment lit up with an eager sparkle of joy; but it faded out in a moment, and left only courtesy in its place.

"O yes," said he; "how good of you to come to see me here! But"—and his voice faltered—"why are you in black? Is—is *she* well?"

"Yes, Pak, well, and in Rome" (the sparkle returned, and the free hand seemed to be seeking the confined one, and clasping it under the clothes); "this black is the regulation for lady-attendants to be admitted here; but anyhow we should be in mourning, for we've lost poor Mrs. Bythesea."

But Pak seemed lost in his thankful thoughts. At last Lucy roused him:

"Pak, we're going to move you."

"But I don't suppose the doctors will let you."

"O yes, they will, so as it isn't far. I'll

tell you how it all is. Colonel Bythesea, and Emmy, and I, are all here, and Tom is the Colonel's servant; and he found you yesterday when you were asleep. And it's all arranged; the Colonel has taken a nice little room across the street for you, and the doctor is to come and see you moved this afternoon; and there you can lie and get well, and we shall come and sit with you and comfort you."

"Thank God!" said the grateful youth; "any place but this, though they are so kind to me."

All went well in the afternoon. The kind doctor brought four stout *facchini*, who slid a board under the patient, and bore him as he was to the little room in the Borgo del Santo Spirito. Much care had been there that morning. The bed was cosy and white, and chairs, and couches, and a bedside table, with a heap of familiar

books, all seemed to tell of one who had left but to return shortly. Tom and the Colonel had walked beside the procession, and gave their English help, to the great relief of both doctor and patient, in laying Pak on the bed, and arranging all around him.

Dusk was drawing in, and it was thought best that no further excitement should take place that night. So the two left, having installed a motherly form in the Roman costume at the bed's head.

The next day, *the* meeting took place. We cannot rival Tom's powers of description; and, alas, Tom was not present: so it must remain undescribed. We intrude unseen however, to say, that it soon became plain that poor little Emmy was not at all herself. Her frank lover noticed to her the constraint in her manner.

"My darling," he said, "I am sure

that you have something on your mind that you wish to tell me."

"Yes," said she, "there is."

"And you don't call me by my old name, either," said he; "what is it, my darling?"

But she only sat still and cried.

"Those are not tears of joy, Emmy," said he.

"Well, they are, and they are not."

"How can that be? Have you not something to say?"

"Yes, and no."

"How your talk puzzles me, darling; and how cold you seem to me! What do you mean by 'yes and no'?"

"Well, the truth must out, and it's this —you're not the same as I left you."

"No; I'm a poor smashed man, not worth your notice; and you're an accomplished young lady, fit for any society."

"No, no; O no, it's not that!" cried Emmy passionately; "it's all the other way. Do you know who you are, Pak?"

"No," said he; "but bless you for using the old name once more!"

"Then I used it by mistake, for you're not Pak at all. Who did you think you were?"

"Why, Emmy, I always thought I was Tiffy's son; but perhaps you know better now."

"No, it is so," said she; "but who's he?"

"That he never told me; but I always fancied, and so did everybody, that he was something more than he gave himself out for."

"Well," Emmy said, and she spoke quietly and slowly, "it must be told. He's a great lord, and you're his heir, and a lord too. And now I've told you so, I'd better

not stay any longer here; so I'll say good-bye"—drawing her hand out of his which lay on the bed—"I can't say 'my lord.' Only one thing, you shall tell me to go with your own mouth."

But he threw his hand out as far as he could without moving, and caught her and drew her to him, and covered her cheek with clinging kisses, and said,

"My own life's darling, if I were ten thousand times an emperor, and you were the same little Emmy, it should never make an atom of difference between us. Why, little simpleton, we've grown together, and there's never been an hour for years that I haven't thought of you, and you of me. We've one heart and one life—yes, my Emmy, and more—you always said it would be so—we have one God. Kneel down, darling, and let us thank Him for all this happiness."

And Emmy was very calm—she was too happy to weep; and she knelt down by the bedside, and she clasped her palms, and they were held together by the dear right hand which had just been given her; and Pak poured forth in thankful prayer words that thrilled her through and through with joy. When he had finished, "Emmy," said he, "I've sought, and I've found; sought in strange ways, and found in strange places. It was a long and weary search; but I found Him, and now I've found her that set me seeking."

There was silence for a few moments—the slender form still kneeling, the hands still joined and held together. Through the window streamed the orange glow of the setting sun; it fell on the kneeling figure, it bathed the joined hands in golden light.

"You remember, darling, that evening on the beach in the sunset, when you

looked bright, but not so bright as now; and you pleaded, and I would not hear; when I called you my good little angel, and told you that if you kept steady to me, I might get right in time? And when you spoke those blessed words of heart and hope—'I feel so certain that you'll come right in the end, that I thank God for it every day I live'?"

"O yes; that parting has never been out of my thoughts. It was the bright spot of all my memory."

"And now, darling, there is a brighter. The angel has won the day: will she stay and live with her conquered foe?"

"O, why should you ask it? For ever and ever, my own, my blessed, my recovered one!"

And she fell on his face, and his right arm clasped her, and the vow was finally sealed which death alone can sever.

CHAPTER VIII.

DESPATCH OUTWARD.

IN due course, the following missive arrived at the Eternal City:

Amy to Tom.

"DEAR TOM,—This comes to thank you for your two letters, which I hope finds you and the misses quite well, and the Cornel and Annet, as thank God it leaves us, me and the Cap'n and the younkers, and all at this present, and mother she's bravely. I read your letters a loud, tom, to several as axed forry, and some on 'em said as you rote like a book, and it was a prime thing it was that you was took off to

them furaway parts, else nobody wouldn't a knowed their outlandish doings, which they ought to do, poor dum hethens as they be. But the best was, tom, when the letter come about your finding of Mr. Pak, me and mother was at th' iorning-bord, and the Cap'n, he sot in the door-place, an' he 'spected a letter about his pay, an' he says, says he, 'Here comes the red-top' (that's what he calls the postman) 'with my letter at last.' So when it came, an' he saw them outlandish queen's-heads, only it isn't a queen, but an old gentleman in a smoking-cap as Mr. Tiffy used to wear, bless him! he cries out, 'Here's summut from t'other side o' the moon; who's for oning it?' So I iorned away, and I tho't, Why, it can't be for me, anyhow; which I had another only Monday was week. However, it was. So I said, 'Just be so good as to read it us now, for I can't abide that nasty silver paper as

shows all the words backurds. Wot work I had last time wi't!' An' so the Cap'n he begins, and mother an' I soon lays down our heters an' stood a list'nin'. And when he got to th' ospittle, we was oncommon keen to hear it; for the good Cap'n he boggled and boggled wi' they black words commin' in backurds, but when he come to the feet a sticking up, why, tom, if I may venture it, he got stuck up too, an' he says, wi' a queer kind o' crack in 'is voice, 'There,' says he, 'I can't go on;' for he seed what was a coming. An' O, tom, how happy we all was, both for he hisself, and for dear Miss Emmy; for if there ever was a angel walking of Netherton streets, it was her, an' no misprint; poor little Johnny give a scream and a jump for joy when I told he o't, an' furred his crutches away as if he could do wi'out 'em, which he isn't going to.

"An', tom, I read it all arterwards to Bengy, as happens modrate often into tea of late, an' he got quite fierce he did, and went on for most an hour 'bout the rongs of the people, and how 'twou'd all be set to rites now my lord Pak was turned up. An' he's awful fond of Mr. Pak is Bengy. Some times he'll be in a hurry to go, and I'll be wanting 'im to stay a bit longer there,—now don't laff, tom,—an' I only got to up wi' sommut about his old friend bare legs, an' he'll start off an' talk away by th' 'our how clever he is, and how he won't never forget old chums, and how great we're all going to be when he's in the Parly-meant. But I'm ritein' all about myself, an' you wanted news, an' I'm goin' to tell you some, an' it's about Amey again, an' it is that Bengy an' I have said Done, and now we've got our young lord, we

thinks o' waiting till he an' Miss Emmy is made one; and so it'll be twice two is four, which I hope it won't give no ofense if you mention it to Miss Emmy, an' we'll make our 'rangements acordin' lie. But what all Netherton is talking about now is just this, that Mr. Gerald's come home from Austrayler as rich as rich can be, an' looking so handsome, wi' a beard so long that it lay on our iorning-bord when he sot talking to me and mother, as pleasant and quiet as an unborn lam'. An' our Rector, he holds up his head again, and looks as proud an' pleased as you like. An' Bengy said one day — he's so clever is Bengy—that the Rector's hair would turn back brown again, only it isn't in the nature of 'em. Only think of Mr. Gerald a-sittin' in our poor little place; an' he talked so jenteal to mother about our Cap'n, and so pretty to me

about Bengy. He was delighted he was wi' your letters, which he axed if he might see 'em, and I gave him leave, hoping no ofense, as I'm sure you wou'dn't take it, was you to see his smile and hear his pleasant words about 'em, when he said what a lucky fellow you was ; only he didn't say not a word about Miss Emmy, which mother said she had her thoughts, but I shut her up pretty quick. I tell Bengy Mr. Gerald's the hansumest gentleman I ever see, but he says I ain't no judge, for he doesn't come wi'in a day's walk of my lord Pak. But I shall keep my 'pinion, an' so I mean to in lots 'o things, or else where's the use of we women if the men is to do all the thinkin' for us ! ! Is these marks rite, tom? I mean as I goes in strong for this. Well, you know that big house of Cornel Seagrave's, five miles out o' Netherton, an'

folks do say that it's for sail, and Mr. Gerald he's for bying it and settin' up for a Parlymeant man for Netherton, as has gotten a vote like to send up a Parlymeant man next 'lection, wi' his Austrayling money as he picked up out there.

"An' I got it in my head, only mother she's so down on one like, an' the Cap'n he bax her, that there's a nice young lady not fur from were you sits a-readin' this — that's Miss Lucy — that might do vor'n mitey well. An' so, tom, I dream, but it's only bosh I'm telling you, that we was all tied up in one day by the Rector in th' old church, as has good congregations again of aternoons. There was I an' Bengy, an' Lord Pak an' Miss Emmy, an' Miss Lucy an' Mr. Gerald, an' you an' Annet : only you mustn't read as far as this to her.

"An' I'm glad Neener who you talks about is a'ready took in an' done for wi' some dum hethen, 'cos, you know, it wouldn't do to bring no popishers in here to marry nor given in marriage. But I'll be bound she's wonderful pretty, else you wouldn't say so much about her.

"As to the Cap'n, tom, why no I don't hate 'un, nor can't say as ever I did; he's oncommon rezon'ble an' kind to I, an' I should dearly miss 'un now if he warn't sittin' in the door-place, or by the fire, wi' his pipe. It wouldn't do to stop, tom, wi'out saying that poor old tabby, as scratched your face so when you ty'd a squib to her tale, was pisoned by Johnny's mother for makin' holes in her crokase-beds. Well, good-bye, tom, I've made my fingers shockin' inky in ritein' this, an' Bengy, who is like you, tom, an' don't like to see nothin' out o'

reepare, is comin' up to tea, so I must stop an' try to scrub 'em clean afore he comes, which it won't come out 'sept wi' hot water; an' that Kezier, she's a great big girl now, has been an' let the fire out; but I forgot to say that the poor woman who Miss Emmy nursed through the collarer comes most weeks to ask what news, an' when I told her yesterday that you'd found him, I thought we'd a' had to take her of strate to a sile'em. She's a good woman that is; an' you tell Miss Emmy, tom, as I was in a shop last Friday was week, an' I give a scream, for sommut was all over me in a minute and up on the count her an' slobbering my face. An' it was bones, as come in wi' our Rector, an' he'd heard all about it in a letter from the Cernel, and, no dout, but he'd send his love an' a licking, there don't laff again, to Miss Emmy and lord Pak, which he can't, poor

dum creetur as he is. So no more from your sister AMEY.

"There, if Bengy isn't comin' up the lane, and my fingers black as the back; shan't I ketch it!"

CHAPTER IX.

IN MEMORIAM.

UNCHRONICLED weeks and months followed the recognition and its sequel. Of course the young ladies had abundance of occupation while Pak lay helpless; but it does not follow from this that the visits were infrequent, or the time heavy. Many an hour was spent in talking over the past—many a book was read through: *Dr. Antonio*, of course, among the first, and then *Mademoiselle Mori*, and Hawthorne's *Transformation;* not forgetting *Corinne* and *Valerius*. And the daily churches or picture-galleries were expounded by Emmy or

Lucy to the invalid, with the help of *Murray* and other guides. So that a new interest was awakened by the time Pak could be moved to the spare room in the Piazza Nicosia. He really thirsted to attack the grand old city in the quarter of its ancient, mediæval, and modern treasures of history and art, as much as he before had burnt to scale her material walls.

At length the day arrived, long promised by the good doctor, and the little room in the Santo Spirito was deserted for ever. And as this coincided with power of removal to a sofa, from that time the daily employment was changed. Drawing was again busily resumed, and, at last, drives in the Campagna begun. All had by this time settled down into the usual state of enforced tranquillity in and about the city; and hope of deliverance for Rome at present was over. So that the adventures of

the past gradually became more and more as a tale that is told ; and Pak could recount to the Colonel now, with more ease of manner, much that had happened on and off the field during his long discipline ; and could even be brought to approach the fatal Mentana itself. It had been more than once proposed by Lucy to her father, that a drive to the battle-field should be arranged; but as often the Colonel met her with a denial, fearing that the shock to Pak's feelings might be too great.

But one fine January morning, as they were discussing the day's plans over the breakfast-table, Pak himself said,

"There is one place to which we have never driven."

"Yes, there is," said Lucy eagerly, "and one to which I have often wanted to go;" with a triumphant look at her father.

"Let us go to-day," said Pak.

So the luncheon was ordered, and they started.

The road was not all new; they had previously visited the catacombs of St. Agnese, and those of S. Alessandro, several miles farther on. But beyond this, Pak took Emmy's hand in his, and became silent. The drive was growing more and more beautiful every moment. To the right the vast masses of Monte Gennaro and his attendant hills rose, blue and purple, and spotted with rocks, far into the sky, while on the left they looked down the side valleys towards the Tiber. At length they passed in among wooded slopes and overhanging trees; and Pak evidently was searching one spot and another with eager eyes, as one who half recollects something and cannot identify it. By and by, among the scrub and on the grass, signs of the conflict three months ago still lingered: torn shreds of clothing, and

bits of cartridge-cases, damped and soiled. On the left was a ruined farm, on the right a house, standing, or rather which had stood, in a vineyard. Here Pak stopped the driver, and all alighted. He led them into the farmstead, and thence down a lane which went towards the village. About fifty yards down this lane he stopped, and pointing forward a few feet, said, "There he fell."

"Of course nothing more is known," said Lucy.

"Well," said Pak softly, as if in a solemn presence, "I am not without hope of hearing something. Emmy knows what I am going to tell, and what was the real reason of my wishing to come here. When I fell wounded, which was somewhere up by the farm yonder, and was made prisoner, I was sent with many others into the village. As we lay about there, some kind women brought us water, and one even gave me

a drop of wine. I said, 'May I ask a favour?' 'Certainly,' she said, 'anything I can do.' Then I described exactly the spot where he fell, and his person and his clothes; and for fear of his having been plundered, I mentioned a scar which he had from a wound in youth. 'Comfort yourself,' said the good woman, 'my son Beppo shall go down immediately and bury him.' 'One more thing,' I said; 'as you are so kind, let your son bring away something from the clothes or the body, that I may know it's done, if I ever live to inquire.' 'So he shall,' said my kind attendant; 'and if you ever come, ask at the priest's or the sacristan's for Maria Gitani. Addio!' 'God bless you!' said I; and then the carts came, and we were taken away."

"Then," said the Colonel, "let us go into the village."

They had little difficulty in making out

the Casa Gitani. The good lady herself was away in Rome, but Beppo was not far off, at work in the vineyard. Thither they were guided, and found a comely specimen of the swarthy Italian farmer, standing barefooted in his rich purple furrows, breaking up the earth with his peculiar hoe-like spade.

The circumstance was soon recalled to his memory. O yes, he said, he had found the body, after some search; it was untouched, just as he had fallen; and he thought the Signor would not wish it stripped, so he had buried it as he found it, only taking the contents of the pockets, and a medal from the neck, which was *nella casa.* If the Signorine would excuse his feet and his working-dress, he would accompany them home and give it them.

We have heard of that medal before.

On receiving it, Pak eagerly kissed it, not for its own sake, but for his; and placed it on his own neck, saying, "May it never cover a breast less true than his!"

On which the Colonel replied: "No danger of that, while it hangs *there*." Whereby may be measured the opinion which he had formed of Pak.

"And now, Signor Gitani," said the latter, "let me add to the obligations under which your kind mother and yourself have laid me, by asking you to show us my poor friend's last resting-place."

"It is hard by where he fell," said Beppo. "I will lead the way."

He took them back to the lane. Not five yards from the spot which Pak had indicated was a low bush of hawthorn. On one of its branches hung a faded *immortelle*.

"There," said Beppo; "my mother put

that to mark the spot. Under my feet lies your friend."

"*Vattene in pace, anima beata e bella*," said Pak; then added, in an earnest and quiet tone: "Lucy, I may tell you now what you never would have known had he lived. Next to his religion and his country, *you* were the guiding-star of his life. His birth was noble; but he considered his poor country to be too utterly ruined ever to justify him in looking up to you. Only had this one enterprise prospered, only had he become a public servant of free Italy, did he ever anticipate breaking the silence.—Colonel, he would have been worthy of her; and you know, and Emmy knows, what that implies."

The bright girl had clung close to her father, and was weeping on his shoulder. It was not the first introduction of the

thought to her mind, though it had been to his. It had flitted across her view, a bright summer visitant, on those dear old cliffs at Netherton. But the utter departure, the long years that had intervened, the slightness of the original impression, all had concurred to obliterate it. At Pak's gentle loving tones, it had revived in memory, but not as a mere girl's love-tale, nor as a human interest only. It was as if a bit of her past life came back upon her from heaven. It dwelt about her henceforth, and took its part in her self-communings and in her prayers. If anything were wanting to rivet closer the links which bound her to Pak and Emmy, it was this revelation of the heart of their dearest friend.

Not long after this day's incident, it appeared evident, from Pak's restored strength, that the return to England must soon be

thought of. But as the ardour of classic interest, and interest for art, was now fairly aroused, and his survey of the glorious old city was but beginning, he was unwilling at once to be torn away. He appeared in no hurry to return and claim his honours in England, especially as he knew that, seeing their proofs were deposited with the Netherton authorities, nothing would be gained by hurrying home. So it was agreed to remain till well into the spring; and then to return leisurely through the stirring scenes of the liberation campaign, the girls putting in an earnest word for the Riviera di Ponente again, full of old memories and beauty ever fresh, as against the readier but duller route by Turin and over Mont Cenis.

But before they left Rome, sundry visits to a sculptor had issued in a beautiful but plain marble cross; and interviews

on the part of the Colonel with a grave Roman lawyer had duly negotiated a deed, wherein the proprietor of the field at Mentana had engaged to allow the said cross to be erected on his land, and for himself and heirs had undertaken the custody of the same, barring only such repairs as natural wear and tear should render necessary; and of them the English Consul at Rome for the time being was to be informed.

When we were last there, it stood on a knoll, slightly to the right of the lane leading down into Mentana; and on it the inscription:

E. E.

VIVAS IN CHRISTO.

CHAPTER X.

THE HISTORY.

THEY were sitting on a rocky projecting point, in the midst of a series of terraces rising out of the bed of a torrent far beneath. The terraces were formed by yellowish-brown stone walls, and served for the rooting-ground of numberless olive-trees; the opposite and neighbouring hills being similarly disposed. The peculiar green thus spread over the upper parts of the slopes gave place to a silvery gray as the eye ranged downwards, which again became bright misty blue in the depths of the valleys. Looking to the right and

northward, two or three distant folds-over of lower mountains melted into tenderer and tenderer purple, till at the farthest point a single snow-flecked summit looked over into the vale. To the left and southward, the opposite hill sunk down into a promontory, with its feet in the sea. The pearly haze divested that sea of its ordinary depth of colour, and left it in lines of paler and paler blue, losing its horizon in the brooding mist. To complete the far-off picture, five or six glittering campanili, some with, some without attendant villages, were perched on heights, basking in the haze. Close at their feet, passed downward the paved path by which they had ascended, divided into steps by narrow curbstones. On its left dropped down a tiny dark ravine, full of verdure, from the depth of which came the trickle of a slender stream, broken at intervals by the

rich gushing notes of a nightingale hidden in its shrubs. The head of this little ravine overhung the path itself, and consisted of a curved basin or circus of tufa rock, moist with dripping water, and draped with a perfect carpet of the graceful maidenhair fern. In the point of the natural arc had been placed a stone basin, into which ran, from a piece of hollow cane, a bright little stream of purest water. The terrace-walls were rich with the dusty pink bunches of wild-thyme, and the bright blue of the borage, — and there was a perfect glory of golden sultan and cytisus, deepened here and there, on a terrace where culture had been too easy, with a band of the crimson poppy. For some way down, the bank of the little rillet in the gully gleamed with a clear dark blue, due to a profusion of the blossoms of the lovely lithospermum.

The glancing shade of a venerable olive

half revealed the two figures, seated side by side. A delicate smooth hand was lying on a rough tanned one; and in the face to which the lesser hand belonged, there was that peculiar resting look of betrothed trust, which can hardly be mistaken by any observant eye.

"And now, Emilio mio," she said, "you promised you would tell me the wonderful story of all your feelings on that great occasion."

"Even so, Emilia mia," replied the other. "Even so; and I don't mean to disappoint my darling. But first let us spread the contents of that basket, of which my aching arm is not yet unmindful. It will recall to us dear old Netherton cliffs, and the Paradiso, and the day when we found Bones. And it may foreshadow another day, Emmy, when we may sit there yet again."

And so the little maid busied herself with the basket she had so carefully stored; and out of it came rosy Riviera oranges, with their stems and green leaves on them; and those queer bivalve "breads," and the inevitable bottle of red wine, and the bunches of small home-dried raisins, and minute sweet figs. To these, at the special request of the Bordighera padrona, had been joined a salad, as that without which no meal could be complete. And so they regaled in their simple way, tempering their wine with water from the trickling cane; while the nightingale sung to them, and the lizard glanced quickly away at a look; and the sun, and the hills, and the sea, helped to impress the tale which followed.

"And now, carissima, where shall I begin?"

"From the time when the Curé first fixed his eyes on you as you sat at the

window, and made such a turmoil in your brain, as you described it to us all."

"Very well. First, then, for those eyes themselves. I told you that the face of the Curé was utterly unlike those of other men. There are but about half a dozen faces of which this can be said. ONE is in both our thoughts; and we need not stay to particularise the others. Then as to the eyes. I have never seen such eyes. They searched you in an instant. Once turned on you, their power sunk in, and took up its abode within you. Only one other pair—well, darling, we are not making love; thank God, that's made long ago—so we'll say only what is necessary for my purpose of present description: that those eyes, and yours, have each a totally different sphere of power. Those, they seemed to reach the very marrow, so to speak; or, more plainly, to penetrate, in

spite of, or independently of, oneself, into the upper regions of the spirit, whence come the influences that control one's being. Whereas yours, my darling," (and here the two hands became almost as one) "dwell all about me on every side; blessing, but never searching: of myself, so that they may be fused into mine. Thousands of other eyes can bless and cheer each their own, like yours, my Emmy; but no other eyes could ever search like his; at least, so it seemed to me. When they first turned on me, I seemed to feel for the moment some smallest part of what it will be when His eye shall look into ours, who stands at the head of our race, and has all our thoughts, joys, sorrows, hopes, fears, summed up in Himself.

"That first day when our engravings were exhibited, I told you about his passing up the street, and what he said. The

eyes on that occasion just met mine—no more; I saw in them just one flash of a purpose directed towards me : I felt sure that more influence from them was in store for me. This fact sunk into me, and somehow in a moment I seemed to take it in, and its possible consequences. As sometimes we hear that in the end of life all a man's past course has come in a moment before him, so now, in the beginning, or rather before the beginning, of my new life, I seemed, with a kind of prophetic instinct, to see before me all that has since happened to my inner convictions. I knew I was overcome. All the resistance I afterwards made was but the show of fight kept up by a beaten enemy. From the moment that the hidden fire of those eyes shot into me, I was a lost man, as far as former firmness and former purpose were concerned. It was half-an-hour before I took

up my pencil again; and when I did, I knew that a change had come over me.

"Well, I told you how the next day he bore down on me and carried me off to his confessional."

"Yes, but what passed there you did not tell us. Perhaps, though, you can tell it to no one. Is the 'penitent' under seal of secrecy as well as the confessor?"

"I never heard that he was. At all events, darling, you are my confessor now. And could he be looking upon us here, he would wish you to share what was then said. Well, then, this was what passed. He seated himself on a low bench; and then first I recovered my presence of mind so as to speak to him.

'M. le Curé,' said I, 'why have you brought me here?'

'Why, my child,' he replied, 'have you not something to say to me?'

'Nothing whatever, M. le Curé,' said I.

'Have you no sins to confess, no life to give me a history of? I do not read comfort and satisfaction in your face.'

'Thank you, M. le Curé,' I replied; 'I am quite as happy as I ever expected to be, and it is impossible for me to tell you why I am not more so.'

"He pointed in a marked manner to the wooden step beside the confessional, and said, 'Kneel down there.'

'But, father,' I said, 'I have no vocation that way; I never did confess; I have nothing to confess; I lead my life as inclination urges and society expects; I am not imaginative; to me, things unseen are things non-existent.'

"His voice increased in intensity as he again said, in a slow and authoritative manner, 'Kneel down there.'

"Once more I said, 'But why should I?

I am not of your faith ; nay, I am neither Catholic nor Protestant ; what I see, I believe : your God, your Christ, I hear of them, I read of them, I admire them to a certain extent, but I do not believe in them ; therefore I cannot sin against them, therefore I cannot confess to them, nor to you, who are identified with them. I know you to be simple, to be in earnest ; I admire you, I love you, M. le Curé, but further I cannot go.'

"He rose from his seat, suddenly, impassionedly, with an inspired manner which made me crouch before him. One hand he fixed with a grasp on my arm, the other he flung out, rather than pointed, towards the inexorable wooden step, and, almost casting himself on me, his eyes fixed on mine, he cried out, with a voice which pierced me through and through, 'KNEEL DOWN THERE, I SAY !'

"Confused, overpowered, I seemed to fall down in spite of myself. In another moment I was kneeling, my face buried in my hands; the whole of my questionings and heart-searchings of the last many days seemed to have centred in this point, and here found their issue. I buried my face in my hands, and my tears flowed profusely.

"Need I say more, even to you, my dearest? Need I tell you how wonderfully and most kindly, with an irresistible skill and power, the good man taught me to open, depth after depth, the hard soil of my heart; how wonderfully too he worked the vein, when I once disclosed it to him, of your sweet influence, and your arguments with me? But I must cut this short. Day after day, notwithstanding his myriad engagements with others, did the holy man plead, and counsel, and search in secret with me. Whenever I asked, as I

often did, about those matters in his peculiar faith which I saw exemplified in his church and his worship, and which I could not receive, he replied, 'Not that, not that yet: your poor soul, my child, your poor soul; open it to God, open it to me, open it in front of the Cross, and all else will come in time.'

"And so the great change was effected, and the seed of comfort was sown which bore fruit in many a dreary hour. I longed and longed to tell you, darling, but it was not to be, I felt. It seemed matter of faith, to keep our resolve to rest apart, till He should bring us together who made us for each other. Your life was led in circles to which I had no access, and where any missive from me must have troubled the peaceful surface; and for you yourself, it was better to be unconscious of all, than to know only enough to keep

anxiety fretful. The more fragments, the more surface exposed. So I lived on, and looked on, and prayed on; and who would have dreamed of this rich reward?

"But it is time, my Emmy, to bring this my confession to an end. I see the sunset flush on that peak of snow, and our donkeys wait below, and our carriage at Taggia."

So they rose and passed downwards; not without one clinging kiss, the successor, the prolonger, of that first pledge of child's affection among the brick-heaps of No-man's Land. Nor again without more discourse, as they descended, how the good seed planted by the holy Curé had lived and flourished; how the wood, hay, stubble, of that earnest teaching had been burnt away by the fire of trial, and the pangs of the wound almost unto death,—but the

gold, silver, precious stones, had remained, glittering from eye to eye, giving and receiving light for earth, and for that which is beyond.

CHAPTER XI.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

THE train was proceeding through the fair valley of the Rhone. They had passed Vienne, and were now fast approaching Lyons. The rest of the travellers were asleep, but Pak was wakeful, and was ruminating over all the strange, and happy, and sad things that had befallen since he last was beside the broad bright river.

He had just brought down his lucubrations to the present time, and was turning towards the future which awaited him in England, when the train was suddenly and sharply pulled up. All were awoke

by the shock, and were more or less dislodged from their seats. The ladies gave an involuntary scream, but no one was hurt.

This being ascertained, the next thing was to discover the cause of their unexpected stoppage. On looking out, it was seen that they were on a level curve among cornfields and vineyards. Just ahead of them, the morning sun lit up a dense mass of escaping steam, amidst which human forms could be seen running about in wild confusion. From the same quarter were proceeding, heard above the shrilling of the steam of their own engine, shrieks and passionate cries.

"Pak, there's mischief there!" exclaimed the Colonel. But Pak had already opened the door on his side, and was running towards the scene of the accident. The Colonel, saying, "Girls, sit still here till further orders," quickly followed.

The sight which met them was one such as those only who have witnessed it can imagine. First lay the engine and tender of the other train, turned over, amidst a cloud of steam and pools of water, and afterwards followed scenes of horror which it is best to leave undescribed. The first care of the two friends was to render help ; and there was abundance of need for it. One carriage had turned over, and the inmates of some of those which had maintained their places had been terribly shaken and injured. The first attention was due of course to the overturned carriage, and many were engaged in helping those who lay entangled in and under it. Among these the Colonel and Pak perceived an apparently lifeless form, round which were several persons, vainly endeavouring to remove some pieces of broken wood.

"He's dead, my friends," said the Colonel; "hadn't you better keep your kind help for the living?"

"No, he's not dead," replied an English voice; "he has only fainted; for it was but now that he was crying out for help." On this, exertions were redoubled, and by removing the ballast from beneath, at length the body was set free. On the face appearing, Pak uttered an exclamation in an agitated tone, and said, "Do you know him, sir?"

The Colonel hesitated a moment, and then said, "Why, it must be your old master, Dr. Digam."

"Poor dear Doctor!" said Pak, much affected, "who would have thought that I was to make my amends thus?"

As he said this, they were bringing him to the bank by the side of the line, and were laying him on the grass. There was at present no sign of life.

"Pak, you can run fastest," said the Colonel; "go for the ladies; their help will be invaluable; and bring the brandy, mind."

In a very few minutes both Emmy and Lucy were on the spot. The cordial was administered, and not wholly without effect. The eyes were opened, and turned first on Pak, who was holding the hand, watching the pulse.

The first sign of consciousness was a warm pressure of the hand that held his—an evident token of recognition, and warrant that the past was forgotten. The next sign was an attempt to speak; but it was evidently attended with great pain. Something was uttered in a whisper, and repeated.

"What is it?" said the Colonel.

"He says Timins and his sister were in the train," said Pak.

"We must see to that," said the Colonel; "you had better go and search for them."

They were soon found, and, happily, unhurt. They had been separated from the Doctor at Lyons for want of room in the same compartment; were in the hinder part of the train; had got out on the other side to give help there; and were at this moment searching for their travelling-companion. Their surprise at seeing Pak was soon turned into grief at hearing what had happened; and they quickly returned with him to the spot. They had inquired, as they passed along the train, for a medical man. There was but one, a Frenchman, and he had more on his hands than he could manage. He promised to come round to them as soon as he could.

So the Netherton company were gathered, waiting his arrival. The injury appeared to be serious. Several ribs were

broken, and the whole body was much crushed and bruised. The medical man said that as soon as the train came for which they had telegraphed to Lyons, he had better be moved thither.

And this was done accordingly; but not without serious risk. The whole company, and a medical man, were with the poor sufferer in the carriage. All that could be done was done; but it seemed doubtful whether he would reach Lyons alive. Plans were carefully and wisely laid. One of the hospital-ambulances which had been sent to the station was at once secured, and the sufferer placed in it, to wait, with the surgeon, Mr. and Miss Timins, and Pak, who refused to leave the sufferer, till the ladies and the Colonel, guided by a kind fellow-passenger familiar with the place, should have found a lodging.

In less than an hour the poor Doctor was in a comfortable room, well attended and cared for, with his Netherton friends around him, a consultation of surgeons considering his case, and a hospital-nurse duly installed in charge.

The verdict of the medical men was that the case, though it might assume an alarming aspect, had not at present done so; that, even should all go well, it must necessarily be tedious, and require careful watching.

On this a council of war was held. The patient himself had been heard to whisper: "How good of you all! But let Timins have his holiday. I was to pay, and he has no money." This furnished an index to the best course. The means were at once furnished, and the reluctant, generous second master, who strenuously asserted his right to remain and act nurse,

was, with his equally reluctant sister, seen to the station, and put into the train for the South.

It was Pak's resolute determination to stay by the sufferer; and, of course, this involved the detention of the whole party. The Colonel had no pressing engagement at home; and the girls, besides the more powerful motive inducing one of them to remain, and the earnest desire of both to minister to the patient, had no objection to a sojourn in the second city in France. It was a strange coincidence, as Pak thought, sitting by the bed on the first night, that he should be again set down at Lyons for an indefinite period—a place so full to him of mournful memories of his beloved friend, which were now to be shared by one still dearer and closer to him.

Weeks passed away, and every part of

the old city, during the intervals of watching, had been explored, generally with his dear companion. The patient gradually improved, and there was a near prospect of his being able to get up and to be among them. Pak would now sit and recount to him, by the hour together, his adventures by flood and field. The subject of oppressed nationalities was of course tabooed ground; but it soon became evident that there had been in this matter an unconscious approximation on both sides to a common point of view. Pak's enthusiasm had not lost its deep inward spring of feelings and hopes; but the deeper springs which had been opened by the Curé,—the long experience in chastening disappointment—the failure at Mentana, doubly saddened by the death of his friend—and last and chiefly, the future of interest now opening before him—all these had contri-

buted to sober down and to extrude from the first rank of his thoughts what had been his exuberant patriotic ardour.

The Doctor, on the other hand, had not been able to withhold his admiration from the struggles of Italy, and her behaviour since she had achieved her freedom. Probably his estimate of the judgment and sobriety of her Liberator had not increased; but he had learned to sympathise with his high self-abnegation and noble singleness of purpose. So that on the frontiers of the cherished antipodal realms of thought, there were common meeting-places. When the young narrator grew ardent in praise of his leader, the listener's eye returned the sparkle without stint; and when the elder and wiser suggested the evident causes of failure, they were accepted without a protest.

So time wore on. Timins and his sister

had finished their tour, and had returned; and it was agreed that he should speed to Netherton, and open the school at the usual time, with a hope that the Doctor might appear in a few weeks.

The younger members of the party took advantage of this visit to make an excursion to the village, only a few leagues off, where the great turn of Pak's life had been so marvellously brought about. Many were the solicitations to the Colonel to accompany them; but he declared it to be not at all in his line. He saw enough of that sort of thing at Lyons; and he added, with a delicate tact which was characteristic of him, that he might perhaps not be disposed to make allowances, and so might jar on their feelings.

It was an uncertain day of showers in July, when the trio approached the entrance to the mean little village. They

were on one of the omnibuses which run to and from the village and the station for the benefit of the pilgrims. From their driver and their fellow-travellers they had learned, that the stream of visitors still, after some years, continues at the rate of from twenty to thirty a day at ordinary times; that some go out of veneration for the holy Curé, some for the purpose of a devotional retreat, some for the especial relief of some doubt or trouble, or to offer prayer for some object of anxiety; but all said that the work done there was quiet and earnest, and of much value to the souls of those who sought it.

They were somewhat disappointed at seeing the little byzantinesque campanile which Pak had so often described and drawn for them, and by which they seemed to know the place, over-topped and almost absorbed by a huge structure of ambitious pseudo-

gothic style, and glaring white in colour. But as they approached, the dear little old church appeared, and took all their attention.

"There," said Pak, "I first made my way up among the throng, and saw his never-to-be-forgotten face. There, on the right, was the window where I hung the first engravings; and there, I declare, they are now. There it was he came and led me off to his confessional."

Hardly any more guidance was needed. The three wandered over all together, as if what happened to one had happened to all.

Their common and deep interest was noticed by the good Abbé T., who has succeeded the Saint Curé. He at once recognised the young man's face; for the case had been a remarkable one, and had at the time attracted considerable attention.

In a very few minutes the two were engaged in earnest conversation, with the girls as eager listeners.

"M. l'Abbé," said Pak, "I owe nothing less than my life and my all to him."

"Ah, monsieur," was the reply, "it was not a man that was among us; it was not the life of a man; it was something the world has never seen before, and will never see again."

"I yield to none in simple admiration and veneration for the dear Curé, M. l'Abbé; but I should rather say it was a life intensely human. For surely all this material frame and its sustenance are not of the very essence of our human nature? Them we have in common with the animals; and those among us who over-nurture them sink down and become like the animals. But eminence in our especially human qualities,—love, holiness, sympathy,

—and the cultivation of our supra-sensuous powers,—discernment, persuasion, influence, —these it is, as seems to me, which constitute a life intensely human. And these surely your Curé possessed as hardly any other man ever possessed them."

"You are right, monsieur; your way of viewing the matter is at once exalted and philosophical. But my meaning, when I used the expression, '*la vie d'un homme*,' was, the life of average commonplace men, such as we daily see about us."

"Clearly that life was not his, but one altogether in a higher sphere."

"Ah, monsieur, what was his self-denial! what was his devotion to the Holy Virgin and the saints! what was his daily remembrance of and charity to the dead! what his intensity of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament!"

"Shall I confess to you, M. l'Abbé,

that I would fain have passed over every one of these in my estimate of him, and have gone down deeper than any of them? In none of these which you have mentioned, except the first,—his self-denial,—am I at one with him; but in all for which I admire and venerate him, we were and are intensely and inseparably one."

"How do you mean, monsieur? I hardly follow you."

"Why, M. l'Abbé, thus: he lived upon, he obeyed, he imitated, as few have imitated, the Divine One who has become the Head and Restorer of our race. His words, His sufferings, His spirit, were all reflected from our dear friend. When he gained over me the power of which you know, it was as His messenger that he gained it; it was to Him that he brought me; it was His hand that he placed in mine; His cross that he laid upon me.

And since then, it is this one thing which has opened in me the spring of life and joy; not any of those which you recounted, but this one alone, that I have found HIM. This, M. l'Abbé, was his eminence, this was his power. If his was not '*la vie d'un homme*,' it was because he was inspired by, penetrated with, transfused into, our Blessed One in heaven."

"Again you are right, monsieur," said the Abbé; "you speak of the hidden spring, and I of its visible outbursts."

"Yes, M. l'Abbé; but you will be the first to grant—you who have seen, when working with him, so many of the thousand varieties of human weakness and temperament—that those outbursts may be most various and diverse. One may issue from under the living rock, and break onward in the torrent and the cataract; another may well up in the clear

still pool, and wander away, known only by its track of verdure in the plain; and a third may appear to stagnate in the mountain marsh, and yet be the head of the river which localises and blesses a nation."

"Even so, monsieur."

"Well, then, you will be prepared for yet more. In the inner and deep spring you, I, the dear Curé, are all one. To that spring he brought me; of that spring have I drunk ever since, welling up within me; and I feel that I shall never thirst again. But it is in the nature of the 'visible outburst' that we differ. On this he, good man, zealous for my soul, kept for the most part silent. For a time, as a novice, as new and ardent, I did as he did. But ere long my habits of thought, my inner questionings, my precious book, the gift of my other self" (with a look at Emmy),—"all these, and, added to all

these, solitude, peril of life and limb, the life of David at Engedi,—these drove me to strong conflict of principles ; and I found the outburst uncertain, freakish, intermittent, but the inner spring always full and always clear. And so, M. l'Abbé, to bring this confession to a close, the things for which you have outwardly praised him carry now but faint praise to me ; but all the more have I learned to prize the source from which they flowed."

"Well, M. le Protestant," said with a bow the courteous Abbé, "we will not quarrel for this, nor will I treat you any otherwise than he did. Hold fast the Head, and I have faith enough, as he had, to believe that, whatever oscillations time may bring, you will eventually rest in the true position of repose."

"Amen!" was the fervent answer.

And then they went to hear the simple *catéchisme* in the schoolroom, the continuation of those addresses for which the Curé had been so famous; and passed their evening in talk with the Abbé in his new and comfortable presbytery, and returned to their inn, and so the next morning back to Lyons.

Thus another link seemed supplied in this career, which was so wonderfully being knit up into a whole. It was due to those who had witnessed the Curé's teaching, and had been familiar with his own "conversion," that they should learn from himself of its abiding effect,—how much of what they believed was deep and permanent, how much was occasional and transitory.

CHAPTER XII.

CHIEFLY GENEALOGICAL.

TIFTON Castle is situated in the fairest part of one of England's beautiful west midland counties. It stands on the brow of a hill which commands a view down the Bristol Channel, and the sides of which are hung with majestic woods. Among the woods every here and there peep out ranges of bright gray limestone rock; and the hand of art has been busy constructing paths and terraces leading to gay parterres of flowers scattered among the broken ground. The house is built a little back from the brow of the hill;

but from the upper windows the ships can be seen on the channel through the tops of the trees. A sort of sham fort or belvedere had been constructed in the last century on the point where the view was most extensive, and became in its turn an object to the country round as Pakley Tower: Pakley being the village in which the Castle was situated, and giving a second title to the eldest son of the family.

Such had been for ages the hereditary abode of the earls of Tifton. The family, one of historic fame, had first emerged into notoriety during the wars of the Roses, by favour of Warwick, the king-maker. After the battle of Barnet, in which the hopes of the Lancastrians were crushed, Lord Tifton had fled to join Queen Margaret at Beaulieu; fought on her side at Tewkesbury; carried the news of the disastrous defeat to Lord Pembroke,

in Wales, and fled with him and the Earl of Richmond into Brittany. Thence he had returned with the latter, to whose court he became attached, and was in old age among those enriched with the first spoils of the western monasteries.

From that time the family had taken no very prominent part in public affairs. The earls of the reign of Charles I. had favoured the Parliament, but had managed to trim so as to retain their beautiful patrimony.

And so on, and so on, till we come to the present Earl, much of whose history our readers have already learned. We may now add thus much to the account current at Netherton.

He had been a strange, studious youth; had taken high honours at Cambridge, and had fitted up Pakley Tower with telescopes, and other scientific instruments. On the

discovery that his learned leisure had suffered his estate to fall into neglect, he had become the victim of morbid misanthropy; and when his home was broken up by the death of his wife, he determined never to return thither, nor to live as became his rank. As for his child, if ever he were to do either of these, it should be after the discipline of hardship, and the struggle upwards through the ranks. He should be brought up, not simply, not below his station, but not at all: cast out as a ball for Fortune to play with; turned adrift upon life, sink or swim.

Such a plan it was impossible for even morbid misanthropy to carry out. The heart of a father yearned within the Earl, and our readers know the result. His strange plan was not given up, but it was carried out under his own eye. That it did not lead on to ruin, was owing partly

to his own influence at first, greatly to the boy's noble disposition, but most of all to Emmy. She stood like an angel in the way, and thwarted the evil which might have gathered round the design.

When Lord Tifton saw matters fairly in train for his son's improvement, he put himself in communication with the town authorities, and, as we have heard, deposited with them the secret and the proof of Pak's identity. Then he went and lived in another place where he was unknown, sent privately for his new agent, and transacted the business of his estate, keeping up meanwhile a correspondence with his confidential friends at Netherton. He was hardly sorry to hear from them of his son's sudden departure, for he wished him to be cast into all sorts of adventures and rough company in his search for knowledge and experience ; and his morbid

monomania rendered him insensible to those anxieties which would have distracted most men concerning so long an absence, and total failure of intelligence.

His sudden visit to Netherton at the time of Mrs. Podger's marriage had for its motive that which Amy suggested. He had had information of the intended wedding, and with the keen eye of prophetic suspicion divined the probable use of his room for the banquet; and he came to prevent it. The scheme of becoming host and guest at the feast was an after-thought.

Since that visit, he had not been heard of at Netherton. It was supposed that he had made a long journey—some said, to the East; and latterly there had been many speculations by which of the two titles "Mr. Pak" on his return would be called.

This, however, Pak himself for the

present put an end to, sending forward a message by Timins to all concerned, and backing it by a letter to the Rector, that until some solution should appear, he wished to be known as before, and take no accession of rank. He also resolved in his mind (which mind, of course, Emmy always shared) that until the same expected day, he would not visit Tifton.

It may readily be supposed that the party hailed the time when their invalid was pronounced fit to travel. The journey could, however, only be performed by easy stages. At Chalons, at Macon, at Dijon, at Fontainebleau, a halt was called, and time taken, during which those interesting spots were explored.

At Paris, the Doctor was so much better, that all agreed, himself among the first, that the journey to London need not be broken. So between two and three

P.M. on Monday, the 7th of September 1868, the white cliffs of Dover greeted them; and before six they entered London.

A story near an end, with a hero and heroine who have never seen London, has at all events the merit of singularity in our days. But so it was: absolutely true of Pak, and virtually so of Emmy, who had passed but one night there, and driven through the streets next morning almost before daylight.

It was natural, under present circumstances, that they should somewhat eagerly catch at the opportunity of making up leeway, by becoming familiar with objects known to all Englishmen. And the time being that in which no one is supposed to be in town, they were enabled to do this without hindrance, and free from the danger of unwelcome recognition.

The good Doctor had manfully insisted

on making his own way to Netherton, where he was now once more installed at his desk.

One of his first greetings after his arrival, and they were many, was a visit from Gerald, asking for his vote and interest for the newly-constituted borough of Netherton.

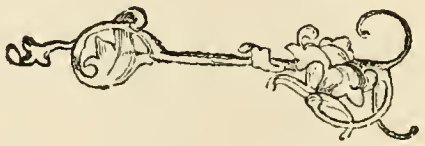
The applicant's candidature was after the Doctor's own heart. With no ancestral claims, he yet stood on the side of traditional institutions. He had thoroughly imbibed the atmosphere of the class into which his family success had raised him. He had, by experience in the colonies, learned to estimate England's true greatness, her inestimable advantage in her venerable Establishment, and her time-honoured Constitution; understanding, of course, by both those terms, that which they have included up to the present time,

not any developments which the progress of the nation may require. To all these last, Gerald declared himself entirely opposed. His phrases were cut and dried—such as men may hear and remember and carry home; they had a ring with them, and were clearly household words of first-rate manufacture. The good Doctor was tickled with their alliterations, and flattered by their assumption of wisdom on the part of the hearers. How much the fair young man who sat opposite him had had to do with their composition, he cared not to inquire.

The result was, that he pledged himself at once to Gerald. The rival candidate was some Radical, locally unknown, sent down from the Reform Club to "drag the Nethertonians through the mire" (a process always predicated of each party by the other at elections, but what importing, we could never exactly understand). Unfor-

tunately, the candidate thus sent to Netherton had a foreign name—which circumstance was, of course, made the most of in the squibs of the adverse party. It had transpired that Mr. Delenda's canvass was not prospering, and exactly the same fact had leaked out with reference to that of Mr. Bythesea. So that men's minds at Netherton were somewhat bepuzzled as to what the issue would be.

How this puzzle was solved, we may be able in another chapter to inform our readers.



CHAPTER XIII.

NETHERTON AGAIN.

IT was the morning of Tuesday, October 20th. The sun shone bright on the old tower, and the side-lights of the bays of the Rectory windows, and the colonnade in front of the old schoolhouse. The bells had been ringing a merry peal, and were just putting on that racing pace which is indicative that the ringers are "letting them down," and about to cease.

This was evidently only the prelude to some expected excitement; for the Rector might be seen emerging from his breakfast-table through the glass-door,

giving last directions about the trimming of the long-neglected grass and the nailing of the errant climbers. Workmen were observed busy fixing a flag-pole on the summit of Messrs. Warham, Wix, and Warham's new and immense factory. The church-tower had been beforehand, and had already flung out the Union Jack to the westerly breeze; and leaning against the school entrance an arch, bright with autumnal leaves, bore as yet the letters P X V B SC M.; implying that the vowels of the intended motto had overslept themselves.

But our immediate attention is called half a mile away—to the interior of No. 4 Paradise-place. It is not the first time we have gone there to pick up intelligence, or to reinvigorate the interest of our tale.

"Well, mother," said Amy, "how

ever shall we get through it all to-day?"

"Why, lass," said the Captain, "just as you got through yesterday, that's all."

"But there warn't nothing to get through yesterday," said Amy.

"And so you'll say of to-day when it's over."

"Mother," said little Keziah, now a comely, rosy-cheeked maiden, a second Amy as Amy was when first we knew her, — "mother, Amy's had her bonnet set back so 'cause she's afraid Tom's great boisterous kiss 'll spoil it."

"Nonsense, little imperance," retorted Amy; "that's 'cause you're afeard he won't kiss you at all."

"Won't he? But he shall, and twenty times too; I'll take care of that."

"Well, Miss Jealousy, get on your

hat and things, or we shall be late at the station."

When they got to the station, half Netherton was there. There were the 5th Westshire Volunteers, with their band, and Gerald in command, and Benjie a flourishing sergeant; and there was the Netherton fire-brigade, owing its present augmented and efficient condition to the events of a certain night in the memory of our readers; and the well-known, kindly face of Dr. Resp, plus a fringe of white beard below, and an honorary brigade-uniform cap above; and there were the lifeboat crew, more than a few of them glittering with well-earned medals; and on the other side of the platform the scholars, with the arch, vowels and all; and a miscellaneous assemblage, uncontrollable by the railway-police, between whom and them was flying chaff thick as at a barn-

door in winnowing time. The station itself was amply decorated with such greens as the late season could furnish; and the porters might be seen, in the midst of the chaffing of the mob, now and then casting a satisfied glance at the girders which their hands had festooned.

At last there was a cry of "Here she comes!" and a long level line of steam was seen, as yet far off in the valley.

The rest it were vain to particularise. How the appointed space was with difficulty cleared on the platform, and who were admitted within it; how first out of the train stepped Pak, with his handsome and thankful face, "as it did one good to look at," as Amy reported it; then the ladies and the Colonel; how Tom and Amy were fast infolded in one another's arms, to the vast delight of the crowd. But whom have we here? Can

it be that the railway people have had the bad taste not to reserve a compartment for the expected party? For a tall figure, erect and distinguished in bearing, steps out last, and is immediately arm-in-arm with the Colonel.

For a moment there is silence; but the discovery is quickly made.

"Three cheers for the Earl of Tifton!" cries a stentorian voice in the crowd.

And so it went on. The bands—of which there were three—struck up, "See the conquering hero comes;" but, not having previously assimilated the pitch of their instruments, produced an effect much more like the wail of a defeat, thus unconsciously paying tribute to the historic truth of Mentana.

Outside was a carriage with a stout bevy of Netherton youths for horses; and amidst shouting, and flags, and bells, and

guns, the cavalcade, escorted by the volunteers, entered the town, and wound its way to the peaceful Rectory, startling the old house and its occupant with this invasion of glare and blare.

However, such as it was, the display was all heart; and when the party of travellers were fairly within the dear old walls, and the first greetings had passed, the Rector thankfully exclaimed, "Well, I never expected this of Netherton!"

It had been arranged that, with a view to the next day's all-important event, Emmy and Lucy should be at the Rectory, while Pak and his father were the Colonel's guests at Overton. Not without some difficulty had the Colonel been induced to consent to this arrangement; but Lucy urged on him that it was of course a matter of necessity that the bride should come to church from the Rectory, as being

her proper home, and also necessary that she should have the help of her chief, and indeed only, bridesmaid. Moreover, she set before him how that these wedding arrangements often split up houses and their inmates in a very curious way. So that, as was not very unusual, the Colonel was defeated, and gave way.

Whatever rash things have been done by us in the course of our tale, we are not going to be so rash as to describe a wedding. For are not such descriptions written by the dozen in the pages of *Gazettes*, and *Mercuries*, and *Observers?* And is not the choicest rhetoric bestowed on them, and the aid of well-thumbed dictionaries invoked over the midnight lamp? Who would trespass on ground so well kept, so stocked with choicest phrases and tallest words?

But though we may not describe, we

may quote; and we have no hesitation in giving entire the following quotation from the *Netherton Observer:*

"MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE.

"Yesterday, Wednesday October 21, by special license, at the parish church of Netherton-on-Sea, Lord Pakley, only son and issue of the Right Honourable the Earl of Tifton, of Tifton Castle, in the county of Gloucester, to Emily, adopted daughter of the Rev. Philip Bythesea, Rector of Netherton.

"So runs our formal announcement of this much-expected event. The parties to it are too well known to our readers to require any description at our hands. It may be enough to say, that the history of both might not unaptly furnish material for a telling romance; and that we hope some pen may be found to undertake the task. Ours is the far humbler

one of describing the arrangements at the wedding.

"It would be needless to say, that the interest taken in both the bridegroom and the bride put the whole town *en fête.* The description, which will be found in another column, of the rejoicings of the day before, will also describe the appearance which things wore yesterday. The only difference was, that during the afternoon of the Tuesday, triumphal arches had been erected at various points which the bridal party would have to pass. Of these the most conspicuous was that spanning the gateway leading from the Rectory to the church; the only one under which the party would pass, both on their way to the ceremony and after its conclusion. It was constructed by the scholars of the Grammar-school; and bore over the side towards the Rectory, the legend, '*Gaudet*

Alma Mater;' and on that towards the church, '*Pax vobiscum;*' the whole being surrounded with a very creditable coronet; an epithet which, with all allowance for the best intentions, cannot be predicated of all the coronets which did duty on the festive occasion. The other arches, and the illuminations, will be found described in another column.

"Precisely at eleven o'clock, the bridegroom appeared in the church, which was, we need not say, densely crowded by all ranks of persons. He was accompanied by his 'best man,' Gerald Bythesea, Esq., our respected Conservative candidate; by Dr. Digam (whom we rejoice to see recovered from his late serious accident); and by Mr. Timins, second master of the School.

"The young lord was not slow in recognising old friends, as he passed up the

aisle ; and he was engaged in busy greetings, when the arrival of the bride was announced. None of our readers need be told the interest felt for her in Netherton. It gave all the most lively pleasure to see that her strength, which broke down under her self-denying ministrations in the awful time of the cholera, now appears completely restored. She looked the picture of health, and has developed a beauty which, notwithstanding her good and kind looks of former years, we hardly expected to see. She was attended from the Rectory by Miss Lucy Bythesea only, who, if rumour tell correctly, is soon about to follow the good example of her friend. But at the church-door they were met by eleven young girls as volunteer bridesmaids, who had solicited and obtained her consent to this unusual arrangement. Her answer, when applied to, is said to have been,

'Why not? You are all my sisters.' The touching part of the incident is that all belonged to families whom she had attended in the cholera, and four of them had been watched by her day and night through the crisis of the disease.

"At the altar, of course all went well. The bride was given away by the Colonel, acting for the Rector, who performed the ceremony, having, as he was afterwards heard to say, almost earned the right to act as father on his own account.

"The happy party then retired to breakfast at the Rectory, where many of the town authorities, including, of course, the Mayor and Dr. Resp, had been invited.

"The remarkable incident by which the breakfast was varied we relate elsewhere. We will only say, that in the failure of our own party to carry the suffrages of the

lieges, we cannot but cordially acquiesce in its result."

This same incident now requires explanation.

The time came, in the process of affairs, when Gerald, as in duty bound, had to return thanks for the health of the bridesmaids. Those who listened to his speech could not fail to observe that, though the facetiæ were sown reasonably thick, and the whole was a success and not a failure, his heart—even his present and presentable heart—did not seem to be in it. And no sooner had he finished than, making some excuse to the Rector and the bride, he rose and left the room.

Hardly was the next speech finished, when a servant entered to say that Mr. Gerald, with a number of gentleman, asked to be allowed to speak to my Lord the bridegroom.

"Show them in," was the answer of the Rector.

"Please, sir, they're too many to come in; but if they may be allowed, they would wish to speak with my Lord through the window."

"By all means," replied the bridegroom.

So the window was thrown up, and on the grass-plot outside appeared Gerald, apparently with half Netherton at his heels.

"My Lord," began the young man somewhat timidly, but gathering courage as he went on, "Netherton wishes to make you and your bride a wedding-present. It is not for me to recount the services which the town is anxious to acknowledge. I will say only this: that she honours you, my Lord, all the more for having known you in former days so well; that she recognises in you, from boyhood upwards, the defender of the op-

pressed, the rescuer of those in peril, the possessor of great abilities nobly used. And for her who sits, and long may she sit" (a necessary pause, till the uproar had subsided), "at your side, I can only trust myself to speak of her as the guardian angel of Netherton. Hundreds are living who bless her now; and if her life be prolonged, as we pray it may be, thousands more shall rise up and call her blessed.

"And now, my Lord, I fear that our small gift will appear utterly contemptible when set against such things as I have been mentioning.

"You are aware that since your departure from this town it has received the franchise, and is to return one Member to the new Parliament. And it may have become known to you that I myself and another gentleman were contesting the honour

of being that representative. It must be owned to you that neither of us prospered in his canvass. Men's minds seemed preoccupied. They evidently did not want me; and, from what I was informed, my hon. friend, who is now called away by pressing engagements elsewhere, came to the same conclusion regarding himself. To cut short a long story, my Lord, my committee, having knowledge how things were, sent an invitation to Mr. Delenda's committee for a conference. That conference took place, the voters were consulted, and our appearance here this morning is the result. I have the honour, my Lord, to represent the unanimous voice of the gentlemen of both committees who surround me here, or are seated at the Rector's festive table, when in their name, as far as they can do so, and with the general approbation of their fellow-citizens, I offer to

you the seat in Parliament for the borough of Netherton."

Certainly, never was a speech more gracefully made, nor a gift more generously offered. Our hero rose from his seat, and approached the window, evidently under strong emotion. After a few seconds, he said, firmly and slowly, like a man who is afraid of his feelings overcoming him:

"Mr. Bythesea and gentlemen,—It was very kind of you to give me some intimation last evening of your great intended kindness. Had it not been so, I might have been even less capable of acknowledging it than I feel myself now; and I am sure Lady Pakley would have been overcome by its suddenness. As it is, I must ask your indulgence for a very full heart and a wavering voice. I am sure you will not expect me to cast your kind-

ness from me, or to do anything short of simply and cordially accepting it.

"There are two reasons, gentlemen, why I cannot make you now a political speech. First, this is not the place for one; and secondly, my notice has been too short to prepare one. Still, I should not be justified in not taking you into my confidence, now that you have so generously given me yours. Should you, when the writ is issued, choose me your representative, I know no better guide for my conduct in Parliament than is furnished by the circumstances under which you make me the offer. It is one thing to be of no party; and generally, if one reads aright, a very useless thing. I shall hope to serve you, gentlemen, in a very different character, and to be, as this deputation which has given me political birth is, of all parties. I am a Conservative, because I see in this land, of all lands, most

to be conserved, and least to be swept away. I am a Liberal, because I feel that a wide and generous trusting of our countrymen, and an open and unprejudiced dealing with them in matters of right and conscience, is the path of public duty, and the way to bless and improve a nation. I am a Radical, because I believe that in a land which has inherited the traditions of centuries, there always must be ingrained abuses, to which no remedy but extermination can be applied.

"And if I must say something on that which in this 1868 is the great test of public men's intended action, it shall be this. The matter seems to me to stand thus. The state in a former age guaranteed to a certain public body the means of performing certain stipulated services. The very fact implies a covenant. Circumstances are now such, and have long been such, that those services are not, and can-

not be, performed. And yet we are told, gentlemen, that the means must still be furnished, though the end is impossible! And if the public body is one whose functions are of a religious kind, all the more ought the first principles of right and justice to be applied to it. The spectacle of a Church receiving money under false pretences is surely of all things to be deprecated.

"I will say no more, Mr. Bythesea and gentlemen, but offer you my poor thanks for your very great kindness and confidence. I could have wished to devote a few years to study of the materials of public action, before I became involved in its stir. But I feel that it is not to be, and I accept my lot.

"One word more; and that, Gerald, is to you. For the kind things which you have said of my wife, accept her earnest thanks through me. In no form could they

have brought her keener pleasure; from no lips could they have been so effectively and truthfully spoken. What must be the blessings of my lot, when she, who has hitherto blessed all, has now bestowed herself to bless me!"

Explicit. But we must not omit the completion of our quotation from our good friend the *Netherton Observer;* which, after stating that festivities were provided by the bride and bridegroom for the schools, and the inmates of the hospital, concluded its notice:

"It is understood that the noble pair have repaired to Tifton Castle, there to spend their short honeymoon, till Lord Pakley's presence is required at the nomination on the 16th of November. We are authorised to state that on that occasion his lady will accompany him."

THE END.

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