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Autobiography of a
missionary.



THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF
A MISSIONARY.

—
VOL. II.

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OF
A MISSIONARY.

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"A TWO YEARS' RESIDENCE AT NINEVEH."

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

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CHAPTER I.

MRS. TOBIN was a tall, thin lady, with a solemn aspect and bilious complexion. She rose in a very stately manner to receive me, and waved her arm towards a seat with the air of a queen. Then she sank back on the sofa as if exhausted by the effort, and, in doing so, dislodged her handkerchief from the pillow. Fixing her eyes on the ceiling, she exclaimed, with a very languid voice : “ Boy, boy !” when, to my surprise, instead of one of those nondescript youths called, in England, pages, there

appeared an old, wrinkled native, who began making an incredible number of low bows—almost prostrations.

“What missis please to want?” said the *boy*.

Missis said nothing, and did not vouchsafe her sable attendant even a look, but pointed, in a dignified way to the handkerchief. The black page then raised and restored it very reverentially to its fair owner. All this struck me as rather ludicrous at first, but I became quite accustomed to similar scenes, and finally thought nothing about them.

The next day I was presented, by Mr. Tobin, to a number of people, as “one of our Missionaries,” and had certainly no reason to complain of the manner in which I was received. There was an open-hearted courtesy about most of those gentlemen which I still remember with gratitude, but which I have no desire to requite by putting them into print. Suffice it to say that, in hospitality and kindly feeling towards strangers, the English in India certainly do no discredit to the reputation of

the East for these amiable virtues. I found myself the guest of people whom I had never seen before, who knew nothing of me except that I was a Missionary, yet who placed not only their rooms and their tables, but their horses and carriages absolutely at my disposal, and treated me as liberally and as kindly as if I had been one of their own relations.

My stay, however, at Madras was short, for the Mission District allotted to me was about two hundred miles distant from the Presidency, and I was anxious to reach the scene of my labours. I travelled in a primitive kind of vehicle, drawn by bullocks, which pursued its weary and tedious course along the paths or tracks that, in India, are denominated roads. So few indications of civilization met my eye after I had proceeded a short distance from Madras, that it appeared almost incredible when I reflected that I was traversing regions which had been for so long a period under the government of one of the greatest nations of modern times. The squalid, miserable looks of the people, their

complaints of heavy taxation, and the wretched hovels in which they lived, seemed by no means creditable to the government which tolerated such a state of things.

The tracks are sometimes so difficult to distinguish, that even my native guides, who had frequently travelled by this road before, lost their way several times, and regained it with great trouble. The fact is, that the majority of Englishmen employed in India, feel but little interest in the country itself. It is for them a place of exile to be endured for a certain number of years, after which they hope to return and enjoy themselves in their native land. Hence few improvements take place, except those which are absolutely indispensable to the comforts or convenience of the European sojourners in a few thinly-scattered stations. In these localities, the roads are kept in good repair for the evening rides or drives of the Collector and his subordinates, while spacious and handsome dwellings are erected for their accommodation.

But the native town still retains its mud huts, its narrow lanes, its filth, and its abominations of various kinds. Cholera and other destructive diseases pursue their ravages unchecked and uncontrolled by sanitary measures and sanitary reforms, and though the death of an European excites attention, and calls forth inquiry, yet thousands of natives disappear annually from the earth without its awakening much remark, or drawing forth any investigation into the cause of such an alarming mortality.

But I must remember that it is not my province to dwell upon points like these, although it is very desirable that they should meet with some notice. My whole journey to the interior, indeed, impressed me with a melancholy sense of responsibilities neglected, and of duties left unperformed. It is my belief that if every Indian town had possessed, during the last hundred years, its school and its schoolmaster, the natives would, by this time, be so perfectly convinced of the falsehood and childish

absurdity of their popular creed, that they would be now ready and willing to receive the instructions of the Missionaries. This is no mere religious question. The Hindoos were always desirous of secular knowledge, and now they are agitating to obtain it. That agitation must increase in energy and vehemence every year, and if the boon is much longer denied, it may endanger our rule, and evoke a spirit of sedition which it will be difficult to lay.

At length, I reached the ancient city of Madura, once the capital of the old Pandion kings. The resident Mission Catechist had been deputed to meet me, and as he spoke English very well, I found myself quite at home with him. He told me that Madura formerly possessed a large university, and was then famous as one of the chief seats of Brahminical learning in the south. It had also been the head-quarters of the Jesuits when, under Robert de Nobili, the nephew of a pope, the astute sons of Loyola attempted to palm themselves off upon the Hindoo priests as the

Brahmins of the West, who were alone in possession of the lost Veda. To support this deceit, the Missionary Fathers practised daily the most frightful austerities, and, it must be added, so fearfully corrupted even the doctrines of their own Church, that they called down upon themselves the denunciations of Rome. The Christianity which they left behind them was, as might have been expected, of a very questionable character. Thousands of the so-called converts abandoned, in one day, without a struggle and without a murmur, the creed of the Roman Church, and embraced that of Mahommed at the command of Tippoo Saib.

I was musing over these things, when the old Catechist asked me if I had ever heard in England of the celebrated Tiroo-Vullavan. I was obliged to reply in the negative, upon which he said, that if I pleased, he should like to relate me a few particulars of one who, by his poetical effusions, had conferred considerable renown on his native city of Madura. The sun was now declining ; and so after placing my chair

beneath the grateful shade of two venerable banyan-trees, the old Catechist stretched his mat upon the ground, and seating himself cross-legged, began the legend of Tiroo-Vul-lavan, which as I am not sure that it has ever appeared in English, I may be excused if I insert it here.

“What I am going to tell you, Sir,” said the Catechist, “occured in the time of the Pandion kings, before the English came into this country, or the Mohammedans either. It was a period, indeed, which even the heathens consider very ancient, and during which they say their false gods frequently appeared on the earth, and assumed in turn various human forms. One of these deities was Vishnoo, of whom you have doubtless heard. He was a great patron of learning, and is generally considered the founder of the Madura University. At all events he collected a great number of scholars from all parts of India, and selected twelve of the wisest Brahmins to preside over their studies. These venerable sages occupied

as a seat of honour a golden bench, which had been manufactured for them by Vishnoo himself. From this place they gave lectures in logic, in poetry, and in philosophy, and all the country round rang with the praises of the twelve learned Brahmins of Madura.

“The distinctions of caste among the Hindoos were not then so rigidly observed as now, nor were the Pariahs so rigorously excluded from the society of those above them. The twelve Brahmins, however, entertained very marked opinions on this matter, and it soon became known throughout the university that no low-caste student need ever expect much favour from them.

“‘A Pariah,’ observed the venerable chief of the sages, who was noted for his attachment to Sanscrit and rice-pillau, ‘a Pariah has no business with learning, since he is a being intended by Brahma to be a mere drudge, and to attempt to raise him from this, his allotted station, is not only foolish in a political point of view, but decidedly impious and heretical.’

“ At this period, there lived near Madura a youth of the Pariah caste, noted for rare genius and remarkable abilities. He laboured hard during the day to procure the means of subsistence for himself and his orphan sister, and devoted the night to poetical composition. The beauty of his verses attracted the attention of the labourers by whom he was surrounded ; and although their rude and uncultivated minds were incapable of fully appreciating the excellence of the sentiments contained in these effusions, yet they enjoyed the sweetness of the measure, and cheered their labours by singing the odes of the youthful poet. So highly, indeed, did they estimate his strains, that with one consent they conferred upon him the title of Tiroo-Vullavan, the holy or sacred Pariah.

“ One evening, a group of shepherds had assembled on the borders of one of the consecrated tanks, and were diverting themselves by chanting the verses of Tiroo-Vullavan. It happened that a Brahmin belonging to the neighbouring temple was passing at the time,

and struck by the energy and beauty of the sentiments expressed in their songs, he inquired the name of the author. The shepherds directed him to the humble cottage, where Tiroo-Vullavan was occupied in kindling his fire for the preparation of the evening repast. The learned man was much impressed by the youth's ingenuous appearance, and the ability displayed in the answers made by him to the difficult and subtle questions propounded. He invited Tiroo-Vullavan to repair with him to the famous University of Madura.

“When the Pariah first made his appearance among the students, every one was charmed with the beauty of his poetry, and the depth of his philosophical views. The twelve sages, however, did not share the general enthusiasm. The chief Brahmin thought it presumption in a Pariah to compose poetry at all, and unparalleled audacity to publish it. He was convinced, however, that there could be nothing commendable in these flimsy stanzas, and he determined at once to display to the public the

profound character of his critical knowledge, and to annihilate for ever the daring pretender to the sacred title of poet.

“ With this benevolent design, he convoked an assembly of the students, and summoned all the wise men of Madura to assist on the occasion. He himself and his eleven brethren seated themselves in state upon their golden bench, and calling for Tiroo-Vullavan, commanded him to recite some of his poems. The youth was at first abashed by the appearance of his judges, and by the numerous concourse which surrounded them ; but the applause of the students encouraging him, he commenced one of his latest and finest odes. As he proceeded, acclamations burst forth from all sides, until the voice of the reciter became positively inaudible.

“ The chief Brahmin looked very stern, having frequently recourse to his betel box while the applause continued ; and when it had ceased, he addressed himself to Tiroo-Vullavan in a severe and contemptuous tone. He began by complaining of the degenerate taste of the

age, and eulogised the poets of the good old times. Warming with his subject, he recapitulated upwards of a hundred canons of criticism which the unfortunate bard had violated, and assured him with great earnestness, that he had no taste for poetry.

“‘But the verses are so original!’ timidly suggested one of Tiroo-Vullavan’s admirers.

“‘So much the worse, young man,’ said the chief Brahmin, frowning; ‘originality is presumption, and a wilful departure from the rules of a wise antiquity. Do you suppose that our ancestors did not know better than we how good poetry ought to be written? And can you anticipate even tolerable verses from a man who does not understand Sanscrit? As for this impious innovator from established rules, my judgment is, that he immediately quit the sacred territory of Madura.’

“Loud expressions of disapprobation followed the promulgation of this sentence, and a tumult arose among the students which it was found impossible to allay. Their cries penetrated

even into the Swergam or Elysium of Vishnoo, where that divinity was aroused by them from a profound reverie of philosophical contemplation. Indignant at the interruption of what the Hindoos consider the height of celestial bliss, he repaired to the earth in great haste, thinking perhaps that his beloved university had been menaced by an invasion of the barbarians from the north.

“In the meantime, the tumult having been partially appeased, the chief Brahmin had retired to his dwelling to refresh himself after the labours of criticism. He thought with complacency of the able manner in which he had exposed the presumption of the upstart Pariah—a complacency unruffled even by the recollection of the ignorance and want of taste displayed by the multitude.

“‘A wise man is never popular,’ said the Brahmin to himself, as he surveyed with satisfaction the dishes laid before him; ‘what can we expect from gross minds who heed nothing but the vulgar appetites?’

“ At this moment, one of the servants of the temple came to say that a stranger waited without, and desired instant speech with the chief Brahmin. The sage assuredly wished the intruder at the bottom of the nearest tank. He was not particularly fond of being disturbed at meals ; and moreover ill-natured people said that although the rules of his order proscribed animal food, the learned man entertained a private partiality for mutton-curry. His eye, indeed, rested for a moment with alarm upon one special dish that did not seem wholly composed of vegetables, nor was his apprehension abated by the sudden appearance of the stranger himself who had followed almost at the heels of his announcer.

“ The Brahmin eyed him for an instant, and seemed exceedingly disturbed.

“ ‘ What do I see ? ’ he exclaimed, bowing very low ; ‘ this honour—so unexpected.’

“ The stranger placed his finger on his lips, and motioned to the servants to retire.

“ ‘ I hope he won’t smell the mutton,’ said the Brahmin to himself.

“ ‘Now,’ said the stranger when the last servant had withdrawn, ‘what is the reason of all this uproar.’

“ ‘Swami, my lord,’ gasped the chief Brahmin, ‘I am so overpowered that—but in short the insolence of the lower people is getting intolerable. An upstart youth has produced a poem contrary to all the rules of criticism, and the fickle multitude have taken it into their heads to rank him with the highest of the sages. Now your mightiness knows that the critical canons—’

“ ‘Never mind them,’ said the stranger, ‘but tell me where I can find this youth.’

“ At another time, perhaps, the Brahmin would not have condescended to remember the abode of so insignificant a person ; but he was anxious to get rid of his visitor ; and therefore briefly gave him the information he required. The stranger bade him a hasty and somewhat ungracious farewell, while the Brahmin muttered to himself :

“ ‘Bad taste seems to be infectious. How-

ever, I am glad he did not detect the mutton-curry.'

"Tiroo-Vullavan was seated by his sister, and receiving her congratulations on the applause which the assembled students had lavished upon the recital of his poem. The bright eyes of the Hindoo girl sparkled with pleasure and pride as she spoke of the success that he had achieved, and of the glorious immortality which he might anticipate.

"'Ah!' said the young poet, as he gazed with affection on the beautiful form of his sister, 'what would even immortality be worth, if it were unshared by thee? Dearest Narana, thou art the lotos-flower of my soul.'

"'And,' replied his sister, 'as the lotos-flower expands beneath the genial beam of the sun, so shall my spirit rejoice when cheered by thy glory's rays.'

"'Hush!' said Tiroo-Vullavan, 'some one approaches.'

"His sister modestly retired, and the stranger stood face to face with the young aspirant to fame.

“ ‘Art thou ?’ inquired the former, ‘the young poet whose renown has reached my ears, and disturbed the peace and quiet of the gravest university in the Pandion realms. Nay, you need not answer, for I read the reply in your averted countenance and downcast brow. Fear not, however, for I come as a friend. Yet tell me, is it wealth and station that you hope to gain by your song ?’

“ ‘Stranger,’ replied Tiroo-Vullavan, ‘I have heard an ancient sage relate that yonder in the far West there is to be found a wondrous bird which lives for a thousand years, and then retiring to its nest kindles its own funeral flames. But from its ashes there springs another, and as beautiful a successor that endures for the same time, and then in turn begets in a similar manner a fair offspring the counterpart of itself. I would resemble in my destiny that bird, and outlive in my verse the ashes to which this earthly body will one day be reduced. If, as our teachers say, the soul must pass through successive transmigrations, haply at some distant period I

may hear in another form the praises of the ancient poet, who yet lives in song, and thus shall rejoice in having achieved a double immortality.’

“ ‘ Yet bethink thee,’ said the stranger, mournfully, as he gazed upon the animated features glowing with all the enthusiasm of hope, ‘ bethink thee of the pain and of the struggles through which a man must pass, who hopes to influence the minds of his fellow men. The trials and penances which our Sanniyasis* practise in order to gain immortality, are but a shadow of that sorrow and birth-throe of the spirit which engenders earthly fame. Our sages teach that all in this world is delusion, but of nothing may this be asserted so truly as of the renown which lives but in the breath of men.’

“ ‘ Alas ! young as I am,’ replied the poet, ‘ I have had some experience of this. But yet there is something besides mere fame in the wishes of my heart. To influence my race for good,

* Indian devotees.

to teach future generations the lessons of piety and virtue, to form the mind of childhood and to soothe the sorrows of age would be a lot worthy of a struggle, and one which a generous spirit might even sacrifice life to obtain.'

“ ‘I see you are resolved,’ said the stranger, ‘and though, perhaps, in some respects I could wish you a better destiny, yet your courage and noble desires shall in one instance meet with their reward. Go boldly to Madura to-morrow, and present yourself before the golden seat of the sages. Leave the rest to me.’

“There was something commanding and authoritative about the stranger’s manner, and Tiroo-Vullavan felt that he must obey him. They parted and the young poet returned to his solitary musings till the first beams of the rising sun illumined the far distant horizon. Then he arose, and having performed his devotions repaired to Madura, where a large concourse was assembled around the seat of the sages. As soon as the people saw him they burst

forth into loud acclamations. The stranger stepping forth from among them, addressed the crowd.

“‘Men of Madura,’ he said, ‘genius is the gift of heaven, and owns no distinction of caste or rank. It is like the fire which burns with equal brilliancy on the earthen dish of the peasant or in the silver lamp of the king. Tiroo-Vullavan has shown that he possesses pre-eminently this divine quality, and my voice is therefore that he take his place on the golden bench of the twelve sages.’

“The crowd renewed their shouts as the stranger spoke, and four of the principal students approaching the twelve who had already assumed their seats, demanded in the name of the rest that the Pariah Poet should seat himself by their side.

“The chief Brahmin foamed with rage at the audacious proposal.

“‘What!’ exclaimed he, ‘shall a vile Pariah be honoured with the highest prize of learn-

ing, and the company of Brahmin sages be contaminated by the society of a reprobate eater of flesh?’

“ ‘ Ah, hypocrite,’ said the stranger advancing from the crowd, and whispering in the ear of the irate sage. The learned man looked suddenly confused and alarmed while he whispered in an under tone :

“ ‘ Only a slight indiscretion, your Mightiness ; in fact an oversight. Willingly,’ he continued in a louder voice, but with the most marked respect, ‘ willingly would we accede to the wishes of so noble a personage,’ here he made a low inclination to the stranger, ‘ but this golden bench bestowed by our founder, as a token of the highest literary distinction is already filled up, and it would be an injustice to remove any of its present occupants. The present length would not allow us to offer an extra seat even to Vishnoo himself.’

“ ‘ That objection is easily removed,’ said the stranger, striking the bench so smartly with

his walking staff that all the sages started up in affright; 'behold!'

"The spectators could scarcely believe their eyes, when they saw the golden board prolonging itself so as to afford comfortable accommodation for thirteen instead of twelve. They looked round for the wonder-working stranger, but he was no where visible.

"'The scruples of myself and colleagues are now removed,' said the chief Brahmin. 'Come, then, Tiroo-Vullavan, and assume your place beside the presiding sages of this great university. Forgive and forget our past opposition, and endeavour to render more illustrious by your future exertions, the high post which has been awarded you for your past merits.'

"The acclamations redoubled as the young poet seated himself on the golden board; and they were still more loud when a slight female figure advanced to his side, and threw over his head a wreath of lotos flowers. Tiroo-Vullavan turned to thank the donor, and found himself

in the embrace of his sister. And then the poet's heart, he was want to confess afterwards beat more proudly and triumphantly, than even when he was elevated by the popular voice to the rank of a sage.

“For many years, Tiroo-Vullavan and his sister continued the wonder and the pride of the surrounding country. Narana was so interested in her brother's pursuits, that she began by degrees to share them, and became eventually a poetess of no mean rank. True to his professed intention, the young poet devoted himself to moral subjects, and themes, calculated to promote the love and practice of virtue. It seems also as if his aspirations had been crowned with a successful issue, for even to this day his poems are taught in all the schools of India; and there are few persons, except among the most degraded and ignorant classes, that cannot repeat a few lines of Tiroo-Vullavan, the Pariah poet of Madura.”

The stars were shining brightly from the clear and cloudless sky when the old Catechist

finished his tale. I was struck with many of the sentiments which he had expressed, and did not conceal my astonishment when he repeated and explained some of the poet's verses whose life he had been relating. They seemed far above the gross and grovelling Polytheism which I had been always taught to associate with India and her creed, and although far inferior to the sublime precepts of the Gospel, were at least equal to most of the moral sentiments contained in Horace and the ancient classical writers. The old Catechist smiled at my remarks.

“Ah, Sir,” he said, “the English gentlemen are very clever; but they think that a black man never can know anything. Yet an old Missionary once told me that the Greeks took much of their philosophy and learning from our country, and that the first thing you teach your children in England is the writings of the Greeks. They were, he said, heathens, and still they knew a great deal.”

“ You think, then, that we underrate you,” said I.

“ Oh, Sir,” he replied, “ the Missionary gentlemen don’t, perhaps, think so badly of us ; but your people generally esteem us as dirt. Once, when the Padre was examining my school, a fine officer gentleman came in with him and listened while the boys read in Tamul and English. As they went out, I heard the officer say, ‘ Dear me, Mr. ——, is it possible that you have been able to teach those black fellows how to read and write ? ’ ”

“ Well,” said I, “ but you must not judge of us all by that officer.”

“ No, Sir,” replied the Catechist ; “ but I find the same thing with the Missionaries. A European gentleman goes into one of our villages ; he sees a set of clay images, which he is told the people worship, and then he sets them down as a herd of childish and silly barbarians. He gets such a contempt for their understanding that he thinks anything will convert them, and

thus he scatters among them books only fit for a child to read. But, Sir, I have been told that the Roman Catholics in Europe have many great and clever men among them, and yet they do reverence sometimes to images, not much better in appearance than those of our heathen. And what they allege in their defence, our learned pagans say in theirs, which is, that they do not worship the image, but the god or the holy person, some of whose attributes or features it represents, and of whom it merely acts as a memorial.”

“And what do you think of the employment of European Missionaries amongst you?” inquired I.

“European gentleman is very good,” he answered, “and much respected; but he does not speak to the heart of the native like one of his own nation. Then, Sir, the sun here is hot and the Missionary gentleman cannot get out of his house during the day: and often when he has learned the language and got acquainted with the people, some illness takes him, and he

leaves, or he is moved off to another station from which some one else has gone.”

“And do you think the natives fit to take up the work?”

“You ask me one question,” said the Catechist, smiling, “and I ask you another. Did the Apostles wait to civilize the people they preached to, before they raised up native churches and a native clergy among them?”

CHAPTER II.

MY Missionary career was not an adventurous one. I lived among my Indian flock in the midst of an Indian village, remote from European society, and, alas! that I should have to write it, the contagion of European manners. My people were simple in their habits, and patriarchal in their feelings. Four shillings a month was considered a pretty thing in its way, ten shillings a decent income, and twenty the height of opulence. On the confines of the village, was an extensive forest filled with all kinds of game, where herds of wild boars roamed in unmolested freedom, and now and then a tiger would pay us a roving visit. But

I met with little annoyance from the denizens of the wood, and although the howling of the jackals sometimes kept me awake at night, and one of them once leaped through the window, and made a careful survey of my person with his sharp, glittering eyes, I was on the best of terms with my neighbours both biped and quadruped. On Sundays I officiated in the little chunam-plastered church, which a former Missionary of classical taste had constructed as like a small Grecian temple as possible; and in the week I traversed my extensive parish, about as large as two English dioceses in a bullock-cart, living almost exclusively upon rice, except when I happened to shoot a few snipe or wild-fowl.

One day in the seven was generally looked forward to with some degree of lively expectation; it was that on which my messenger returned from the nearest post town with a packet of letters from England. I used then to place my chair beneath the shade of two banyan-trees which grew near my house, and pore over

the pious and affectionate soul-breathings of Mr. Templeton, the quaint and sometimes pedantic epistles of my uncle, and the open-hearted, friendly communications of Merton. From the latter I heard frequently. He wrote in high spirits, chastened by the sobering tone of religious feeling, and spoke with the warmest expressions of his domestic happiness. By degrees I noticed a change in his style, and was inexpressibly shocked when in one of his letters he intimated to me his fear that he was then suffering from the secret and insidious inroads of consumption. Subsequent intelligence redoubled my anxiety. He was growing worse, though still in outward appearance but little affected by his disorder, the existence of which he had carefully concealed from his wife. But at length he wrote no more, and I was left to learn the last sad particulars from my uncle.

Death is painful to hear of at all times, and the death of those for whom we feel affection, inflicts additional anguish if the tidings of it reaches us in some distant region. The daily

anxiety, the longing for, yet the dread of intelligence, the desire to fly to the bed side of the sufferer that we may render the last sad offices of friendship, and receive the last words of expiring affection, heightened by the conviction that we cannot and ought not to comply with it, all tend to add to the intensity of our sorrow, and to increase our pain.

And now, that the sad news comes at last, I feel how strange my mournful countenance and brief words must appear to those around me. They cannot sympathise with me, for they have never known *him*.

I hear from a distance the sound of boyish revelry, and there seems something heartless in it, though I have never breathed to any one the cause of my grief. It soon oozes out, however, and I have then no reason to complain of indifference on the part of my alien flock. Yet their untaught attempts at sympathy wound perhaps more than heal.

Writing as I do, at a distant period from the occurrence of the events related in these pages,

the emotions I describe appear invested with a certain amount of unreality. There is a tendency in all of us to underrate the afflictions through which we have already passed. It is this which so frequently invests old times with a roseate hue, and leads us to cherish vividly the recollection of their pleasures, while we can scarcely believe in the intensity or depth of their sorrows. It is as when the man immersed in the maturer cares of life, smiles half contemptuously at the whining of the imprisoned school-boy.

The grief of those who are actively employed, is, however, but of short duration. A thousand daily cares and anxieties blunt the edge of recollection and withdraw the sting from regret. Soothed by the opiate of distracting influences, our sensibilities close again, like a rapidly healing wound, and we wonder that they could ever have felt so keenly the deadly thrust of affliction.

Soon after her husband's death, I received a letter from Mrs. Merton, and addressed to her

in reply some sentences of consolation and encouragement. It seemed strange to me, almost painful to be obliged to write to *her* on such a theme. As I traced the characters, old recollections rushed into my mind, and old feelings revived which I endeavoured to check. It appeared almost sacrilege to indulge them while her tears were yet flowing for *him*.

About six months afterwards I heard again from my uncle, who informed me that Mrs. Merton and her father had left town. She was now, he said, resigned to her loss, and was devoting herself with unwearied assiduity to her father whose health had suffered materially of late. My old *protégé* Jack had obtained the post of midshipman on board the 'Dido,' the captain of which was an old friend of my uncle.

Time rolled on, and I began to feel unmistakeable tokens that the climate of India was telling upon me. I will not weary the reader with a detailed account of my struggles with increasing ill health, and the many efforts which I made to retain the position where it had

pleased Providence to place me. It may be sufficient to say that the medical men whom I consulted, gave it as their unanimous opinion that I should at once return to Europe, and in this the Local authorities of the Society concurred.

The news of my approaching departure from my station was received by most of my flock with great apparent affliction, in which I believe the majority to have been sincere. I had entered into their habits and feelings as much as I was able, and having acquired considerable fluency in their language, they could converse with me freely on their little troubles, and understand me when I offered them either consolation or advice. Those who have had any experience in the study of language, will comprehend a distinction which may seem to others too subtle, when I say that a man might speak in a foreign tongue correctly enough according to the grammatical theory, and yet be unintelligible to the majority of those whom he addresses.

I received an intimation that the Missionary who had been destined to replace me, was now on his way ; and one evening, a native servant entered my verandah, and handed me a card, on which was inscribed, "Rev. P. A. Haufman." About an hour afterwards; a bullock car drove up the compound, out of which stepped a gentleman with strongly marked Teutonic features, who, seizing my hand, addressed me as "mine reshpected Broder Shingleton."

I gave him the warmest possible welcome in return, and taking a seat, he began to discourse with considerable volubility.

"Mine goot Shur," he said, "we are bredren, and should therefore know all about each oder. My name ish Peter Atlantic; for you shee I vas born on dat great Ocean, and they did on that account gif me its name. By-and-bye, I shall hafe de pleasure to introduce you to mine pride, Karen Happuch."

I was uncertain whether the pride with the strange name might be a horse, a flower, or a

particularly handsome bullock, when Mr. Haufman, observing my bewildered air, said :

“Karen Happuch is mine wife, Broder Shingleton ; she is name after the daughter of Job, you know. Her two sisters vere called Jemima and Kezia. She is following after me, but the bullock in her bandy has been shick on the road, though I hope I shall be able to shave him.”

The idea of shaving a bullock seemed rather incongruous, but I soon got used to Mr. Haufman's peculiar phraseology ; and the more I knew of his history, the greater respect I entertained for him. He had been out as a Missionary for fifteen years, when the death of a relative in Germany left him heir to a considerable amount of landed property. He returned, and was offered a high and lucrative appointment in one of the Universities, for which his knowledge of Oriental languages peculiarly fitted him. But his heart was in India, and he returned thither, having sold his

estate and bought an annuity which enabled him to dispense with a salary.

Karen Happuch soon arrived safely. She was a Danish lady of Tranquebar, and, notwithstanding her odd name, I found her a very unassuming nice person. It was some satisfaction to think that I could leave my flock in such hands, and when the summons came to depart, I almost felt, on bidding adieu to the worthy Peter Atlantic, as if I were separating from an old and valued friend.

From Madras, I took the overland route, and arrived safely at Cairo, without having met with anything worth recording in the way.

CHAPTER III.

BEING somewhat fatigued by my journey, I determined to remain a month or two in the capital of modern Egypt, the more especially as the winter season had now arrived, and I no longer felt myself suffering from immoderate heat. I had studied Arabic in India, and found no difficulty in making myself understood by the natives, so that I could examine the curiosities of the city alone, and unfettered by the official tyranny of a professional guide. This mode of life was new to me, and I enjoyed it. I hired a house for a month in the most oriental quarter of the town, and scarcely saw any one except the natives of the place.

I was walking one day in the bazaar, when my eye, which had been hitherto carelessly wandering over the different picturesque groups so often met with in these localities, lighted upon a face that immediately attracted my attention. Its owner was dressed in the oriental costume, and possessed a fine bushy beard that a pasha might have envied.

“Surely,” said I to myself, “I have seen those features before.”

The man looked up, and our eyes met. Laying down his pipe with oriental deliberation, he hurried towards me, and smiled as he remarked my confused stare in answer to his English salutation.

“What, Mr. Singleton,” exclaimed he, “have you forgotten me? No fault of yours though, for I have deluded sharper ones than you in my time, if you will excuse my saying so. Well, I rather think I’ve done it pretty well, and could even pass muster at Mecca, if necessary, for a true believer.”

“Pardon me,” I said, “I am still at a loss.”

“What!” he said, “don’t you remember Jack Martin, Sir, and the old ferry on the Lea, not to speak of St. Giles’s and our young friend Jack? I told you, Sir, we should meet some day in foreign parts, and you see my prophecy has come true. But I have a great deal to say to you, and perhaps you would have no objection to a little conversation in some less public place than a Cairene bazaar.”

“Well,” said I, “let us go to my house, which is not far off, and then I shall be glad to know your adventures. But I hope you have not turned Mohammedan.”

“Not I, indeed, Sir,” replied Mr. Martin, “and perhaps I am a better Christian than I was. I attend the services of the Missionaries here, and I think they have done me some good, but I am sure they have kept me from much evil. In fact, I don’t think one understands the value of a church until one finds oneself in an outlandish place like this.”

We soon arrived at my dwelling, where Mr. Martin seated himself cross-legged upon the

carpet, and having been furnished with a pipe, made himself in a few minutes quite at home.

“I dare say, now, Mr. Singleton,” he said, after a short pause, “that you are surprised to see me here, and, indeed, sometimes I can hardly believe myself actually in the land of old Pharoah and the Pyramids. Fine country, Sir, though a queer set of people ; they would be too much, I think, even for St. Giles’s itself.”

“And what are you doing here, Mr. Martin?”

“Why, Sir,” he replied, “I can hardly tell you exactly. The fact is, I am something between a secretary and a man-of-all-work to a gentleman hard by, who brought me from England as his confidential attendant. When we first came we intended to stop a fortnight, but we have been in these parts about two years. My governor, you see, Sir, is a studious sort of man, that does not like to be bothered, and so I manage all the house affairs, pay everybody, and keep the accounts. As for this Eastern dress, it is all a freak of his, for he wished, when

he came here, to live among the natives, and adopt their habits as much as possible ; and as this change of dress fell in very well with my humour, I followed his example, like a dutiful follower ought to do."

"Does your employer live far from hence?" I inquired.

"No, Sir," said Martin. "We have a house in this quarter, and I hope I shall see you occasionally, since we are such near neighbours. And how does poor Jack get on, Sir?"

We talked for some time on different topics, and in the course of conversation Martin told me that he thought his master intended to leave Cairo shortly. He described him as a man of eccentric habits and retired disposition, who had secluded himself entirely from European society, and mingled very sparingly even with the natives. He told me that he passed his time chiefly in solitude, shutting himself up for hours in his own room, and refusing admittance to every one.

"But with all this," continued Martin, "he

is very benevolent and charitable, and also, I think, religious. One night, Sir, I heard sobs and lamentations, as it were, from his room, and I listened at the door, thinking perhaps he was ill; but it seemed as if he was praying, and, though I could not hear exactly what he said, yet it appeared as if he was very much in earnest."

I felt considerably interested in the unknown, and after Martin left, I sat for some time debating with myself whether I should call upon him, when the return of my old acquaintance with a message from his master saved me any further deliberation. He came to say that Mr. Walsingham had sent his compliments, and would, if agreeable, pay me a visit in the course of the day.

"He looked rather cross," added Martin, "when I first told him that I had met you; but when I said that you were a clergyman, in bad health, who was living like himself among the natives, his heart seemed to warm to you, and he said: 'I must really see Mr. Singleton,

Martin,' and so, Sir, he sent me with this message."

"Well," said I, "if you think there could be no objection, I will carry the answer myself, provided you do not mind my accompanying you."

"Not in the least," he replied, "and I am sure he would be glad to see you."

As we went along, Martin informed me that his employer he believed was highly connected, but seldom spoke of his relatives, and never made allusions to his past history.

"Once," continued Martin, "I said something about a person of the same name whom I had heard of in London; but my master interrupted me with unusual sternness, and told me if I desired to remain with him, never to mention England, or any one belonging to it in his presence. In fact, I was almost afraid he would be angry at my meeting you, and I don't think, Sir, I should have told him of it; but he questioned me rather closely as to where I had been."

We were now at Mr. Walsingham's door, and my companion led the way through a narrow passage into a large square court, where he asked me to wait by the side of a fountain, bordered with orange trees, while he informed his master of my presence. The rooms which surrounded the quadrangle seemed spacious and lofty, for as is generally the case with eastern habitations, there was no second story. Two large recesses were lined with divans or low sofas, while a third, much lower and less elaborately ornamented appeared to lead to kitchens or inferior offices connected with the house. I had barely time to note these general features, when Martin returned with a message from his employer that he would be glad to see me immediately.

Following him into one of the recesses already mentioned, I entered an apartment to the right which had been fitted up as a library and contained an ample store of books. Mr. Walsingham was writing or reading at a large table in the centre, and as he rose to welcome me I found myself opposite to a man

of middle age, dressed in the Egyptian costume and wearing his beard after the oriental fashion. His naturally dark hair was thickly mingled with grey, and on his spacious forehead might be traced wrinkled lines, which owed their existence apparently more to care or study than to years. There was an expression of pride about his features tempered, however, by that unmistakable air of courtesy which characterizes men of birth and station. His mode of receiving me, savoured much of the easy dignity that we are accustomed to associate with the old régime of former days, the effect of which was heightened considerably by the graceful costume of the East. Perhaps, however, a close observer might have detected beneath this polished exterior, a certain reserve belonging more to the scholar and recluse, than to the man of action or pleasure.

I apologised for my intrusion, but he begged me to consider my visit as a welcome one, and added :

“ Though I certainly shrink from the society of

impertinent tourists and idlers, to whose curiosity I do not choose to exhibit myself, yet I trust, Mr. Singleton, you will not think such a prohibition extends to one of your sacred office and character. The fact is, I do not wish to hear," he added, smiling, "that I and my humble mansion have had the honour of figuring in the next three volumes of Eastern travels, with which some adventurous gentleman favours the world. I have a slight objection to be ticketed and labelled in some table of contents as 'a singular character,' or 'eccentric Englishman,' or to have all my little whims exhibited, with a slight colouring, of course, to the gaze of 'an indulgent' and curious public. Besides, you remember, doubtless, Sterne's old maxim, that 'an Englishman does not travel to see Englishmen.'"

"Many seem as if they travelled for nothing else," I replied. "But you must be rather lonely here, Mr. Walsingham."

"Oh no, I have my books, faithful old companions, who never grow weary or ashamed of

my society; and then I possess a young gazelle, that has beauty without coquetry, and timidity without affectation. Do you think I could better myself in the actual world of men and women?"

"Well, there is something romantic about your secluded state," I observed.

"Do not say that, or I shall suspect you of intending to write a book, and to put me into it," returned Mr. Walsingham, lightly. "You have no idea what persecutions I have already suffered from curious travellers. How they contrived to ferret me out, I cannot tell, but they have practised all kinds of stratagems against my solitude. My servants were bribed, my doors watched, my walks haunted, and one lady sat herself down, note-book in hand, upon the door-step, and declared she would not stir till she had seen me."

"And how did you get rid of her impertunity?" I inquired.

"Why, you must know, I was driven in self-defence to countermine. Martin is a very

clever fellow, and he acted as my substitute on the occasion. What he told her, I do not know, and never inquired, but some months after, I received three volumes, very handsomely bound, from London, containing a full and true account of a mysterious Englishman, whom the writer had met and talked to in Grand Cairo. The narrative connected with this strange personage was so full of the marvellous, that Martin declared he could not in conscience lay claim to more than a quarter of it."

Soon after I took my leave, and Martin accompanied me back to my house, as I had promised him some medicine for a headache, of which he was then complaining.

"Why, Mr. Singleton, you are quite a doctor," said he, as he examined my case of instruments and well-worn chest, which had already done good service in India. "I wish I was," he added, "for the French and Italians here are nothing but quacks, they say, and it is well to be independent of them."

He took the powder and departed; but in about half-an-hour came running back in a great fright, to say, that his master had fallen down in a fit, and was now perfectly insensible.

Seizing hastily my lancets and bandages, I hurried after him, and found Mr. Walsingham lying on the divan, quite motionless. I bled him, and he revived a little, but his state seemed so doubtful, that I determined not to leave the house. It was well I did not, for he was attacked by fever in the evening, and before night was perfectly delirious. Finding that there was no medical man near, in whom I could confide, and having both studied and practised the healing art during my Missionary career, I thought I might safely undertake the case myself.

For some days I watched by the bed-side, and ministered to the sufferer; nor shall I easily forget how deeply thankful I felt when I perceived signs that the vehemence of his disorder was considerably abated. In his delirious

fits he murmured the name of Adeline very frequently, and addressed some person who bore it in terms of endearment. It somewhat startled me at first, for Adeline had been the name of my uncle's unhappy daughter ; but I knew that this appellation was common enough in France, and therefore paid little attention to it.

Profoundly thankful did I feel to the Almighty Healer, when Mr. Walsingham revived so far as to recognise and converse with me. His gratitude was unbounded, and I was even obliged to repress its transports lest his emotions should affect his recovery. I did not forget the responsibilities of my own sacred profession, and endeavoured to lead his mind gently and cautiously to religious subjects. On these indeed I found him well informed, and his sentiments were always expressed in a sincere and humble manner.

Circumstances had of course materially altered his bearing towards myself. The polished courtesy of his first address now gave way to the familiarity of intimate friendship. He re-

signed himself into my hands with all the simplicity and trustfulness of a child, and there scarcely remained a single trace of his former proud and worldly deportment.

I quitted him as seldom as possible, for his illness made it irksome for him to see the few natives with whom he possessed a slight acquaintance, and he had always shrunk from the society of the Europeans.

My stay in Cairo had been much longer than I originally intended, but I felt that I could not abandon my patient. My little property at home yielded me enough to live upon, and I found my health improved by the climate of Egypt. I was anxious, however, to quit it before the very hot weather set in, and Mr. Walsingham being now sufficiently convalescent to occupy one of the divans in his study, I thought I might mention my intended departure to him, and ascertain whether he was disposed to accompany me at least some part of the way.

He listened in perfect silence to what I said,

and then, after some consideration, inquired abruptly—

“Do you think I might travel in a month’s time?”

“That will depend,” I replied, “upon whether your strength goes on increasing at the present rate. If there is no relapse, I should say you might; and I imagine that the change would even be beneficial.”

“And you, I think, Singleton, are going to England? Should you object to pay a short visit *en route* to the Holy Land?”

I replied that nothing would give me greater pleasure if I could meet with a companion.

“Well,” he answered, “I have some idea of going there, and if you would allow me to inflict my dull society upon you, perhaps we might travel together. At all events, we can speak of this hereafter, when my health is a little more established.”

We conversed for some time on various topics, relating chiefly to the country in which we were both strangers. I was surprised at

the accurate acquaintance with Eastern lore displayed by my new friend, and impressed by the extent of his information on subjects which lie far beyond the reach of a mere superficial observer. He spoke with dislike and contempt of the conventionalities of modern civilization, and I thought his remarks tinged with a slight touch of misanthropy.

“Were we in England now,” he said, glancing round the apartment, “this room would be crowded with a set of useless nick-nacks, which we should both despise, and could well dispense with ; but which we must waste our money on because, forsooth, society in its wisdom has decreed that they are indispensable. I come here, and adopt this tasteful and comfortable costume ; but I dare not show myself in it to any travelling countryman, lest he should deride me for not being such a swathed up creature as himself. The poor conventional slave cannot speak out his feelings of honest enthusiasm when he admires either God’s work or man’s, without being voted extravagant or eccen-

tric ; and perhaps he might be in danger of a mad-house, if he had any property to covet, or any stiff conventional relation to disoblige. Out upon this wretched system !”

“And yet,” said I, “the East is peculiarly the home of conventionalism. Men eat, drink, walk, and dress according to traditional rules. How else can we account for the unchangeable character impressed on everything which we see around us ?”

“Ah ! that,” said Mr. Walsingham, “is a respectable conventionalism which antiquity renders almost sacred. You would not compare it to our ever-changing fashions that vary at every new moon, and originate with people whom generally one cannot help despising.”

“Well,” said I, “bad as we are, I do not think you would really like to submit to the oriental conventionalism, venerable though it may be.”

“Perhaps not,” he answered ; “but early education and prejudices, instilled into us when we first begin life, have spoilt us for a more

simple and natural state of things. However," he added, quickly, "we will discuss these matters more fully another time. You want a little change from a sick room now, so go and see the Pyramids, and after that, defend, if you can, your modern upstart civilization."

My prognostications turned out correct, and at the end of a month Mr. Walsingham could go about without either inconvenience or fatigue.

We wandered together through the ruins of ancient magnificence, and moralized over the vicissitudes which had befallen the country in which we were sojourners. His remarks were grave, and full of deep religious feeling, while there were seasons when a profound melancholy seemed to hold sway over his thoughts. It was evident that some hidden sorrow was lurking within; but he appeared, in this instance, to shrink from sympathy, and not disposed to invite confidence. When he alluded to himself at all, which he seldom did, the sincere humility of his tone interested me

strongly, and made me most anxious to penetrate his secret. Why was he lingering here at a time of life when most men are actively engaged in working out the great responsibilities of existence? Such talents as he evidently possessed, and such advantages as he clearly enjoyed, ought not to be wasted in the selfish gratification of morbid meditation.

Something of this kind I hinted to him during one of our expeditions. He received my suggestions in silence, but seemed full of thought until we returned. The next day, however, he referred of his own accord to our conversation.

“And you think,” said he abruptly, “that I ought to go back to a world which, in former days I abandoned, because I so thoroughly despised it. But what should I gain by that?”

“For yourself nothing, perhaps,” I replied, “except the satisfaction of working out the end and object of your being. For others you might effect much.”

“To be repaid with misrepresentation and

ingratitude," he answered. "Those who have attempted to serve men from Prometheus downwards, have met with nothing but disappointment."

"And will still," said I, "if they expect an earthly reward. But is it nothing to labour for high and noble ends with the consciousness of God's approval to lighten our toil, and to assure us of a destiny hereafter, brighter and more glorious than men's applause or commendation could give, or their disappointment and dislike withhold. What if they view our efforts with the same indifference or hatred, which the best and noblest have borne before us. We share the obloquy and misapprehension which lay so heavily on them, shall we not partake also in the reward which has now crowned their unselfish exertion?"

"I have thought of this," he replied solemnly, "and I must own you are right. I feel though I have long been trying to conceal it from myself, that I am both selfish and self-seeking. England possesses for me many

painful associations ; but I must brave these, and see in the sorrow which they inflict only a well-merited penance for the past. Yet I will ask you one thing. Stay by me and strengthen my resolution by your presence and advice. Let me not relapse if you can help it into my old self. I should like to visit Jerusalem, for I have never yet been there. Afterwards we will return to England together."

"I am delighted to hear of your determination," I replied, "and I trust, my dear friend, that whatever the sorrows are to which you allude, they may one day yield to the endearing influences of home."

"Do not speak of home," he said hastily, as if some unwelcome recollection had been excited by the word, "I have no home, except like the ancient philosopher, I may claim one in heaven. All countries are alike to me in that particular."

"Yet you had"—and I paused, fearing lest a reference to his former life might annoy or pain him.

“Friends, relatives, you would say, perhaps, who ought to welcome and rejoice over a returning prodigal,” he interrupted in a bitter tone. “But you forget that the fatted calf is not always killed on such occasions. There are those, Singleton, who might send the poor penitent back to his husks again. But I must not talk of this, or I shall not quit Cairo.”

He paused a few minutes as if to subdue some inward emotion, and then continued.

“Some day you shall know my history. I will not tell it here, because perhaps the recital might, as I said, induce me to give up all thoughts of return. The feelings which impelled me to fix my abode in this place, must sleep till I am far from hence. I will leave you now, for this conversation has disturbed me.”

I met Martin afterwards in the bazaar, and he told me that his master had shut himself up in his room, and given orders that no food should be sent up to him.

“It is his way, Sir,” said the worthy fac-

totum, "whenever anything seems to cross him. At such times he can't bear interruption. I imagine I don't take after him in that though. They say grief is thirsty, and for my part I've found it hungry too occasionally. But he will be better to-morrow, Mr. Singleton, depend upon it. These fits soon pass away from him."

When I reached my own house, my servant came running out to say that a strange gentleman, whose name he tried to pronounce several times, but could not, was waiting for me within. I walked into my sitting-room, and though some years had elapsed since we met, I had no difficulty in recognising the features of Mr. Ranson. They were evidently, he considered, set off to the best advantage by a slight sandy moustache, and a very wiry beard of the same colour. On his head he wore the usual Turkish Fez.

"You would hardly know me, I dare say, Mr. Singleton," said my old acquaintance complacently; "positively, when I looked in the glass

after a month at Cairo, I should hardly have known myself. I rather think I am *the* thing, quite *à la Turquie*, you understand. In fact, between ourselves," he added, "I got a complete eastern dress when I first came, and wore it at the table-d'hôte, but the fellows laughed so, they are horribly rude the English, and the donkey-boys in the streets hooted, so I took it off."

"And what are you doing here?" I inquired.

"Oh! it is a sort of partnership concern, you must know, that I am engaged in. A friend of mine, an artist, is out here sketching, and I am to write the descriptions to his plates. A fine fellow he is, but terribly cranky, and always complaining that my prose don't do him justice. In fact, we've had a little tiff just now, and I walked off from the English hotel where he is staying to the French house, where I saw your name in the book, and of course inquired you out."

"And what do you think of the East? Does it answer your expectations?"

“Don’t ask me, Mr. Singleton,” he replied. “The truth is, I have been terribly disappointed. There is nothing poetical about the East, Sir. It is all a delusion—one vast sham! When I first caught sight of Greece, I was delighted. Here, said I, is that classic land which sages and heroes have rendered immortal—the birth-place of Genius, and the theme of undying verse. I landed in raptures, and in my enthusiasm had bent down to salute the far-famed soil, when I was hailed by the cad of the Athens omnibus, which carries passengers to the city of Socrates from the Piræus every hour. I found the said city a shabby affair, inferior to an English provincial town, and was disturbed in my reverie at the Parthenon by a Jew boy selling oranges. I congratulated myself on having arrived in the

“Land of the east and clime of the sun.”

but was wetted to the very skin every day of my sojourn there by drizzling showers, and

could not even sit in doors without three great coats on. The third day after my arrival at Athens, I saw in the street a fine romantic-looking fellow, whom I imagined to be a Corsair or Giaour, or something of the sort. Thought I, that man must have a history worth knowing. I'll make his acquaintance. I did so, and found he was the cook at the French hotel."

"Well," said I, "you cannot complain of the cold in Egypt?"

"Ah, no," replied Mr. Ranson, "I am roasted here. And then the living, Sir! Would you believe it? I can't get even a steak or a chop for any price; and their greasy dishes brought on a bilious attack, from which I have hardly yet recovered. Then they are a dirty people, Sir—a filthy race. I have been flea-bitten and mosquito-bitten, and worse, every night of my life. In short, Sir, I can't see any poetry in the East, and I am going back as soon as I can to tell the world so."

I condoled with Mr. Ranson on this disap-

pointment, and, at his request, walked with him to the hotel to act as mediator between himself and his friend. I found the latter gentleman a tall, thin person, with an exuberance of hair about his face, and a most ferocious aspect. He received us graciously; however; and after a little conversation, I succeeded in reconciling my poetical Orestes to his pictorial Pylades. The latter extended his hand solemnly.

“Here, Ranson,” said he, “take that and shake it. You are a good fellow in the main, but not sufficiently considerate. Like the organ-blower, you are always putting in for more than your share of the credit. What would your prose be without my designs?”

“And how are the people to know what your designs mean except I tell them?” retorted Mr. Ranson. “Really, Danvers, you are too bad.”

“What, Sir!” responded the artist, growing angry again, “do you take me, Sir, for a wretched sign-painter, who is obliged to have scrawled under his miserable daubs, this is a lion, and that is a bear?”

“If he painted you, Sir, there would be no necessity for the latter description,” exclaimed the now equally irate author.

“Come, gentlemen,” said I, “do not quarrel about the importance of your respective shares in the work, but let each do the best he can to support the other; and permit me in the meanwhile to relate a little Indian story, which bears somewhat upon the question in point. Once on a time a wealthy Brahmin, wishing to do honour to his favourite idol, caused a car to be fabricated at a great expense, upon which he intended to exhibit, during a particular festival, the image of his Deity. It was ordered in the ritual that vehicles of this kind were to be drawn only by men, and to induce the people to volunteer, he proclaimed that certain privileges should be awarded to those who rendered the idol the most important assistance. Every person hoped to find himself among this fortunate number, and each contributed his share of the labour so effectively that the ceremony was considered one of the most impressive which

had ever taken place in that part of the country.

“ As the car proceeded, the people followed it with their applause till it reached a sacred tank at some distance from the town, in which the idol was to be washed according to custom. While this part of the ceremony was going on, the principal assistants having nothing to do, began unfortunately to dispute among themselves as to who had rendered the most effective services. The car maker insisted that the greatest credit was due to him, the decorator was certain that his ornaments had formed the chief attraction, the men who pulled the ropes urged their claims, while the person who was bathing the idol left it in the middle of the water, and hurried on shore to declare that if his aid was not handsomely acknowledged, the dumb divinity might lay there for ever as far as he was concerned. In short, when the Brahmin who had been to visit his brethren in a neighbouring temple, returned to the tank, he found his splendid car half buried in the mud,

and his favourite image immersed up to the neck in water.

“He was obliged, therefore, to promise that all who had contributed even in the slightest degree to the work in hand should meet with their share of consideration and favour. His words produced an instantaneous change in affairs. The poor half-drowned idol was rescued from his unpleasant position; the drawers took hold of the ropes, and pulled away in good earnest, while the decorator, having nothing else to do, fanned the idol most vigorously as it proceeded homewards; and finally the procession returned in triumph, and was as much applauded as when it had set out.”

“Well, Sir,” said the artist, “I withdraw my expressions, if I have said anything offensive.”

“And so do I,” added Ranson; “and I am sure, Danvers, Mr. Singleton will bear me witness that I described you as a very able man.”

“Then talk no more about it,” replied Dan-

vers, "and let us for the twentieth time be friends again. You have, it must be confessed, a pretty knack at description. There now, I have said everything a man should say; and you must be as stony-hearted as the Sphinx herself, if you bear malice. Will Mr. Singleton sup with us?"

I declined his invitation, having a sort of presentiment that my new acquaintances might seal their reconciliation by a little more conviviality than I felt disposed to witness; but not being willing to give offence, I asked Mr. Danvers to allow me to inspect the sketches which he had made. He immediately laid open his portfolio, and I turned over its contents with some interest, for the designs were admirably executed. I almost started, however, when, among some views in the Holy Land, I came upon the portrait of a lady, in whose features I traced the unmistakable lineaments of Rachel Monçada.

"You seem interested in that sketch, Mr.

Singleton," said Danvers. "If so, you will, perhaps, be pleased to hear that we met the original about two months ago in Syria."

"Mrs. Merton is an old friend of mine," I replied. "Can you tell me if she is still in the East?"

"Oh yes," answered Ranson; "for you know, Danvers, she and the other lady both said they were going to reside for a year near Mount Lebanon."

"But where?" I inquired.

"Well, I can't remember the name of the village," replied Danvers; "but you will, doubtless, be able to hear something of them at Jerusalem. The elder lady said she had letters to a Mr. Babington, a medical man there."

I now took my departure, furnished with an additional motive for visiting Palestine. It was a singular encounter to look forward to, and one which I could not anticipate without some degree of anxiety. My first thought was that I would tell her all; my boyish love and its concealment, my struggles to repress it when

she became the bride of another, and my joy that now I could offer her a home, and a heart which had never ceased to feel strongly interested in her welfare. But soon I said to myself, "George Singleton, years have passed since then; you are both altered, and, perhaps, the pale, sun-burnt Missionary may prove more welcome as a sage adviser than as a lover. A truce, then, with romance and boyish dreams. You are old, my friend, and you know it. Your calling and your years should warn you against indulging the raptures of two-and-twenty. See Rachel Monçada if you will, but look forward to your meeting only with the sober, grave delight, with which a Christian ought to anticipate greeting the friend of his youth."

Yet there was a strange gleam of pleasurable emotion flashed across my mind when I pronounced her name in my evening orisons, and prayed that wherever she dwelt, or for whatever she might be reserved, the God of her fathers, the guide of the patriarchal Syrian wanderer,

would be with her still. And as I craved His direction, and besought that His future protection might rest upon me, I felt that my prayer had ascended on high, and that the answer would come likewise in His own good time.

CHAPTER IV.

Two travellers are gazing upon Jerusalem, from the low, rocky flat, commonly identified with Mount Gihon. From behind the Gothic wall which encircles the city, a few domes and minarets relieve the monotonous mass of low, insignificant houses that disgrace, in modern times, the former metropolis of David and Solomon. Beyond rose the bare and rocky mountains, which confront the city towards the East.

“And it was here,” said Walsingham, “that the great work of man’s redemption was worked out. Who could think, with such associations surrounding him, that the cry of the penitent soul can fall unheeded on the ear of omnipo-

tence. Let us contemplate this scene awhile, Singleton, for I feel almost incredulous, and can scarcely believe that I am here. Do you remember those magnificent lines of Tasso? How applicable they seem now :—

“ ‘ Ecco apparir Gierusalem si vede ;
Ecco additar Gierusalem si scorge ;
Ecco da mille voci unitamente
Gierusalemme salutar si sente.’ ”

“ It is strange,” said I, “ that during all your wanderings, you never visited this spot before.”

“ Not so, friend, if you knew my history. But the time is now rapidly approaching when you shall know it, and advise me for the future. It is a mark of confidence due to the preserver of my life.”

“ Nay,” I replied, “ *I* was but the humble instrument in a higher hand. With regard to your confidence, I have no right to demand what it may be painful for you to grant, and therefore perhaps it would be better not to

pledge yourself to relate that which may awaken old sorrows."

"I have nursed them too long in solitude," he answered, "the process has not been so beneficial as to lead me to continue it. To-night," he added, solemnly, "I go to pray before the tomb of my Saviour, to seek for pardon for the past, and to entreat guidance for the future. To-morrow we will talk more of this. And now let us ride on to the Latin Convent."

We wended our way through the narrow and dirty streets of modern Jerusalem, until we halted at last before the old monastery, which is one of the few memorials of the crusading period. It was considered at the period of my visit, and perhaps is still, as the inn of all Europeans, to whatever community of Christians they belonged, although strictly one of the Missionary establishments of the Church of Rome. Here, however, as elsewhere, the magical virtues of a silver key seemed to be duly appreciated, and nothing could exceed the suavity and politeness of the *padre guardiano* and his brethren

to the two English heretics. Their manner savoured perhaps too much of the style of an attentive innkeeper ; but in such cases it is useless to torment ourselves with suspicions of the sincerity of those who proffer us kindness and civility, at a time when both are much needed ; and certainly the exercise of these two qualities could rarely be more welcome than after a hot ride of ten hours in a Syrian sun.

· Soon after sunset, Walsingham and I separated for the night, and I lay for some time revolving over in my mind his promise of confiding to me his past history. It must be evidently a narrative not devoid of painful events, and I almost shrank from the idea of listening to it. Yet I felt that it would be unkind to refuse his confidence when so frankly and freely offered. Perhaps, too, I should be made the medium through which consolation might be imparted to a world-weary spirit.

The distant sounds of the organ dispelled my reverie, and diverted my thoughts to subjects more strictly devotional. I pondered over

the wonderful mysteries of which this hallowed land had been the scene, and felt almost as if it were a species of neutral ground between heaven and earth. Never did I realise so fully the great truths of Christianity and its miraculous facts. It seemed to me as if the veil which shrouded the invisible had fallen, and I was standing in the very presence of the supernatural and the unseen.

My mind was too excited by the images which it conjured up to allow me to sleep. The more I courted slumber, the more it appeared to fly from me, and at last I rose from my couch, and wandered out into the street. It was one of those nights known only in southern climes, where moon and stars seem to the inhabitants of a more northern region to shine with unwonted brightness from the clear and cloudless sky, while the light breezes breathe doubly welcome on the frame that has been parched and fevered by the heat of the day. I paced to and fro for some time, enjoying the fresh and perfume-laden air, till at length drow-

siness began to steal over me, and I resolved once more to seek my chamber. It was, however, no easy task to find it, and after involving myself in a maze of intricate passages and small courts, I emerged into a circular church, which I knew at once to be that containing the Holy Tomb. It was partially lighted, but the faint glimmer of the lamps left unrelieved the dim obscurity which enveloped the surrounding objects. I felt impressed with the spirit of the place, while my steps instinctively became noiseless and my movements inaudible. I stood holding in my breath, afraid that the slightest sound might dispel the solemnity of that still silence.

The rays of a lamp near the place where I stood, fell upon a kneeling figure at a little distance from me, and I was about to withdraw lest I should interrupt the soul-breathings of one who had evidently chosen for his devotion an hour when none might witness his communion with his God. Suddenly the tones of his voice arrested my attention, and fixed me as if spell-bound to the spot.

“Father,” murmured the suppliant, “heavenly Father, forgive thy erring child for the sake of Him who suffered here for the sins of man. Pardon that one great weakness of my life, and in Thy mercy relieve me from the results which have flowed from it, results which Thou knowest have brought upon me disappointment and anguish unutterable. Oh! restore to me the peace of earlier and happier days, and let me return from my voluntary and self-inflicted exile with a bright and hoping spirit, determined to submit to Thy will, and in that submission find my true solace and satisfaction. I ask forgiveness for the past, and hope for the future. I ask it for the sake of Him, who in His soul-agony could yet exclaim: ‘Not my will, but thine be done.’”

“Amen,” said I, solemnly, as I glided to the side of the suppliant, and knelt beside him in silent prayer.

It was Walshingham.

CHAPTER V.

THE next day we mounted our horses, and rode a few miles from the city to a small garden, shaded with trees, beneath whose welcome shelter we spread our carpets on the banks of a rivulet which meandered along at our feet. Neither of us, however, were much disposed to contemplate the scenery around us; and when we had dispatched the servants to a little distance, that they might make preparations for our rustic meal, Walsingham at once began the recital he had promised me.

“I was about ten years old when my father married a second time. My mother, his first wife, died while I was yet an infant, and un-

conscious of the loss I had sustained, though to that loss I may attribute most of the misfortunes which have since befallen me. My step-mother never liked me, and she persuaded my father, who was an easy, good-natured sort of man, to place me with the clergyman of the village near which his seat was situated, while they went up to London. She possessed one of those stern, ambitious natures, to which the bustle and intrigue of the world are as the breath of life. Her relatives were connected with the Government of those days, and perhaps she hoped, through their means, to make her husband something more than a wealthy country gentleman. I was in her way, and therefore she got rid of me as decently as she could.

“ However, I was very happy with the old clergyman, to whose care I had been entrusted—happier perhaps than I should have been at home, with a step-mother whose manners overawed me, and who sedulously frowned down every little ebullition of boyish feeling. My

tutor was kind and considerate, somewhat romantic in his disposition, and a perfect child in the ways of the world. It was natural that I should feel disposed to sympathise with his tastes, and I soon became as romantic as himself. At seventeen, I wrote bad poetry and built castles in the air, like most youths who have been trained in solitude, and entertain an inclination for quiet and studious pursuits. At length my venerable friend died, and I was even more afflicted for his loss, than I could possibly have felt at the departure of my own father.

“It was still my step-mother’s policy to keep me out of the way, and by her advice I was sent to the University immediately, being only allowed to pay a flying visit to my surviving parent, whom I found completely in the hands of his wife. To both, my presence seemed so unwelcome, that I hastened to relieve them of it as soon as possible.

“When I had taken my degree, I was unwilling to return to such a miserable mockery of home as my father’s house would have

proved under existing circumstances. I asked permission to go abroad. It was, of course, readily granted; and so I wandered about for some months through the different countries of Europe, and finally fixed my temporary abode in Provence."

"In Provence!" I exclaimed. "But go on. I must not interrupt you."

"There I became fondly attached to a young lady, whose mother had been married to an Englishman; but who was then residing with her aunt, a native of the country, and well known to some of my Provençal acquaintances."

He paused for a few minutes, during which various emotions agitated my mind. But I was determined not to interrupt him, and suppressed as far as I could any external signs of what was passing within. My companion, however, was too much engrossed with his own thoughts to pay much attention to me, and he continued his narrative with his eyes fixed upon the ground.

“I shall not attempt to describe my Adeline to you, though every feature is so deeply imprinted on my memory, that I could do so with ease.

“Suffice it to say, that in my day-dreams I had always pictured to myself a fair ideal whom I could love, and who could sympathise fully with my tastes and feelings. That ideal I thought I had now discovered, and I laid all the fresh and tender emotions of a soul that as yet had never known the charms of mutual affection at the feet of Adeline. My love was warmly returned, and for a time we were too happy to think of the future. At length my attention was called to it by the aunt—Madame St. Aubin. I could not deny the justice of her remarks. She urged upon me the necessity of becoming a formal suitor for the hand of Adeline, and pressed me to consult my family, and obtain their consent to our marriage. I offered at once to wed her niece, but she would not hear of this unless with the sanction of my father. That sanction I doubted very much

whether I could obtain, more especially as my efforts would be counteracted by the inimical influence of my mother-in-law.

“ While I was considering in my own mind what steps I ought to take, I received a communication from the latter. Her style was cold and ceremonious. She stated briefly that my father entertained certain views with regard to my marriage and settlement in life, which would render my speedy presence in England particularly desirable. The letter concluded with, ‘ I need not, I trust, remind you that any *més-alliance* contracted abroad would inflict incalculable injury on yourself, and prove a serious blow to your surviving parent.’

“ I threw down this epistle in a violent rage. What right had a stranger, a person that I had always disliked and despised, to dispose of me in this manner? I felt sure she was the mover of the whole, although my father’s name was used; and in my indignation at being thus made the puppet of an artful and ambitious woman, I was but too ready to overlook the obligations of filial duty.

“ I was brooding over this annoyance, when Adeline joined me evidently under the influence of great excitement. With broken accents and flashing eyes, she told me that her aunt had forbidden her to see me any more, and had even threatened to write to her father in case she proved contumacious. She spoke of the latter as a harsh, severe man, who had treated her during her short stay with him, with asperity and indifference. She threw herself on a chair, and weeping bitterly, exclaimed that she had now no one in the wide world who would love and protect her. Then rushing to me frantically, she clung round me, and implored that I would not abandon her to the tyranny of her relations.

“ I was deeply touched with her emotion, and indignant at those who were the cause of it. All our relatives seemed in a plot against our happiness, and I hastily determined to act in defiance of them. The details of a plan flashed through my brain like lightning, and I did not even wait to consider them, before I communicated my idea to Adeline. Among my English

acquaintances at Malta was a lieutenant on board one of the ships of war then lying in the harbour of Valetta. The day before I had received a note from him, stating that as his vessel was taking in some stores at Marseilles, he should be glad if I would pay him a visit on board. I resolved therefore to speak to my friend, and through him prevail upon the chaplain of the ship to marry us. This scheme rather pleased my romantic fancy, and Adeline eagerly assented to it. It was arranged that she should feign submission and obedience, and expect to hear from me when all was ready.

“My preparations were soon made, and the chaplain, who was not in the secret, readily consented to officiate. We were married, and as Adeline did not like to encounter her aunt immediately, we proceeded to Germany. This, Singleton, was my first great error, and though I am not prone to superstition, I cannot but think that my subsequent misfortunes have been sent as its punishment.

“When we arrived at Cologne, I acknow-

ledged my step-mother's letter, but gave no intimation of what had transpired. My father's affection had long been alienated from me, and fixed entirely on his second family. He was besides so utterly subject to his wife, that he was certain to take her view of the matter, and I desired as much as possible to avoid explanations until I should have an opportunity of making them in person. Adeline wrote several letters to her father, from whom she received no reply, and this harshness from a relative, to whom she particularly desired to be reconciled, at present tended very much to depress her spirits, and make her look with some degree of self-reproach on the step which she had taken.

“After a few months, I heard again from my step-mother, who now insisted in a very peremptory manner on my immediate return, as she said that rumours of an unpleasant nature had reached my father's ears, and that he wished me to disprove them in person.

“My wife, poor thing, knew little of all this, although generally aware that my parents and I

were not on the best of terms. One day, however, when I came in from a walk, I found her reading my mother-in-law's letter, which I had left inadvertently upon my desk. She was in an agitated state, and I soon discovered that she entertained suspicions as to my conduct, which were not easily allayed. She taxed me with having deceived her, and demanded that I should at once write and explain the real state of things. This I was unwilling to do, as I wished to see my father in person. We accordingly set out for England, but I was grieved to observe a great change in my wife's behaviour. She treated me with a certain reserve, which annoyed me, and produced a corresponding irritation on my part. It appeared as if I had sacrificed everything for her; while she repaid me by suspecting my honour, and doubting the reality of my attachment. I began to discern faults in her, the existence of which I had never noticed before, though now they seemed magnified in my eyes. A mutual coldness was creeping over us both; and though

she was looking forward to becoming a mother shortly, all the happiness she had formerly felt in the prospect, appeared to be gradually dying away.

“Another circumstance which occurred about this time, gave me no little trouble and annoyance. I discovered by accident that my servant, an Italian, had kept back several of my letters, for the purpose of embezzling the postage money. Unhappily, my wife chose to consider that I was in some way concerned in this, and had purposely intercepted the letters to her father. I was obliged to prosecute the fellow, for in the first instance I had complained of the post-office authorities, and they were anxious to obtain this species of public vindication. As a stranger, appearing before a foreign court of law, I was exposed to many delays and vexations, which did not certainly increase my happiness and good-humour, especially as Adeline often accused me peevishly of deferring my departure intentionally.

“At length we reached London. It was

a cold, foggy day, and the dulness of the season communicated itself to my spirits. Even my native soil seemed to frown upon me, and to give no welcome to the returning wanderer. Our reception by my family was as disagreeable as my mother-in-law could make it. My father appeared disposed to forgive what had been done, but sickness had made him peevish and irritable; and his wife took care, I have no doubt, to check as much as possible all feelings of affection.

“My mother-in-law now discerned, with feminine quickness, that all was not well between my wife and myself. They had begun to entertain for each other a mutual dislike, and she exerted all her ingenuity to widen the breach. There is no being so truly diabolical as an artful and unprincipled woman, and some of her artifices were indeed worthy of the Spirit of Evil himself.

“We were staying at my father’s country-seat, whither he had retired on account of his health, which was by no means improved

by the dissension he witnessed around him. Some business required my absence from home for a few days, and I went away, leaving my wife at the Hall. She had been very cold and distant of late, and I did not feel disposed to take her with me.

“When I returned, I received the distressing intelligence that during my absence she had quarrelled with my mother-in-law, and had left the house. A letter was put into my hands, in which she reproached me with unkindness and neglect, and bade me farewell for ever.

“She announced her intention of returning at once to her native Provence, where she said her aunt would willingly receive her again, and her child should be trained up to hate the cold and hypocritical English. The letter was written evidently under the influence of considerable irritation, and I rushed with it in my hand to my mother-in-law’s room. I upbraided her with her conduct, and appealed to my father. He was compelled to own the justice of my

complaints, and I learned from him that this malignant woman had used every artifice to induce him to disinherit me. His eyes seemed now fully open to her character, and with the timidity of a child, he implored that I would not leave him in her hands, as he was sure he should not survive the present shock for many days.

“What could I do? It would have been unkind to have abandoned my only parent at a time like this, and I felt certain that a little explanation would soon set matters right with my wife, who, I believed, was now safe with her aunt in Provence. I wrote immediately, to acquaint her with my present position, and entreated her not to think harshly of me till she heard my explanations, and had given me an opportunity of defending myself. To this I received no answer; and soon after I had dispatched it, my father was taken seriously ill, and expired in the evening of the succeeding day.

“There were many things which claimed

my attention, and which I could not decently leave undone. These detained me for about three weeks in England; but when the more urgent affairs had been settled, I hastened off to Provence. Travelling day and night, I soon arrived at the small village where I had first met Adeline. My heart beat violently as I approached the well-known house, and a feeling of sadness that was almost prophetic came over me, when I gazed once more on the unforgotten scenes, where I had formerly been so happy in bygone days.

“My impatience was such that I hurried unannounced into the presence of Madame St. Aubin. She uttered a faint scream when she saw me, darted forward and seizing my arm, exclaimed:

“ ‘Where, where is my child?’

“ ‘What, Madame!’ I cried, ‘is she not here? Has she not arrived?’

“A look of despair was my only answer, and then I felt oppressed by a dim consciousness that something horrible had happened, and

poured forth question upon question with nervous rapidity. Madame St. Aubin became almost too agitated to answer me, and when at length she recovered sufficient composure to make her meaning intelligible, I was struck dumb with astonishment and alarm. The last letter which she had received from her niece was simply dated London. It was short, and the style betokened anxiety of mind. Adeline stated that she was on the point of embarking for France, and begged her aunt to meet her at Calais. From that place Madame St. Aubin was just returned, and had only an hour before seen the letter which I had sent off from my father's.

“I scarcely heard the reproaches that she addressed to me, but rushed like a madman from the house. I made inquiries at all the hotels in Paris and on the road, but could hear no tidings of the lost one. At Calais my excitement and the anxiety that tormented me brought on a violent attack of fever, which confined me for two months to my bed. As soon

as I could walk, I crossed over to England, and continued my search in London, but without success. I consulted the newspapers, and lighted once on an advertisement several months old which excited some momentary hopes; but when I applied at the place indicated, I found that the parties who were supposed to have inserted it had left the neighbourhood, and I was unable to trace them out. I spent five years in these inquiries, but all my exertions were in vain. Moody and discontented, I left England, and tried to divert my spirits by travelling. But the spectre of past happiness still haunted me wherever I went. I endeavoured to drown recollection in business and pleasure, but to no purpose. At length I settled in Egypt, where, except for some few intervals, I have since resided. And now, Singleton, that you have heard my story, what advice can you give me?"

It was now my turn to speak, and after disclosing briefly in the first instance my relationship to the unfortunate Adeline, I laid before

him those particulars with which the reader is already acquainted. Martin was taken into council, and his statement left no doubt in the minds of both Walsingham and myself that his former lodger had been none other than the ill-starred young wife, upon whom her season of trouble had fallen sooner than could have been anticipated. Mr. Walsingham remembered perfectly that he had presented Adeline during their courtship with the silver case now in my uncle's possession. It had been a sort of heirloom in his family, and the verses on the paper that was found in it were, he told us, the production of a young German friend, who had devoted himself to the study of astrology.

One circumstance in the narrative struck me, however, as particularly mysterious. It seemed natural enough that the unfortunate Adeline should have omitted, in her confusion and perplexity, to inform her aunt of her address, more particularly as she appeared to anticipate joining her in Calais before her confinement took place. Yet it was strange that she should not have

written to her husband, whom she had formerly loved so tenderly, and for whom at that period especially one might have expected she would have felt some touches of reviving affection.

I mentioned this to Walsingham, and found that he entertained the same idea.

“With all my inquiries,” he said, “I could never find traces of any letter that had been sent from her. I suspected my mother-in-law at one time of having kept back something ; but when I transferred over to her and her daughters a larger share of my father’s property than they could reasonably have anticipated, I took advantage of the grateful transports which she either felt or feigned, to question her closely on the subject. She denied with apparent sincerity that she knew of any communication from Adeline, and suggested that perhaps she had been taken ill suddenly, and from her imperfect knowledge of English had been unable to send any message, while her condition would incapacitate her from writing. It was a painful idea, and I writhed under it as she spoke, but

it seemed plausible in the absence of any proof to the contrary."

My friend was overwhelmed with joy when he heard of his son, and of the providential circumstances which had led to the youth's adoption by my uncle. He was moved by the picture which I drew of the childless and solitary old man, and let fall some sentiments of self-reproach, as if he considered his own conduct had tended to bring about his wife's unfortunate fate. I endeavoured to console him by the reflection that God had caused all these things to happen for some good purpose, and entreated him not so much to regret the past as to prepare his mind for a meeting with his son, of whom, I assured him, any parent might feel proud. He continued, however in an abstracted mood during our ride back to Jerusalem, and when we arrived at the convent he retired to his own room, and I saw no more of him that day. I passed the evening in writing to my uncle, in order to prepare him for the arrival of his hitherto unknown son-in-law,

begging him also to communicate the intelligence to Jack.

When I rose the next morning, a lay brother brought me two cards, on which were inscribed Mr. Tobias MacFungus and Mr. Jonas Wintrington, each name having attached to it a number of capital letters intelligible only to the initiated, but which I suppress for fear of giving offence to some society that may think fit to claim them. The two owners of these appellations, I was informed, would be glad to see me as soon as I was at leisure to receive their visit. Knowing the usual absurd reserve of Englishmen when on their travels, I was somewhat surprised at this initiative step; but returned for answer, that I would call upon the gentlemen in question when I was dressed.

In half-an-hour the former messenger returned and ushered me into an apartment of the convent on a lower stage, where I found Messrs. MacFungus and Wintrington paying their attentions to a very substantial breakfast. After the usual observations about weather and climate, which

seem as inseparable from even a travelling Englishman as his mahogany dressing-case and closely-shaven chin, Mr. MacFungus made many apologies for their intruding themselves upon me; but having understood, he said, that I was a Missionary here, he hoped that I would give them the benefit of my local knowledge, as they were strangers in Jerusalem.

I told him in reply, that, although a Missionary, this was not my station, and that I knew very little about the place; but that what little I did know should be at their service, if they chose to put themselves under my guidance. They were very glad of my offer, as they spoke no language but their own, and a short conversation soon made us tolerably acquainted with each other. Mr. MacFungus was a slight-built, active little man, with sharp grey eyes which seemed every moment as if they would pierce through his very spectacles. He was perpetually in motion, and appeared absolutely incapable of remaining quiet on his seat for a single instant. Nothing, on the other hand, could present so

complete a contrast to all this, as the appearance of his *compagnon de voyage*.

Mr. Jonas Wintrington, like his namesake, immortalized by Crabbe,

“ Was six feet high and looked six inches higher.”

His complexion was dark and saturnine, and his eyes remained pensively fixed on a jar of honey during the whole of the meal—not that I suppose he was contemplating that in particular, but had merely selected it, as many meditative persons do, for the point upon which his regards might rest when they had nothing else to employ them. There are some people who seem never to see with their eyes, and Mr. Wintrington was clearly one of these. He appeared as if he were considering intently something internal rather than external, and spoke only by fits and starts. The contrast seemed equally discernible when I came to compare the sentiments of the two, as they were gradually drawn out by conversation. MacFungus was perpetually doubting, and his friend was a most credulous

believer. The one had come to Jerusalem prepared to question the authenticity and genuineness of everything he saw or heard; the other received, with a most capacious swallow, legends that even the most ignorant pilgrims would have suspected.

“ You see, Mr. Singleton,” said MacFungus, returning from the window to his chair for about the twentieth time, “ that I never can believe all these stories about the holy places, as they are called. Everything here is a sham ; in fact, I can hardly make up my mind whether this is Jerusalem or not. I imagine the old city must have been several miles to the north. I am not satisfied, moreover, about the position of Bethlehem ; and as for the Temple, I am sure it never could have stood where they say it did.”

“ Respect the united testimony of history and tradition,” ejaculated Mr. Wintrington, in a deep, sepulchral voice.

“ All twaddle,” replied his friend. “ History, you know, is full of misstatements ; and as for

traditions, do you think I am going to credit a set of lying monks?"

"Ah!" said Wintrington, "there spoke your Presbyterian prejudices."

"Well, Sir," said MacFungus, "I am a Presbyterian, and I glory in the title. Mr. Singleton, as an Episcopal clergyman, will excuse me, but I think it the simplest and most primitive form of Christianity. And I must tell you, Wintrington, that I feel more sympathy with the unaffected and unadorned rites of Mohammedanism than with the mummeries of the so-called Christians here, who require a Turkish guard to prevent them from tearing each other to pieces."

"It is occasioned by the fervour of Oriental piety," said Mr. Wintrington.

"Well, defend me from such fervour!" ejaculated MacFungus. "But what do you say to all this, Mr. Singleton?"

"Why, I must own," I replied, "that I consider the principal sites pointed out here will not admit of a doubt; but of course the

lesser stations must be given up at once. Yet, let us remember that in the case of the latter, the misrepresentations of the monks may not be exactly wilful falsehoods. It has long been the custom to represent particular scenes from the life and passion of our Saviour at certain localities, and it is very likely that these scenic mysteries have been confounded with the real events which they were intended to pourtray. With regard to the shameful contests between the different Christian communities, there can be but one opinion about them among men of sense and religion.”

As Walsingham had not yet left his room, I sallied out with my new friends, and guided them as well as I was able to the different objects of interest in the Holy City. When we returned, I introduced them to Walsingham, whom his newly-revived hopes restored to a more cheerful state of mind than he had ever manifested since our first acquaintance. We dined together, and afterwards our friends left us for a ramble round the city, which was

proposed by the indefatigable MacFungus, and submitted to by the passive Wintrington, who seemed to follow his more active friend about with the imperturbability of a well-regulated automaton.

“There go a singular pair of contradictions,” said Walsingham, as he looked after them; “credulity and incredulity arm-in-arm. Of the two, however, I own I prefer the ready belief of the one to the doubting spirit of the other. It is the happier error of the two.”

“I must disagree with you there,” said I, “or admit what you will hardly I think maintain, that falsehood is more congenial than truth.”

“And yet, Singleton,” said Walsingham, “an agreeable fictitious personage is more pleasing than a dull reality. The ‘Vicar of Wakefield’ never existed, but I enjoy his fire-side talk more than I should the recorded conversation of some real, living, prosaic Jones or Jenkins. Do you think the man who wept over an imaginary Thermopylæ was a whit the

wiser when he grew ashamed of his emotions, on being told that the real field was half a mile farther on? Or who would exchange the polished philosophical, yet fictitious Hamlet of Shakspeare for the dry and dull reality of honest Saxo-Grammaticus? But to change the subject, when shall we take our departure?"

"As soon as you please," I replied. "I learned yesterday that Mrs. Merton is residing with another lady near a village at the foot of Mount Lebanon; and after I have paid my visit there, I am ready for you."

"I am sure there is some secret connected with this visit," said he, smiling; "and I really think, Singleton, you ought to repay my confidence in kind."

I was willing enough to comply with his request, as I felt that, on this subject, I needed some counsel and direction. He listened to my confessions with sympathising interest; and when I had finished the recital, he told me he thought that I ought not to resolve on any

plan till I had seen Mrs. Merton, and discovered how far she might be disposed to entertain the idea of a second marriage.

“People change so, Singleton,” he continued, “that you may find her a very altered person from the Miss Monçada of past days. Otherwise I cannot see any impropriety in making known to her the state of your feelings. Your friend and her husband has now been dead for some years, and neither Scripture nor reason have ever decided against second marriages. If she had children, it might be different, but this you say is not the case, and therefore you may proceed on your wooing expedition with every encouragement, the more especially as, I should hope, both of you have outlived the idle romance of earlier years.”

“Do not make me too grave and matter-of-fact a personage,” said I, laughing.

“My dear Singleton,” he replied, “you are too old for poetics, and I would fain hope too wise. Let the feelings of the past rest where time has buried them, or if they revive at all,

let them appear in the shape of honest manly sentiments of esteem, such as will discredit neither your grave years nor your clerical calling. But I must pause in my homily, for here come our two friends, and poor MacFungus seems to have been in the hands of the Philistines. What can have happened to him?"

As he spoke, the two travellers entered the room in a very disordered plight. Mr. MacFungus's nose was bleeding, and a dark swelling over his right eye with sundry other contusions and scratches, indicated that he had been involved lately in some disagreeable adventure. Mr. Wintrington was less battered than his friend, but his spectacles had been broken, and his coat tails torn off. The Italian sub-prior followed in the rear, with hands and eyes uplifted, and exclaiming at intervals: "O questi Greci! O questi birbanti! O these Grecks! O these rogues, they merit richly the bastinado."

To our inquiring looks, Mr. Wintrington replied by stating that he and his friend had been visiting some small chapel of the Greeks,

where they were shown a miraculous picture of Saint Nicholas, which had excited the ire and incredulity of Mr. MacFungus. He forthwith began to harangue the people present on their ignorance and stupidity, in a mixed jargon of English and ancient Greek, some words of which having been unluckily understood, had procured for them their present mauling.

“It is so unreasonable of MacFungus,” continued Mr. Wintrington, “why can’t he believe as I do? and then these things wouldn’t happen. Just before this took place, we had been looking at a most interesting relic, one of the teeth of Pontius Pilate’s porter, which MacFungus declared he had seen before somewhere else. I endeavoured to reason with him, you know, and told him that the true relic must be one or the other of the two, a consideration which would have satisfied any calm-judging man, but he gets downright frantic on these occasions.”

“I don’t believe it,” roared MacFungus from the sofa, on which he had thrown himself, “I don’t credit it, and I won’t; in fact, I don’t

believe in Jerusalem at all. Oh!" and he sank back on his divan, his fervour having apparently been checked by a sudden twinge of pain.

"To be sure," said the sub-prior, "those Greeks are the most shocking impostors. Talk of their San Nicola indeed! But everybody knows they are the greatest liars under the sun."

"By the way, father," said Mr. Wintrington, "you told me you had one of the bones of Lazarus."

"Ah, that is another thing, that is a veritable relic, if you please," said the sub-prior complacently. "Yes, my son, you may safely credit anything *we* show you; but as for those Greeks, never believe a word they say. They are the greatest ruffians in the world, too, witness the tooth which they knocked out of my right jaw last Easter. O, the birbanti! the bricconi!"

"I wish somebody would get me some lint," sighed Mr. MacFungus from his divan.

This appeal at once attracted the attention of the sub-prior, who, although as credulous as

most of his countrymen, was a very humane and good-natured man. He dressed the wounds of MacFungus with great gentleness and some skill, and his assiduous attention extorted from his grateful patient an assurance that if he should ever be able to make up his mind to believe any legends, he would assuredly give the preference to those of the Latins.

The next day we left Jerusalem; and, after a week's march, came in sight of the majestic summits of Lebanon. As we proceeded, the far-famed "white mountain" rose before us in all its grandeur, the snow-clad peaks, from which it derives its name, empurpled by the rising sun. It was a glorious scene, and Walsingham entered into it with all the poetical enthusiasm of his character. Yet interested as I was in the magnificence of the prospect, there were other subjects which distracted my attention, and drew off my thoughts from dwelling upon that exclusively. I was about to meet again the loved one of my youth; her for whom I still entertained a daily increasing affection. Since

I had nourished the idea that once more there was a possibility that she might lawfully be mine, I felt the recollections of past years reviving in all their freshness and in all their strength. There existed no longer any reason why I should not give the rein to those feelings, which ever since her marriage I had deemed it a sacred duty to discourage and repress as much as possible. Then I thought of her as the friend whom I might one day meet in heaven ; now I pleased myself with the anticipation that if God willed it so, her society might prove my comfort and solace upon earth.

We had been directed in Jerusalem to the house of an English lady, with whom Mrs. Merton was then staying. The village near which she resided was now in sight ; and a Syrian peasant, whom we encountered, offered his services to guide us to the abode of the "Sitte Ingleez." Walsingham made many inquiries of this man ; and we learned that the friend of Mrs. Merton was greatly beloved in

the neighbourhood. Scarce two years had elapsed since her first coming among them, yet she had established a large and prosperous silk factory which had given employment to a great number of the surrounding inhabitants. As the Syrians of those parts were members of the Greek Communion, she had built for them a church and schools, superintended by an enlightened and pious priest from Athens, who had been prevailed upon to abrogate and remove many superstitious rites and practices which he found existing among the ignorant peasants. Every one, our guide said, spoke well of their benefactress; and when, a few months ago, an attack was made upon her house by some wandering Albanians, they had risen *en masse* to defend her.

“How much more like a Christian,” said Walsingham, “has this lady acted than another countrywoman of ours, who in some respects resembled her, but who wasted in misanthropical seclusion and idle fanaticism those talents and abilities which God had given her, and by

means of which she might have effected so much good. Her capricious tyranny and her lavish and indiscriminating liberality alienated the affections of those by whom she was surrounded, and made her the prey of the hypocritical and the designing, while this lady's noble efforts in the cause of humanity and civilization have secured for her, as such efforts always will when properly directed, the love and gratitude of those whom she has benefited."

We had now reached the abode of Mrs. Thornton, or the Lady Agnes, as she was more commonly called, the Orientals rarely being able to pronounce an European name. It was an ancient castle, which had formerly been the stronghold of some Druse or Maronite chieftain, and still retained some vestiges of its former character. We alighted in a court-yard, amid a crowd of retainers, showily dressed and accoutered, one of whom hastened to announce our arrival to his mistress.

On his return, we were conducted into a stately room, surrounded by divans, and richly

carpeted, at the extremity of which reclined the lady of the castle. She seemed about forty years of age, and her tall commanding form was set off to great advantage by the semi-oriental garb that she wore. An air of decision and energy gave to her features somewhat of a masculine character: but their outline was regular and harmonious, and they might have even been termed beautiful, had they possessed a softer and more feminine expression. She bent on us a pair of dark lustrous eyes, the glances of which were almost queenly, as she welcomed us with dignified courtesy to her Eastern mansion. Near her was seated a venerable priest, with a white flowing beard, whom she introduced to us as Father Athanasius, the Greek Rector of the village.

In the course of conversation, Mrs. Thornton discovered that Mr. Walsingham had known some of her connections in England, and this led to a conversation between them, the course of which I at last interrupted, to inquire after Mrs. Merton.

“I think you will find her in the flower-garden yonder,” said our hostess; “and as you may wish, Mr. Singleton, to talk over past scenes, too, you had better go out and meet her there.”

I was delighted with the permission, for I felt that on my part, at least, such a meeting would have been awkward and embarrassing in the presence of strangers. Passing through an aperture, that served equally the purpose of a door or window, and which had been left open to admit the cool breeze from the mountains, I came suddenly upon a scene of floral enchantment, rivalling in beauty some of the descriptions of the “Arabian Nights.” Fragrant parterres, blooming with the choicest Oriental and European plants emitted their sweet odours on every side, shadowed over by stately cedars, and interspersed with venerable oaks, while in the more open parts might be discerned long rows of vines almost wrenched from their supporting props by the weight and abundance of the luxuriant clusters which they sustained with appa-

rent difficulty. In the midst, a silvery rivulet meandered along, losing itself finally in the obscurity of an artificial cave, towards the entrance of which I now directed my steps. A figure in dark apparel made its appearance from within as I drew near, and uttered an exclamation on seeing me. It was she whom I was seeking.

CHAPTER VI.

THE lady, in whose house I found myself a guest, possessed a character worth studying. Descended from an old Norman family, and untitled, like most of those who trace their pedigree to the companions of the Conqueror, she had inherited much of the restless energy, and love of rule, which distinguished her far-famed ancestors. Her beauty and talents had in early youth attracted some attention, and when a wealthy commoner, moved by the influence of both these qualifications, laid himself and his estate at her feet, the world decided that the enchanting Miss Blondville had nothing more to wish for. As is commonly the case in these

matters, the world was wrong; Mr. Thornton was a prosaic, good-natured man, that loved money, because it gave him the means of taking his ease, and hated ambition, because it put him out of his way. He had been stirred up by his wife to stand for a neighbouring borough, and was never himself afterwards. The unusual bustle and anxiety, he said, had affected his constitution; at all events, he did not long survive his election.

For a time the widow was too deeply and sincerely affected by her loss to give the reins to her favourite propensities; but when her grief had been obliterated by time, she once more became sensible of the revival of her old ambitious desires. She endeavoured at first to gratify these on English ground, but found it no easy matter. Politics, of course, she could not meddle with, and for quack philanthropy she had no taste. She tried a little theology, but the rector of the parish, a confirmed old bachelor, and somewhat of a misogynist, would tolerate no female interferences in his societies,

or his schools. What was to be done? Perhaps duty would have answered, that woman's mission lies in doing good inobtrusively to those around her, but for this, Mrs. Thornton had not, or thought she had not, any vocation.

She attempted literature, and was ridiculed by the reviewers as a mere pedantic blue-stocking. In despair she went abroad, and hearing at Paris a vast amount of chit-chat about Syria, and Lady Hester Stanhope, she thought she would try the East. To the East she repaired, inspected the north of Palestine, chose out a fitting place as the scene of her future operations, disposed of her landed property in England, and came out again, accompanied by Mrs. Merton, with whose father, Mr. Monçada, she had become acquainted through the medium of some business transactions. Mr. Monçada's death had mainly induced his daughter to take this step, which she assured me she had never regretted.

Such were the particulars I learned from Mrs. Merton during the conversation which, I

fear, we prolonged to an unreasonable length. One deep feeling of satisfaction at least I derived from it. She was not changed. Sorrow had made her indeed graver and more reflective, but the Rachel who stood before me was still in all essential particulars the Rachel of my youth. I could no longer restrain the impatience which impelled me to learn, as soon as possible, her views on a subject materially connected with my future happiness. In requital for what she had told me, I laid bare my soul to her. I spoke of my first boyish affection, of the deep and perhaps more sacred emotions which had succeeded it, and then I poured forth the more ardent feelings of the present. My suit was successful, and before we returned to the house we had plighted our vows in the face of heaven, and called upon God to bless the union of those whom He had brought together a second time in so mysterious a way.

There is a sanctity and a delicacy inseparable from scenes like these, which makes me unwilling to draw any further the veil which

should conceal them from the curiosity of uninterested parties. To all the world but themselves, too, a pair of lovers are almost ridiculous objects, and their conversation seems vapid and unmeaning. Perhaps it is because that, at such a season, the poetical element expels the prosaic, and poetry in some natures must degenerate into fustian or burlesque.

The next day I accompanied Mrs. Thornton and our other friends, through what she termed her domain. It was situated principally in a beautiful valley, watered by a rivulet whose crystal stream was not always devoted to the most poetical of purposes. On the spur of the left-hand range of hills was erected a group of buildings, the oriental exterior of which would hardly have led one to suppose them mere factories. On the other side was a neat Syrian village with its church and school. Both, I heard, were well attended, and had already acquired some influence over the adjacent districts. I entered the sacred edifice, and observed with pleasure that, although its

Eastern characteristics and construction were most rigidly maintained, the tawdry pictures which usually decorate the screen in Greek churches had been removed. The good old priest told me that the Liturgy and Prayers were said in the vernacular Arabic, and that each member of his flock had, by Mrs. Thornton's desire, received a copy of the Holy Scriptures. The Bishop of the diocese at first entertained some doubts as to the object of these reforms; but he had since visited the spot in person, and after a long interview with Mrs. Thornton, departed, expressing himself well satisfied with what had been done.

In the evening, we all attended the Church service, and I was agreeably impressed by the beauty of the prayers and their resemblance to those of our own ritual. When the priest had finished, Mrs. Thornton went among the people, and made various inquiries after their health and prosperity, which were always responded to with respect. Indeed, if one might judge from appearances, nothing could exceed

their grateful sense of the kindness of their benefactress.

“ I always make a point of attending these services, Mr. Singleton,” said she, as we walked homewards ; “ for as they are at present constituted, I can do so without giving up or abandoning any doctrine of our own Church. The Greek Bishop was at first not disposed to sanction some of our reforms ; but Father Athanasius, who is a very well-educated man, has set matters in a proper light before him, and at present we have everything our own way. Indeed, I believe that if our own Church were better known in these parts, and the higher Greek Ecclesiastics a more enlightened class of men, we might do much here.”

“ I think,” was my reply, “ that your own plan is the best kind of mission that could be devised. By giving the people employment which they so much need, and providing for their education in those points of Christian doctrine which are common to all, you are gradually winning their confidence, and pre-

paring the way, perhaps, for sound and efficient reforms in their once flourishing and orthodox, but now alas! sadly degenerate Church. All I can say is, go on and prosper, and may God bless your noble and self-denying efforts.”

My stay was now drawing to a close; and as it had been decided that my affianced bride should accompany me to England, I was obliged to have the marriage ceremony performed without delay by the English chaplain who officiated at a neighbouring sea-port town. It was with feelings of the most heartfelt joy and gratitude, that I knelt at the altar to receive the nuptial benediction; nor did I dream, as I pressed my wife fondly to my bosom, that our present happiness was but as the gay and sunny aspect of a sky which is soon to be overclouded with the gloomy vapours that announce and accompany an impending storm.

At Beyrout, a letter reached me from my old friend Mayflower, containing the intelligence of the death of Mr. Templeton, who had long

been ailing. This sad news damped our nuptial joy, though it was not altogether unexpected. May we not think, however, that God mingles sorrow with the draught of human enjoyment, lest it should intoxicate instead of soothe.

CHAPTER VII.

MY first care on arriving in England was to seek out my uncle, whom I found at his old residence, and immersed, as usual, in his old studies. The letter I wrote to him from Syria had, in some degree, prepared his mind for the visit of Walsingham, who accompanied me the next day to my uncle's retreat. Their interview though productive of kindly feelings on either side, was in some degree painful, since much that had to be discussed related to one who was lost to both, and of whom neither could think without a slight measure of self-reproach. Yet, regrets for the irretrievable past were soon cast aside by mutual consent, and

gave place to more hopeful and less desponding themes.

Having learned from my uncle that Jack was expected shortly, I left the two newly-acquainted relatives to themselves, and strolled out into the garden, where I found the old house-keeper, Mrs. Dawson, busily engaged in nailing up some stray tendrils of a small vine, which had recently broken loose from their fastenings.

“And so you have come home at last, Mr. Singleton, from foreign parts?” said the good dame, when she recognised me, which was not for some minutes, since increasing years had rather impaired her eye-sight, and reduced her to the use of a pair of horn spectacles. These she drew from her pocket, and putting them on, eyed me with as strict and minute attention as she was wont to bestow on her master’s person in days of yore. Having satisfied herself that I was in every respect little altered from what I had been, she quietly slid back the spectacles into her pocket, and

said: "You have seen many wonderful things, Mr. Singleton, I suppose?"

"Well," I replied, "my eyes have certainly not been idle since I last saw you, for, as an old favourite of your master says, Mrs. Dawson, I have beheld 'many cities and men.'"

"Ah!" said the house-keeper; "but you never met, in all your travels, so clever a man as your uncle, Sir, I'll be bound. Folks talk about his odd ways now; but let 'em, says I; and, as I always tell 'em too, clever people must be odd. Bless you, if they weren't, where would be the difference between them and ordinary folk?"

"And Jack," said I, "is he clever?"

"He's a dear, good lad, Sir," she answered; "full of life and spirits, you know, as them sailors will be when they are ashore. I always look forward to his coming, though he does turn the house topsy turvey. But he is a good youth, and there are more than me as says so. There's the widow at the end of the lane, whose boy he pulled out of the river when he

was half drowned, the young scapegrace, and many others that always have a good word for Master Jack, and never fail to ask me when he is expected."

At this moment there was a ring at the gate, and Mrs. Dawson hurried off to open it. Finding myself abandoned, I took up the hammer which she had thrown down, and was selecting a suitable nail from the bag, when a well-known voice shouted behind me :

"Where is he? Let me see him directly."

I turned round, and found myself opposite a fine-looking fellow, with a merry laughing face, dressed in a naval uniform, which very much became him. He sprang forward as soon as he caught sight of me, and shook heartily the hand which I thrust out to him.

"Well, Jack," said I, "this is very fortunate that you have come just now, for I want to talk to you a little before you go in doors. And how have you been faring since I saw you?"

"Very well, indeed, Sir," said Jack, enthu-

siastically. "I like my profession, I like my captain, and I like my ship, and that's saying a great deal. In fact, Mr. Singleton, I believe that if I could know the rights of the matter with respect to my father and mother, I should be perfectly happy."

"Few people can ever say that truly in this world, my dear fellow," I observed. "But it is upon that subject that I wish to speak with you."

I then told him all the particulars which had come to my knowledge, and was endeavouring to prepare his mind for an interview with his father; but I had no sooner mentioned that Walsingham was in the house, than the impetuous lad darted off like a shot; and when I re-entered the study, I found him in the arms of his parent.

Walsingham quitted his son's embraces as soon as he saw me, and seizing my hand, exclaimed:

"Singleton, I owe much, very much of the joy I now experience to you. I feel you

have restored to me, in this boy, something to live for!"

"My dear friend," I replied, "rather thank Him who has preserved your life to see this day, and in whose omnipotent hand, I and all have been but feeble instruments. And now let us pay to Him that tribute which piety no less than gratitude demands."

We knelt around the table, and I endeavoured to embody in words the feelings of all present; but I felt that on this, as on other occasions, human language is painfully inadequate to express the deeper and more sublime emotions of the soul. Soon after, Walsingham and his son left us, and I took the opportunity of making my uncle acquainted with my marriage.

"I am very thankful to hear of it, George," he said, "for Rachel was always a favourite of mine. She has been an excellent daughter and an exemplary wife, and you cannot want a better guarantee for future happiness. Still, my dear fellow, do not forget that golden maxim of

old Epictetus, 'bear and forbear,' as well as the sounder advice of St. Peter. Perhaps I and poor Walsingham might have been spared a considerable amount of sorrow had we but considered that marriage, to be happy, requires mutual toleration of many defects and weaknesses. And now, George, I cannot conceal from you my apprehension that I have done my work here, and must soon 'sing my *nunc dimittis*,' as one of my old favourites phrases it."

"I trust not," said I. "You are looking well, and your years—"

"Have not reached yet the threescore and ten usually allotted to man's existence. But what of that? We may be called hence at any time, and for some weeks I have heard the tread of the messenger's footsteps. Fortunately I have none to leave but you three, and I think you will hardly mourn much that an old man has gone to those for whose society he has sighed and longed through many a weary year. I hope and trust that I am prepared,

and, thank God! that neither as a scholar or a Christian, do I fear the putting off 'of this mortal coil.' ”

I was at first incredulous with respect to my uncle's forebodings, but he told me some circumstances which proved that his fears were not the mere offspring of a hypochondriacal fancy. I now pressed upon him the necessity of seeking the best medical advice. He smiled faintly, and replied :

“ You know Napoleon used to say that we are machines made to live, and that when our machinery has exhausted itself it is useless to think of repairing it. I am much of his opinion in this matter—at least, as regards my own case. Still it is our duty to take every precaution, and so, perhaps, you would kindly see Dr. —— for me to-morrow. And now, my dear fellow, I must bid you good evening, for I feel rather exhausted by what has happened to-day. But before you go, reach me the Phædo from the high shelf yonder. They must have put it there by mistake, for it gene-

rally lies with the New Testament on the table near my bed."

"It is indeed worthy of that fellowship," said I, as I brought him the book, "for it is one of the noblest testimonies borne by unassisted human reason to that great doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which revelation alone has made certain and sure."

"You are right," he answered. "And leaning on Plato and St. Paul, I feel I might almost exclaim: 'Now am I doubly armed!' Yet how clear and undoubting is the witness of the apostle when compared with the hesitating speculative probability of the sage! We feel as we read that sublime chapter in the Corinthians, this is the language not of acute metaphysics nor of subtle logic, but of one who has, indeed, been led behind the great veil, and has investigated the mysteries which it conceals from ordinary mortals. Ah! the hope of immortality is a glorious thing, it has supported many a world-hero in his struggles with

opposing evil, it can sustain a Christian even in torture like this.”

He writhed as he spoke, and a spasm of agony agitated his frame. He grew faint, and I had to summon the old housekeeper, who brought him a restorative, which seemed to revive him for a few minutes. But the languor of secret and incurable disease soon stole again over his features, and he sank back in his chair. I wished to remain with him the whole of the night, but he thought I had better not do so, as the consciousness of my being there might disturb him.

“I have been so long a hermit, George,” he continued, “that company rather excites than soothes me. I think, therefore, that here you would be of little service to me, but you might see the doctor to-night instead of to-morrow as it is not very late.”

I promised that I would go to him immediately; my uncle pressed my hand affectionately, and we parted. I hailed the first cab I

met, and was fortunate enough to find at home the eminent physician to whom my uncle had alluded. He shook his head doubtfully, as I detailed the symptoms, and said he would see Mr. Sainsby, without delay. I went on to our hotel to apprise my wife and Walsingham of what had happened. They were both eager to fly to the assistance of the invalid, but I thought they had better wait till the ensuing morning, lest their visit might occasion too much excitement, and perhaps make my uncle worse. I was determined, however, to return, and learn the state of the patient from Dr. ——, who had offered me a seat in his carriage. He called for me soon after, and we proceeded to my uncle's cottage, whom Dr. —— found in a very dangerous condition.

He said, however, that the peril was not immediate, although the patient could hardly survive a week. At present he had given him a composing draught, and hoped that its effect might deaden the pain for a time and bring on sleep. I returned with a heavy heart to the

hotel to communicate the unwelcome tidings to my wife and Walsingham, who were anxiously expecting me.

The next day my uncle rallied a little, and was able to see us. Walsingham determined not to quit the house, and Rachel engaged some lodgings for ourselves hard by. Deeply as we all felt the impending blow, no one seemed to suffer so visibly as the youth to whom the sick man had supplied the place of a father. His violent grief could not be restrained, and we were obliged to keep him as much as possible from the presence of the invalid.

Time passed on, and each hour seemed to be working some change in the debilitated frame. The more acute agonies had exhausted themselves by their violence, and were now suffering their victim to sink gradually to repose in the arms of death. The sick man frequently remained insensible for several hours, and at times his thoughts wandered and he murmured forth verses of Scripture, sentences from the "Phædo," or solemn passages from the old Greek

tragedians. As the period of his departure drew near, his mental powers appeared to be less clouded and obscured, and he would then express very touchingly the hopes and expectations that were nerving him for the last great struggle.

“George,” he said faintly to me one morning, as I sat by his bedside, “you will take my books, all except the ‘Phædo’ and the ‘New Testament,’ which I wish buried with me in my coffin. You may think me fanciful, perhaps I am so, but it is a dying man’s wish, and you will execute it, won’t you?”

He seemed as if he would have said more, but weakness prevented his utterance, and I begged him not to exert himself too much.

It was a lovely spring evening, and the genial warmth of the day had been such as induced us to move the couch of the invalid nearer the window, that he might look once more on the smiling landscape and the sweet flowers. His spirits seemed revived by the sight, but the momentary rally was like the last feeble flame

that shoots up as the lamp is waning into darkness. He signed to us to open the window.

“Let me,” he said, in a voice which sounded clearer and more distinct than it had done for many days, “let me breathe once more the incense of my favourite flowers before I fall on sleep. Ah, now I can feel the force and beauty of that old Hebrew metaphor, as I never felt it before. Do not weep for me, dear ones, rejoice rather that, like the weary traveller who has arrived at his journey’s end, I am sinking to slumber in the arms of a merciful father. See how that ray falls upon the picture of Jesus crucified; it is a light that should cheer a poor trembling sinner in his last moments, for it is the glory that radiates around the cross. Farewell, farewell; I must go now—see, they call me—Madelaine and her child, in robes of white. Do you not see them? Do you not hear the rustling of their wings. I come, blessed spirits, I come.”

He sank back on the pillow as he concluded, and the last rays of the setting sun fell upon

his face and lit up the smile that lingered there. We hastened for assistance, but the dread fiat had gone forth, and the close of another hour found us standing a group of mourners round the cold and deserted tabernacle from which an undying spirit had just taken its flight.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME months have elapsed since the event recorded in the last chapter, and the members of our little circle are met together to discuss future movements and future plans. The united property of my wife and myself had been lodged in the hands of an old mercantile acquaintance of her father, who promised to invest it in such a manner as would procure for us a comfortable annual income. I determined, however, not to eat the bread of idleness, for I felt that my ordination vows still bound me to my office of a labourer in God's vineyard. It was therefore my intention to

seek a curacy as soon as possible, and this plan met with my wife's hearty concurrence.

Walsingham had already grown tired of England, and could not settle down to a country life. He was making preparations for another journey to the East, and in this expedition his son was to be his companion. We remained in London until they took their departure, and my wife seized upon the opportunity to dispatch an ample package to her old friend Mrs. Thornton, with whom she still kept up a voluminous correspondence.

The second day after they had gone, I wended my way to the Clerical Agency Office in Fisher Street, it having been represented to me as the likeliest place to hear of vacant curacies. The exterior was not very promising. It was dark and dingy, characteristics which seemed to have communicated themselves with neighbourly alacrity to the apartment inside, where the agent sat in official importance within a species of sanctum carefully railed off from vulgar observation. He was a stout man with a solemn voice

and a manner which seemed to savour of a decayed or retired schoolmaster. A suit of rusty black and a white cravat not in its pristine purity, formed his habiliments, uniting together at the throat in such a manner that even the most practised and curious eye could detect nothing in addition to them. He bent a pair of dull and unexpressive eyes over a large folio manuscript volume, the leaves of which his fingers were turning listlessly to and fro without any apparent object or aim.

After listening graciously to my business, and casting his eye carelessly over the documents which I submitted to him for inspection, he noted down my age and other particulars on the back of an old envelope, and asked me whether "I was high, low, or middle."

I did not at first catch his meaning, but with a gracious smile at my ignorance, he vouchsafed a little further explanation.

"We call high, Mr. Singleton, gentlemen that go about with stand-up collars, double-breasted cassock waistcoats, and mortified faces, that put

candles on the altar, and chant the service when they can. Under the epithet middle, may be comprised gentlemen who wear dress-coats with open waistcoats, clean shirts with plain studs, neat black gloves and wristbands. There is nothing particular about their mode of officiating. Then, Sir, the low are sanguine-looking gentlemen with large neckcloths and bushy hair. They have usually loud voices, and good lungs, with a strong predilection for Proprietary Chapels. Talking of the latter, I have a very pretty property on hand now, which in the possession of an eligible party might prove a very fair speculation."

"Indeed!" said I.

"Five hundred a year clear from pew rents, Sir," continued the agent with increasing animation, "did fetch eight, but has decreased since, in consequence of the last incumbent's being a married man. Marriage rather spoils a gentleman for those speculations. For a single party, however, this would be particularly eligible. The chief sitter, Sir, is a rich widow,

who has made up her mind to marry a clergyman. Of course, Sir, this is strictly in confidence."

I was indisposed to pursue a colloquy of this kind, and asked rather briefly to see his list of vacant curacies which I perused without finding anything likely to suit me. I must own also that I felt some repugnance to the agent's off-hand business way, and I resolved when I took my leave to trouble him no further, but to try whether I should be more successful with the "Church-Advertiser," a copy of which I purchased on my way home.

While we were at tea I ran my eye over the various advertisements, some being calculated to call forth a smile, and others exciting a widely different feeling. Here, a curate was wanted, possessed of all the advantages, moral and physical, that could be embodied in a single person, and expected to devote his time and energies to the promotion of the spiritual welfare of ten thousand people for the liberal consideration of £50 a-year. There, an affec-

tionate incumbent was desirous of enfolding in his fraternal embrace a brother of sound lungs and delicate appetite, who, in return for his board and lodging, would assist in three services on Sundays, and teach four amiable and intelligent little boys during the week. Close to this, was an intimation that Mr. Higgins would sell by auction the cure of five thousand souls, the highest bidder to be declared the purchaser, and hard by, the account of a most tempting living, which, after describing in very flowery phrase the beauty of the property and the comforts of the parsonage, wound up by a declaration that the present incumbent was eighty-nine years of age, and that of course almost immediate possession might be anticipated.

Loving the Church as I do, and earnestly feeling that these abuses form no part of her system, but are condemned and reprobated by the most zealous and most attached of her sons, I must yet ask why such things exist. Surely if the highest appointments and preferments are to be bought and sold in this open and public

manner, the oath against simony, which every incumbent is bound to take on being inducted into a benefice, is neither more nor less than an ecclesiastical farce.

Undoubtedly, if the working clergy of England are paid wages less than a respectable butler or footman would condescend to accept, and are doomed, unless they can purchase preferment, to languish on in obscurity and privation, there must be something in our institutions that calls loudly for examination and reform. A few defenders of the present state of things urge the usage of the Romish Church, where the salaries of the majority of the clergy are nominally on an equality with that paid to an ordinary stipendiary curate among ourselves. But they forget that, while the Romish priest is a single man, the Anglican clergyman is generally married and has to provide for the wants of a family. Moreover, although the nominal stipend of the priest is small, he has a share in the offerings and fees, which sometimes amount to a considerable sum, while the English

curate is not paid one farthing for the extra and occasional services which very often he exclusively performs. The humblest member of the Roman clergy has his room and furniture provided for him at the Presbytère or parsonage, where also he shares with his colleagues the advantages of a common table.

It is said, however, occasionally, that the chance of obtaining the prizes of the Church, is sufficient to compensate for all the toils and troubles of curate existence. The assertion very much reminds one of those splendid but delusive hopes which are indulged in, from time to time, by very aged relatives of beardless ensigns and briefless barristers, and which lead them sometimes to see in the hand of the one the bâton of the field-marshal, and on the head of the other the flowing peruke of the chancellor. But even were these rewards tenfold more numerous, and tenfold more splendid than they are, it is mere childish simplicity to suppose that influence and connections have no share in their allotment. Exceptions there may be

of course, but in the majority of cases, the men who are likely to obtain these prizes are precisely those who do not need the assistance which they afford. And even were College distinction and University celebrity made the test of a man's merit, it should not be forgotten that the most active and zealous labourers in the Lord's vineyard are not always the persons who can make the best Latin verses, or work out the most successfully the problems of Euclid or the Principia of Newton.

Some such thoughts as these occupied my mind as I noted down the address of an advertisement, whose style was the most unassuming of any that I had perused. This vicarage was situated in a pleasant part of Kent, and although the advertisement stated that the salary given could be but small, money was not then an object to me, and I immediately wrote off to the address mentioned. To this application I received a reply by return of post, begging me to appoint some place of meeting that would be mutually convenient. As, how-

ever, the distance to the village where my correspondent resided was not very great, I determined to pay a visit of inspection to the locality itself.

We found the place a charming specimen of a quiet English village. It was embosomed in an almost circular valley, surrounded by downs, and shaded by a straggling plantation of trees, which was dignified by the appellation of the "Forest." In the centre of the sole street, rose the venerable church, with its quaint Norman tower and ancient chancel, contrasting somewhat unpleasingly with the patchwork repairs of the aisles and transepts, which had been executed in a style commonly known, I believe, as "carpenter's gothic." Around the sanctuary lay the memorials of the departed, many of which dated so far back that their inscriptions had been almost entirely obliterated. A group of solemn yew trees shed a mournful effect over the whole, not altogether removed by the flower-garlands which, in compliance with an ancient

custom long since disused in towns, were suspended over many of the graves.

The grey-haired sexton made his appearance from a neighbouring cottage while we were examining the church, and directed me to the Parsonage. Although larger, it was hardly superior in its external aspect to the village abodes by which it was surrounded, and owing to the numerous additions, made doubtless by successive incumbents, it gave one the idea of three cottages joined together without much ; attention to taste or regularity of design. The old-fashioned porch was almost covered with honeysuckle and other creepers, which clambered up the dilapidated wall in luxuriant profusion, as if they had been left very much to their own way, and were destitute of that training and culture which both vegetable and moral natures imperatively require.

“There is no lady here,” said my wife, as she cast a mournful eye over the neglected flower garden ; “if there were, all this would look very differently.”

An untidy maid-servant ushered us into an old-fashioned study, where everything seemed in that state of confusion which marks more than anything else the sanctum of a secluded scholar. We found almost every chair occupied by two or three volumes, the removal of which overwhelmed me with a cloud of dust. The comfortable leathern seat itself, sacred, as we conjectured, to the studious occupant alone, was covered with patches and rents, while an unlimitable extent of cobweb extended itself along the cornices of the apartment. At length the master of the house entered, the interval having been evidently employed in making himself presentable. He was a venerable, grey-haired man, who seemed in admirable keeping with everything around him, and eminently suited to the quiet, retired station in which Providence had cast his lot.

After some preliminary conversation, he expressed himself satisfied with my views, and handing me a card, on which was inscribed in black letter characters "Rev. P. Pleydell," hoped

that I should find the curacy an agreeable one.

“I am almost ashamed, Mr. Singleton,” he continued, “to name the stipend, but when you hear that the vicarage is but worth eighty pounds a-year, you will hardly feel surprised that I can only offer you thirty pounds, the more especially as my own private means are small, and the demands made upon me here extensive.”

I assured him a stipend was of little consequence to me, but expressed some astonishment that the value of the living was so small.

“The reason is,” said Mr. Pleydell, “that all the greater tithes are in the hands of Squire Chase, who lives in the great white house which you must have passed on your entrance into the village. He is the lay-rector.”

“Pray excuse my ignorance,” I said, “but what is a lay-rector? I have heard of such a personage, but I never clearly understood what it meant.”

“ You are aware, perhaps,” said Mr. Pleydell, “ that before the Reformation, the monasteries had by degrees got into their hands a vast amount of patronage, either by building churches in the vicinity, by repairing them when built, or by taking upon themselves the responsibility of serving them. They also managed in many cases to appropriate the larger tithes to their own communities, an arrangement which in those days had some show of justice as it was an equivalent for services rendered. After the abolition of the monastic orders, however, the laymen who seized upon their property retained also the greater tithes, leaving the smaller for the support of the parochial minister, who, because he performs those duties which the rector cannot discharge in consequence of his lay condition, is entitled the vicar, or agent of the tithe-holder.”

“ But all this,” said I, “ seems to me very unreasonable. I can indeed, conceive that the monks being spiritual persons, and in many cases discharging spiritual duties, might with

some fairness lay claim to money left for spiritual purposes, but how a layman who gives no equivalent at all for the sums he receives, can go on from year to year pocketing the funds devoted by ancient piety to the service of God, appears so flagrant an abuse that I am astonished to find people who can submit to it. It is a gross injustice to the clergyman who has all the duty to perform, and a still grosser wrong to the people, who are compelled to pay money for nothing."

"It seems so, indeed," replied Mr. Pleydell, "but so it is. Squire Chase draws from this parish alone about six hundred a-year, and there are several other parishes in the neighbourhood which are in the same condition."

"And does Squire Chase," I inquired, "do much for the poor?"

"I am sorry to say, very little," replied the Vicar. "We seldom, indeed, see much of him here, as he is member for the neighbouring town, and resides principally in London. I am told that he professes himself a great Church

Reformer, and is always inveighing against the large incomes of the Bishops. I applied to him some time ago about augmenting the income of this vicarage, but he returned me a very long, though I must say, civil letter to the effect that he thought such a proposition an encroachment on the rights of the laity. But let us change the subject, Mr. Singleton, for I dislike speaking of my neighbour at all when I cannot speak well of him, and we will go and see if we can find some sort of habitation for you."

In a very short time we discovered what my wife termed "a love of a cottage" delightfully situated on the outskirts of the village. It had a large garden attached to it, with which Rachel became at once enamoured, and finding that the place pleased her, and was anything but disagreeable to me, I agreed to take it at once, and enter upon my duties as Curate of Westpool the ensuing Sunday. The Vicar pressed us to remain for dinner, but observing a cloud gathering on the features of the slip-shod hand-

maiden, who was present when he gave the invitation, I thought it best to decline it, and returned to town with my wife.

The next morning I saw our agent, who informed me that he had invested our little fortune to great advantage in railway shares, which were likely to be very productive. As I believed him to be an honest and upright man, I made few inquiries, and having given him a perfect *carte blanche* to manage the matter as he thought best, I returned to our lodging, to assist my wife in packing up. It was pleasant, sunshiny weather, and neither of us I believe were sorry to exchange the scenic rurality of a London suburb for the open fields and fresh bracing air of the real country.

We had taken our places in the railway carriage, and flattered ourselves that we were likely to retain the sole possession of it, when the pleasing delusion was dispelled by the entry of two gentlemen, whom by their dress and general appearance I conjectured to be members of my own profession. There was,

however, a wide difference between the two, as far as externals were concerned ; for the starched and spotless cravat, perfumed hair, gold eye-glass, and elegantly made clothes of the one, seemed to betoken some degree of affluence ; while the rusty-black coat and ill-washed linen of the other, appeared as manifest tokens that their owner was carrying on a keen struggle with poverty, and had not retired from the contest a victor. I set him down in my own mind for some humble struggling curate, with a wife and large family ; and as I always entertained for the poorer clergy strong feelings of brotherly sympathy, I entered into conversation with him, and was confirmed in my opinion by the simplicity, not to say rusticity of his remarks. This was rather disappointing, for he had a fine intellectual forehead, and an eye of particular brilliancy ; but I imagined that perhaps his was one of those strong natural geniuses which are but too often allowed to rust in obscurity for want of some suitable object to elicit their true character.

The stylish young clergyman opposite me, who had not hitherto spoken a word, seemed to regard our poor travelling companion with no friendly eye. He replied in monosyllables to some remarks which the other had addressed to him, and appeared determined to maintain a dignified reserve towards one, whom he evidently considered as much inferior to himself. With me, however, he was more unbending, until happening to ask the name of my college, I informed him that I had not graduated at either university. He drew himself up very stiffly on hearing this, and took an early opportunity of expressing his wonder that the bishops should ordain men who were not graduates, and thus destroy the respectability of the Church.

“Of course I mean nothing personal,” he added in a tone which showed me most unmistakably that he did; “but such is my conscientious opinion, and I always like to be candid.”

I was about to reply, when our companion interrupted me, and addressing himself to the

other, said with a countenance expressive of the deepest wonder and veneration :

“ Dear me, Sir, a university education must be a fine thing, I am sure. You have been at the university, Sir, of course ?”

“ I should think so my friend,” said the gentleman contemptuously. “ I am of —— College ; otherwise,” he added, with a meaning glance towards me, “ I should not have intruded myself into holy orders.”

“ And does a college training fit one so well for the ministerial office in the Church of England, Sir ?” inquired the other.

“ How can you ask such a question ?” was the reply. “ But probably you are a Methodist or Dissenting minister, and don't think much of the importance of learning and a good education ?”

The poor man did not meet the question with a denial, and the clergyman went on in a pompous tone.

“ You see I wish to say nothing against either Methodists and Dissenters, who are very

well in their way, if they confine themselves to the shopkeepers and the lower class of people. But the higher orders, my friend, require to be addressed by a man of some knowledge and abilities; and for such a one therefore, an university education is indispensable. And then you know a sound divine ought to be acquainted with the Scriptures and the Fathers in their original languages, and understand perfectly Greek, Syriac, and Hebrew."

"Ah!" said the supposed Methodist with a sigh, "it is a great privilege to meet with a man of education. Could you allow me, Sir," with increased reverence, "to ask you a few questions? It would be *such* a privilege."

"Certainly, my friend, certainly," replied the clergyman condescendingly. "What is it you want to know?"

"I have an old book in my pocket, Sir," said the other, producing it, "that a university gentleman who lodged at mother's, left behind him. Could you tell me, Sir, please, what language it is written in?"

“This?” said the member of —— College, as he inspected the book with a very doubtful and clouded aspect, “this is, I think, Chinese.”

“There now,” returned the other, “see what it is to be a man of education. And yet, Sir, it is very odd that a Chinese book should have ‘*Testamentum Syriacum*,’ which I always thought meant Syriac Testament on the title-page. But never mind that, Sir, for I have got another question to ask,” and he pulled out another book. “This, Sir, is an old Hebrew Bible, in which I have often tried to read a little. Could you kindly tell me the meaning of this word in Genesis, and the root, for I can’t find it in my dictionary.”

The divine coloured, and stammered out that he had forgotten his Hebrew.

“Ah! well, we will try a little Greek,” said the indefatigable querist, “I wish you would construe me this passage in ‘*St. Chrysostom’s Homilies*.’”

The clergyman took the book most reluct-

antly, blundered over two or three sentences, making several mistakes in quantity, which were quietly corrected by the other, in whose eye I now detected a certain malicious twinkle, as if he enjoyed the whole thing amazingly. His victim at last fairly broke down, and said as he returned the book :

“I can make nothing of it ; but I must observe that the Fathers write such barbarous Greek, that few men of our college ever open them. Now, if it was the classical writers, you know that would be quite another thing.”

“Dear me ! would it ?” said the merciless tormentor. “I did not think of that. I always supposed that the end of a clerical university education was to make men acquainted with Christian writings in the original languages. I am sure you said so, Sir, just now. But never mind, let us try Homer. Here is this fine passage in the second book, let us see what you can make of it.”

The poor man took the volume, but got com-

pletely at sea in the second line. He threw the Homer on the seat, and exclaimed pettishly, that he had forgotten his Greek.

“And yet, Sir,” said the other, eyeing the perfumed curls very contemptuously, “you don’t look very much like a patriarch.” Then changing his tone, and speaking with considerable emphasis, he added: “Sir, you are a sham, a humbug, and an impostor.”

“What do you mean, Sir?” cried the other. “Do you want to insult me? There is my card, Sir. That will show you that I am no impostor, Sir.”

“It shows me,” was the reply, “that you are a man who was plucked three times in succession, and at last gained his degree only by an *Ægrotat*.”

“Who *are* you?” demanded the tormented collegian, now at his wit’s end.

“Professor ——, of ——,” replied the other, “who will take the liberty of advising Mr. ——, not to be so vain in future of belonging to a university, which does not, it appears, reckon

him among its highest ornaments. Look you, young man, I was loth to pluck off your borrowed plumes, before you thrust them so fiercely in the faces of myself and of our worthy friend opposite. A true scholar, Sir, will always let his modesty outvie even his learning. I trust, however, you have this day received a lesson which will make you more cautious in future."

The train stopped, and our crest-fallen companion got out, very much ashamed of himself apparently, but I trust benefited by the handling which he had received from one of the first Greek scholars in Europe, a man who it was thought then would probably be raised to the Episcopal bench. The Professor looked after him with a smile, and turning to me said :

“ ‘*Abiit evasit erupit.*’ I think our young friend will be in no hurry to exhibit his erudition in a railway carriage a second time.”

We now entered into conversation, and I found the great scholar as modest in his

mind and manners, as he was in his exterior. I almost regretted our arrival at the station, which prevented me from enjoying for a longer space of time his brilliant and intellectual conversation. However, there was no help for it, since the Vicar of Westpool's chaise was waiting for me at the terminus, so my wife and I were obliged to bid our new friend farewell, enjoying a hearty laugh over our late adventure as we rode along.

We were soon comfortably settled in our snug cottage, which, under Rachel's hands, began to assume new attractions daily. When I went out in the morning to my parochial work, she commenced her household duties; and when I returned in the afternoon, I was almost sure to find her twining the honeysuckle round the pillars of our little rustic porch, or clipping and trimming our sweet-smelling rosemary-hedge with a pair of formidable-looking shears. She had also established a poultry-yard, and was most zealous in her attention to the wants of her feathered

family, to whom we were indebted for an unlimited supply of new-laid eggs, and other small luxuries of that kind. In the evening we had a little music; and not unfrequently the good old vicar joined us, and argued with me on some point in theology, or became my antagonist in a game of chess.

On Sundays and festival-days we repaired to the venerable church, where, after service, my wife gave some lessons in music to a few of the more talented school children. During the week she attended the girl's school, aiding and overlooking the village mistress, and would sometimes accompany me in my visits to the sick or the afflicted, soothing their sufferings, and consoling them in their sorrows, with that gentle hand and noiseless, unobtrusive tact, which only can be found in woman.

Our villagers were a simple, kind-hearted set of people, fond of their church and their clergy, thankful and grateful to us for whatever kindness they received at our hands; and as a body generally, free from any of the

grosser or more heinous vices. Our life seemed to glide onwards smoothly and happily, like some gentle stream, that meanders along its quiet way, through verdant meadows and shady groves, knowing neither the impetuous fury of the mountain-torrent, nor the destructive rage of the tempest-stirred sea.

One afternoon we all repaired to a little rural fête, with which the vicar had indulged the children of the village-school. We had made a short excursion to the ruins of an old abbey, situated in the vicinity, where our youthful guests partook of a plentiful supply of cakes and tea, after they had wearied themselves with childish pastimes and romps, among the remains of the deserted cloisters. One pretty little girl was a special favourite with my wife, on account of her docility and quickness. On the present occasion, her companions elected her queen of the day, and twined for her a chaplet of daisies, and other wild-flowers, which grew among the venerable ruins. Rachel

thought she would make the child a small present, to heighten the enjoyment of her regal honours, and went home to fetch something suitable, telling me she should speedily return. In the meantime, the vicar and I strolled through the joyous groups talking and laughing a little with each in succession, and recalling to mind our own boyish days and childish pastimes.

Two hours passed away, and my wife did not make her appearance. It was growing late, and the children were preparing to return to the village. Feeling rather anxious to know what had detained her, I hurried on before, and found Rachel pale, dejected, and weeping, with a letter lying opened on the table, which seemed to be the cause of her grief.

“What does all this mean, dearest?” I inquired, somewhat alarmed.

“It means that we are ruined, George,” she replied, handing me the letter.

I ran my eye hastily over the contents, and found that it was from the managing clerk

of my agent, who informed me that his principal having been concerned very much of late with railway speculations, had failed for a large amount, and in the first agony of despair brought on by this event, had put an end to his life. The writer feared that absolutely nothing would be left for the creditors; but he thought it might be better for me to come up to town immediately.

A dull lethargy stole over me, as I perused these unfortunate tidings, and I sat for some minutes holding the letter in my hand, and gazing vacantly before me, utterly benumbed and stupified by intelligence so unexpected and so distressing. From this I was roused by my wife, who, advancing towards me, laid her hand on my shoulder, and endeavoured to smile through her tears.

“Don't look so woe-begone George, dear, or I shall take you for the Knight of the Sorrowful Figure, in good earnest. The money is gone, but I suppose it is God's will it should go, and we must submit to *that*. After all, I dare

say our lot will not be so very hard. God will take care of us darling, as He has hitherto done."

"Rachel," said I, "it is not for myself that I care, but for you my dear one. You who have known so little privation, and are therefore so ill prepared to bear it."

"Do not think of me," she replied, "I shall get on well enough depend upon it, and there are many things in which I might help you. You know I am an excellent needlewoman, and then I can paint, and do fancy work, and make screens, which perhaps will bring us in something, so that we shall not go to the workhouse yet, my dear."

I looked at her as she spoke with the noble, patient heroism of woman's nature, beaming through her earnest eye; and then I prayed God to bless her, and shield her at least from the misfortunes and carking cares of poverty. She sat down by my side, and endeavoured to console me by making light of our misfortune, and by leading my wounded and mortified spirit to

look upwards in calm confidence and hope, to Him whose hand had now descended so heavily upon me. I fell upon my knees, and poured forth my agitated feelings in prayer, my wife kneeling by my side. When I rose, I felt myself both comforted and relieved, while the suggestions of hope which seemed but a few minutes before to have abandoned me entirely, began again to shed their sunshine upon my mind, and to inspire me with activity and energy.

My first step was to ascertain the true nature of our present position, and with this end I took the special train to London, and hastened at once to the house of Mr. Burley, my recent correspondent. He was himself in great distress, having been involved in the speculations of his principal, and being now a sharer in his ruin. He gave me little hope of recovering any of my lost property, and said that even if a dividend could be obtained, the amount must be so small that it would hardly be worth my acceptance. The utmost I could do, therefore,

was to place the matter with my late uncle's solicitor, who condoled with me most sincerely in my misfortune, and promised to rescue as much as possible for us from the wreck. Having thus concluded my business in town, I prepared with a heavy heart for my return home.

During the journey back, I revolved in my mind a countless number of plans for the future. It was quite clear that I must now look wholly to my profession for support, and that I must seek another curacy, since my present one yielded me only thirty pounds a-year. I determined, therefore, to take counsel with the vicar, who I knew, was well acquainted by experience with the vicissitudes of clerical life. I accordingly went direct to his house from the terminus, and laid before him as briefly as possible the necessities of my present position.

He was both surprised and apparently grieved when he understood the real state of my affairs, but agreed with me at once that I

ought to seek some other sphere of duty. He added that though under ordinary circumstances, a previous notice of six months was generally expected before the departure of a curate, he should of course waive that at present, and concluded by offering to do everything in his power to forward my views.

I thanked him sincerely for his kindness, and begged that he would favour me with his advice. He paused a little to think on the matter, and then said :

“Were you an University man I should certainly advise you to try for a country curacy. You could not, indeed, live upon the stipend, but you might eke out your income by taking pupils. As you are not, however, a graduate, it would be very doubtful if you could get any, since so many clergymen who have taken honours at the Universities are obliged to support themselves in this way. In fact, I know at present several men of first-rate abilities, who, although graduates, are giving lessons in Latin and Greck, and even in writing and geography

at private schools. To be obliged indeed to depend upon a curacy alone for support, is to have starvation like the sword of Damocles perpetually hanging over your head."

"Might not I make an application to some of the bishops?" I suggested, "who have small incumbencies or perpetual curacies in their gifts. I have served the Church for many years abroad, until my health would not allow me to serve her any longer; I have spent from first to last about a thousand pounds of my own property in eking out the scanty income which I have always received, and it does appear to me that under these circumstances I may with propriety lay some claim to episcopal consideration."

"Unhappily," said the Vicar, sadly, "there are already hundreds, perhaps thousands in your case who have never since they were ordained been able to get even the third part of the stipend which you obtained when a Missionary abroad. The incumbencies and perpetual curacies in the gift of the bishops are comparatively few; and at each vacancy there are nume-

rous claimants, so that you would have but little chance among such a crowd."

"Then what can you advise me to do?" said I, despairingly.

"I think," replied the Vicar, "that London after all would be the best place under present circumstances; and I will write a line or two to an old College friend, who may be able to direct you better than I can. A man of talent and ability has so many more resources to draw upon in the metropolis than in the country; and as new churches are being erected there perpetually, you may run some chance of obtaining promotion. Moreover, most of the curacies are worth one hundred a-year, while in the country you would in many instances receive only fifty pounds or eighty pounds, and have either to keep a horse out of your scanty means, or weary yourself to death in walking from one village to another, as there is generally more than one church to serve. Indeed, I once knew a man who had four, and two of them six miles apart."

“But are not such cases disgraceful to a Church which is considered the richest in the world?”

“They are, but what remedy is there? You cannot blame the incumbent, who it may be receives about fifty pounds annually himself that he only pays his curate the same sum. A large proportion, perhaps the largest, of the livings in England are under one hundred a-year; and even if you were to make a re-distribution of the Church property, it would hardly give one hundred and sixty pounds to each individual clergyman.”

“Then you think such a state of things absolutely incurable?”

“I think it would require one wiser than me to act as the physician. Still much more might be done. For instance, the bishops, the wealthier livings and perpetual curacies might contribute a certain portion of their income towards the formation of a general fund, out of which clergymen depending solely upon their profession for support could derive a small annual addition

to their stipends. Many of the clergy have independent means of their own, and therefore would not require the aid of this fund, which should not assist those who are willing by pupils or in any other way to supply the deficiency in their income."

The reader may feel surprised that at such a time I should have stood so long discussing matters of a general nature ; but this conversation arose out of my present difficulty, and to say the truth I was desirous of prolonging the time, and shrank in idea even from the necessary yet painful task of entering my once loved and cherished little cottage as a messenger of gloomy tidings.

I walked mournfully along the pathway which led from the Vicarage to our abode, and meditated with downcast eyes on the prospects before me. The income of a curacy would never support us ; pupils could not be obtained, and I did not know what to substitute in their place. Walsingham of course might have assisted me, but his last letter conveyed the intelligence that he and his son were projecting

a trip to China ; and, moreover, I could not bear the idea of becoming a burden upon his generosity. Too much engrossed with my reflections to heed where I was going, I stumbled over some obstacle in the path ; and in recovering myself almost involuntarily turned my eyes upwards. A gay smiling aspect was on the face of nature. The waters of the little rivulet sparkled brightly in the sunshine, and the birds, hopping hither and thither in quest of food, chirruped cheerfully on its bank. One of them looked up in my face, as if in triumph at his success in bearing off unaided a large worm. The sight recalled to my memory the comforting words :

“ Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ?”

I felt a sting of self-reproach, that I had nourished even a momentary distrust of the protecting care of my heavenly Father ; and for the first time since our misfortune I met Rachel with a placid aspect and unruffled brow.

CHAPTER IX.

DURING the next fortnight we were busily engaged in making arrangements for our departure. The cottage was readily taken off our hands by the owner, and our little furniture soon found purchasers. Tears came into my wife's eyes as she regarded for the last time the flowers which she had planted and tended with such assiduous care, while I felt a pang at parting with some of my old cherished volumes, which the good vicar purchased from me, and for which he would insist upon paying a most extravagant price. The children flocked crying round my wife, and entreated her not to leave

them, while some of the parishioners whom we had known more intimately accompanied us to the train. We were perfectly overloaded with presents of all kinds, and could scarcely find room for the cheeses, fruit, and home-cured bacon which the simple kindness of these good people forced upon us. The vicar went with us one stage of our journey, and was visibly affected when we bade each other farewell. At parting, he begged that I would accept of a small volume which he gave me, packed up in brown paper, as a slight memorial of our friendship, and charging me to let him know from time to time how I got on, he took his departure.

When we were near our journey's end, I opened the parcel, which I found contained a volume of George Herbert's poems, and a letter enclosing a note for fifty pounds, that the writer begged me to accept as a loan until circumstances should render its repayment perfectly convenient. As I knew that to return this would highly disoblige him, I determined to retain it for the present, the more especially as

our own stock of ready money amounted to very little.

After a long and weary pilgrimage through the streets of London in quest of lodgings, we engaged two rooms in the New North Road, Hoxton, at the moderate rental of twelve shillings a week. The people of the house were a respectable old couple of quiet habits, and upon the whole we found ourselves more comfortable than perhaps we could have anticipated. It is true we had no flower-garden to look down upon from our little bed-room window, which opened upon a low, marshy field, covered with brick-kilns ; but we soon learned to laugh at our privations, and rather to enjoy our change of fortune than to fret over it. In fact, my wife said that everything was so novel and so amusing to her, that she would not for the world have missed the opportunity of seeing such a new phase of social life. There is indeed more power over misfortune exercised by novelty than many of us are aware of.

From the first moment of my arrival in town,

I had been considering how to obtain a curacy. I did not like to apply to the clerical agents a second time, but determined to have recourse to the advertisements in the different Church newspapers. After a long interval of patient expectation, I discovered one that I thought would suit my purpose, and lost no time in repairing to the address indicated. It was a large house near one of the squares, and a handsome carriage was standing before the door. On the brass plate I read, inscribed in large characters, the name of the Rev. Montague Doldrum. My timid knock had to be repeated a second time before its sound reached the ears of a portly domestic, who seemed to have been recently aroused from his slumbers in a comfortable leathern chair to the right of the hall, in which I was now standing, and where I was allowed to wait until the porter had communicated with his august master. By and bye he returned to say that Mr. Doldrum would speak to me at once, and after telling me to go up-stairs and take the first door to the left, he descended to

the lower regions, where I heard him complain of the hardship of "being woke up at this time o' day to open the door to one of them curates, who, poor wretches, don't get nothink equal to a bishop's gamekeeper."

Mr. Doldrum was a stern-looking man, with a condescending politeness which would have frozen the loquacity of the most talkative Frenchman in ten seconds. He surveyed me from top to toe with the air of a prince, and having intimated, through the conjoint medium of a nod and a wave of the hand that I might sit down, he said :

"I suppose you are the young man who has come about the curate's place?"

I bowed.

"I am very particular about my curates," continued Mr. Doldrum, "I don't mean so much with respect to their morals and piety, these of course every decent clergyman possesses, but as to their manners and gentlemanly deportment. Lady Charlotte—Lady Charlotte is my wife."

He paused mercifully for a few minutes to allow me to recover from this overwhelming piece of intelligence, and then resumed.

“My last curate left because Lady Charlotte thought that he ought to put on three white cravats a day, which he objected to on account of the smallness of his salary. But curates now-a-days are so unreasonable.”

As he seemed to expect some remark from me in reply to this speech, I ventured to inquire into the nature of the duties expected of me, and whether they would allow of my taking pupils? A slight frown crossed the brow of Mr. Doldrum, and he replied in a tone as nearly approaching to sarcastic as he could make it.

“You will read the morning-prayers every day at eight. I have them because Lady Charlotte thinks it proper that I should follow the example of Mr. Warrenville, Lord Stainsborough’s son, who is the rector of the adjacent parish; but my state of health and many infirmities prevent my attending. Then you will

have the Wednesday Evening Lecture, which Lady Charlotte's aunt, who is evangelical, would disinherit us if I gave up, two sermons on Sundays, litany on Wednesday and Friday at eleven, workhouse, schools, infirmary, burials, baptisms, and the marriages of the lower class, which are numerous, on the other days of the week; and if, after you have done all this, you can get pupils and attend to them, you are welcome to take them."

I sat aghast at this enumeration of labours, which would have given ample employment to two clergymen at least, and Mr. Doldrum proceeded to inquire whether I was married.

"I hope," he continued, "that your wife is a presentable person, and not so vulgar as many curates' wives are. Lady Charlotte's views on this subject are very strict. But, by the way, there is one question which I forgot to ask, though it is but too necessary in these levelling times. You are of course a graduate of one of the Universities?"

My answer in the negative made Mr. Dol-

drum fall back in his chair, and I left him too much astonished to utter a word, or even to make a gesture in reply to my farewell salutation. The fat porter, who had resumed his easy chair in the hall, stared apathetically at me over the edge of the 'Times' as I walked by him, but allowed me to open the door for myself. It was quite a relief to get into the open air; and when I passed the sweeper at the crossing, I felt that it would be much better to change places with him than become for any consideration, the clerical serf of the Reverend Montague Doldrum and of the Lady Charlotte, his wife.

In justice to my brethren of the clergy, I must here protest against the foregoing portrait being considered as a type of the incumbents of the Anglican Church in general. The Doldrums are very rare now-a-days, and it is to be hoped that in a few years the race will be extinct altogether. The other clergymen that I saw during the time I was seeking for a curacy, among whom were some as eminent for their

high birth and exalted position as for their earnest piety and indefatigable zeal, received me in every instance with a kindness which I can only characterize as being strictly and truly paternal; but to my great disappointment, I always found that my call had been already forestalled by a crowd of applicants. One clergyman showed me about forty letters which he had received in the course of the morning, and another was just preparing an advertisement to the effect that the communications forwarded him were too numerous to be replied to.

I directed my steps homewards, dispirited and discouraged by my want of success, and could not help regarding with something like envy the gay and luxurious equipages which passed me on my way back. There were their elegant occupants smiling and chatting, and looking as if want and poverty had never even in imagination crossed their prosperous path—the thoughtless and happy children of good fortune, who never seemed to grow weary

of loading them with her benefits. My attention was particularly rivetted by one carriage, in which sat a man whom I knew by sight, and of whom I had heard a considerable amount of evil by report. Narrow-minded, ignorant and brutal, he had attained his present position, it was said, by the most grinding exaction, and by the unflinching and rigorous oppression of his miserable dependents. The world's voice described him as an ignoble and worthless sensualist, who, notwithstanding his gilded exterior, and the sums he lavished on his bestial pleasures, was despised and shunned by all right-minded men. Yet there he reclined on his soft, stuffed cushions, talking to a couple of boon companions, who sat opposite, and revelling in the height of coarse merriment and vulgar enjoyment. And as I thought of our own dark prospects and daily necessities, contrasted with this man's bloated luxury, and his unlimited control over all the appliances of worldly comfort, sentiments arose in my mind very similar to those expressed

by the Psalmist, when he describes himself as "being envious at the foolish, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked."

It required some serious reflection, and a considerable amount of stern self-monition, before I could calm and purify the rebellious emotions which were springing up in my breast. The wealthy Christian who, from his gilded saloon and eider-down cushions, preaches to his poorer brother the duty of submission and obedience to the Divine will, little knows or appreciates the difficulty of that obligation which he enunciates, and which, under different circumstances, even he might shrink from practising. Yet I cannot but own that I have been the better for the lesson, severe though it was. It has taught me, at least, to sympathise with and make allowances for the impatient and unreasonable complaints of poor human nature, when pressed hard by calamity and trouble; and has led me, I hope, to refrain from mocking the afflictions of the wretched by dictating to them a cant of resig-

nation as impious as it is hollow and insincere.

Of my subsequent trials, until I at last obtained a curacy, I shall say little. It may suffice to remark that, although we contrived by hard struggles to pay our rent, and to keep up a decent and respectable appearance, we were obliged to compensate for this by privations of another kind. A mutton-chop or a small steak was a luxury too valuable to be enjoyed oftener than once a-week, and sometimes we had even to dispense with this; yet my wife bore up nobly against all these troubles, and showed a simple trust in God, and an heroic constancy which I frequently despaired of ever being able to imitate.

Were these Memoirs only intended as the records of my own personal doings, I should probably be tempted to pass over many things which, to the ordinary reader, may seem trivial and mean. But I would fain nourish a hope that the information thus supplied may lead to fresh efforts and exertions on behalf of a class

of men, than whom none suffer more severely from the vicissitudes of life. The poor clergyman has not only to contend with the ordinary privations and slights of poverty, to which education and refinement have made his mind doubly susceptible, but he is linked for life to a position which neither human nor divine laws allow him to abandon. The poverty-stricken barrister, officer, or physician, may seek in another calling the success which Providence has denied them in their present occupation, and will always feel that there are many other steps for them up the ladder of fortune; but the clergyman is fettered on every side by restrictions, which it would be needless to do more than allude to. The scholastic profession, indeed, offers some openings; but here the competition is immense, and capital a *sine quâ non*.

For literature, a degree of talent and information is required which a zealous and pious priest may well be excused if he does not possess, and even if he could lay claim to it, failure

is not impossible. True, there exist societies for the relief of necessitous clergymen, of whose benevolent operations I can never speak but with the utmost gratitude and respect; but their liberality must necessarily be spread over so many claims, that the donations to individuals are but as a drop in the ocean. And when we consider the pain which a refined and ingenuous spirit experiences from being exposed to the ordeal of examinations and inquiries which, however imperative, and kindly, and delicately conducted, must leave an indelible sense of degrading obligation on the mind of the applicant, we cannot be reasonably surprised if many shrink from exposing the sores of poverty even to a friendly eye, and prefer to bear their burden alone and unsympathised with, though the canker worms of sorrow and disappointment are gnawing at their heart-strings.

One morning, as I was on my way to the newspaper office, where, for a trifling pecuniary consideration, I was allowed to glance at the

different journals, my arm was suddenly seized from behind, and my name pronounced by a familiar voice, from the tone of which I had no difficulty in recognising Mr. Ranson. He was very cordial and friendly; so much so indeed, that I judged I might in some measure confide to him my present condition, and ascertain from him whether I could possibly find some occupation in London which would be compatible with my feelings and calling. When in Egypt, he led me to suppose that he had some connection with a publishing firm in Paternoster Row, and I thought it not unlikely that I might hear of some translating or editorial work which would, at least for the present, enable me to keep "the wolf from the door."

"You will have some difficulty in obtaining translation work, I think," said Ranson, after he had condoled with me very kindly on my recent misfortunes. "Every body now-a-days is a linguist, and even the National school-boys, I suppose, will soon have their French and German professors, and learn to bother the

visiting curate with Fichté and Baür. No, my dear Sir, take my advice, and stick to originality. Give us something that is the fruit of your own brain. What do you say now to manufacturing jokes and conundrums?"

"I am afraid I have no ability for that style of composition."

"It is as easy as possible when you understand the knack of it," said Mr. Ranson, complacently. "Get a dictionary of synonymes and an old Joe Miller, and work away. Why I have knocked off some score in the course of a single morning, and as I send them to different journals, I make rather a good thing of it. Between ourselves, I supply all the puns for the —— ; only let that go no further."

As, however, the manufacture of puns was not suitable to my calling nor to my taste, I suggested that, perhaps, I might find employment in some other department of literature.

"Why not attempt travels?" said Mr. Ranson. "I have done so with some success,

witness my book on Egypt, called 'The Pin and the Pyramid.' "

"Excuse me," I observed, "but I do not quite see the analogy between the two."

"They both begin with the same letter," said Mr. Ranson, "and both have a point. But here we are at my lodgings; pray walk up, and I will show you my book."

We ascended the stairs, and he ushered me into a small parlour strewed with papers and literary lumber of all kinds. He had some difficulty in discovering a copy of his work, but was at last successful, and placed in my hand an octavo volume garnished with a coloured portrait of the author clad in Eastern costume, and riding upon a very ferocious-looking dromedary. As I noted the bushy beard and curling moustache of the portrait, I could not avoid glancing at the peculiarly smooth and hairless chin of the original. Mr. Ranson seemed to divine my thoughts, for he coloured slightly, and said with a sort of affected laugh:

"Ah, I suppose you are rather astonished at

the fine beard they have given me, but that was my friend the artist's doing; and besides, I thought it would look more oriental, you know."

I turned over the leaves of the book and came upon the following passage:

"The East is indeed a region of scenic enchantment, abounding in objects replete with gorgeous beauty, and breathing forth the most resistless fascination. The mind of the traveller is overwhelmed with regret and sorrow when he quits a locality which surpasses the most poetical illusions of the most fervid imagination, and tinges his recollections with the brilliant colouring and fairy magnificence of an Arabian tale. I stood motionless at the stern as our vessel receded from these Paradisal shores, contemplating to the last the light which gleamed from the Fanal of Bab el din, and only retired because I found it necessary to dry the pocket-handkerchief, which had become perfectly saturated with my tears."

Mr. Ranson was looking over my shoulder, and remarked:

“There, I flatter myself that is something like writing, don’t you think so?”

“But,” said I, “Mr. Ranson, I thought you did not much admire the East. You told me at Cairo that nothing would please you better than to get back again to England. I had no idea you were nourishing all the time such fervid admiration in secret.”

“Well, I confess,” was his reply, “I did not find it very agreeable. But the fact is, people generally have settled that the East is a region of romance, and few care to undeceive them. Those who take the other course, have commonly made a point of turning everything they saw into ridicule, which I don’t exactly think right.”

“No more do I. In fact, I consider it the mark of a little mind, or of a sour and ill-natured disposition, to strive to diminish the reverence which men of right principles will always feel towards localities, rife with the associations stamped upon their soil by noble actions and great and arduous enterprises. If, as Johnson says, we cannot envy the man who could stand

on Marathon without emotion, we can scarcely help treating with contempt a writer who visits the scenes consecrated to the memory of man's redemption, merely to make them the point of a worthless jest. But still I think that exaggerated enthusiasm may have its dangers too."

"Perhaps so," replied Ranson, "but to return to our former subject. Your remarks induce me to think that perhaps something in the reviewing line would suit you. If therefore, you will come with me, I can introduce you to the editor of the 'Scourge,' who may, perhaps, consent to receive you as an occasional contributor."

We were lucky enough to find the editor of the "Scourge" in his office, and still more fortunate in securing his promise of assistance. He made a long address to me on the importance of the art of criticism, and deplored the lukewarm leniency of certain journals, which fostered what he termed "the exuberance of literary mediocrity." There was something true

in all this, but I soon began to discover that criticism in the mind of the editor of the "Scourge" implied unsparing ridicule and savage abuse. An author was literally to be "cut up," and his "disjecta membra" impaled for the edification and terror of all future delinquents. No pains were to be taken to separate the ore from the dross, or, while pointing out defects, to instruct the erring in the art of writing well. It seemed as if the aim and object of the "Scourge" was rather to crush a man they did not like, or to drive him despairing from the arena, than to amend his defects by sound and judicious advice, or to endeavour by a show of kindness and encouragement to induce him to correct those faults which were perhaps more the result of inadvertency or inexperience, than of blind ignorance, or of wilful incompetence.

My connection with the "Scourge" was not long-lived. I could not prevail upon myself to treat gentlemen and scholars with abusive vulgarity, or to use the rhetoric of Billingsgate to men who were probably cleverer than myself.

A poor author had always been in my eyes a sacred object, and when in imagination I pictured him struggling with difficulties which none could realize better than myself, and thought that by a few lines of ill-natured satire, I might be depriving a sick wife of any little luxury, or some motherless children of their daily bread, I could not prevail upon myself to write with that slashing vigour which the editor of the "Scourge" thought indispensable to a true critic. Poor authors, indeed, were his favourite game, for no one could eulogize with such florid servility the productions of the wealthy and powerful. He perfectly reversed the old Roman maxim :

"Parcere victis et debellare superbis."

Very soon I received an intimation from the office that my services would no longer be required, and this affected me the less because I had just heard of a curacy which seemed likely to suit. I lost no time in calling upon the incumbent, who, I was informed, resided in Enby

Lane, near Whitechapel. It was with considerable difficulty that I discovered the parsonage, towards which I had to wend my way through narrow streets, with an atmosphere that exhaled more repulsive odours than had ever crossed my nostrils even in the East.

Each habitation seemed in the last stage of dirt and decay, while stagnant streams, reeking with the fumes of disease and death, rolled on their putrid waters at the edge of the narrow pavement of about two feet in width, that separated them from the entrances of the houses. Here and there an open door exposed to view a dilapidated staircase or a small back court, more abominable in its filth and smells than even the street itself. The people appeared to be suited to their abodes, if indeed beings with immortal souls can be said without impiety to be suited to such earthly Pandemoniums. They were a gaunt, haggard race, more repulsive than castor oil-anointed Nubians, and less informed than them, perhaps, as to the great duties of religion.

The women seemed void of every tender and

feminine quality that could render them capable of discharging the great duties of mothers and wives ; while in the brutal features of the men, their scowling brows, and the dull idealess expression of their inflamed and sunken eyes, one might read the external tokens of confirmed debauchery and habitual crime. There were children too with haggard care-worn features, and looks rendered watchful and vigilant by the frequent expectation of unmerited and pitiless stripes. Here one, almost an infant in years, tottered under a baby nearly as tall as herself, with a dull leaden complexion and heavy sleepy air, caused by the constant administration of soporific drugs. And there a boy that could scarcely walk, was writhing under the repeated blows and kicks of a merciless ruffian who, with the bravery of intoxication, dared any of the surrounding crowd to interfere between him and his child.

My heart sickened at the sight of all this misery. Surely if anything could make Christians ashamed of their selfish divisions and

party feuds, it should be the recollection that while they are disputing about non-essentials—countless thousands for whom Christ died are dwelling in this Christian land, immersed in worse than Pagan ignorance, and practising a degree of brutality and violence towards even their own flesh and blood, from which the generality of Pagans would recoil with disgust.

The parsonage house was built on an open space of waste ground, perhaps the last remnant of the large common that had formerly existed here, but was now covered with habitations. At the back was a small garden, the privacy of which was amply secured by the height of the brick-walls enclosing it, though these defences were not proof against the vapours arising from the numerous heaps of rubbish that had been deposited at their base.

The house itself was a plain square building of brick, exhibiting in the formation of every window, door, and room, the partiality of the architect for a concurrence of right angles. A slatternly maid-servant opened the door, on the

brass-plate of which I had previously read the name of the "Rev. L. Pemberton," and ushered me into a small room, intended originally, doubtless, for a study. At present, however, it contained only a few worn and battered volumes lying in disorder upon three unpainted deal shelves, which were suspended from two rusty nails by means of red twine. The study carpet had evidently long since abandoned any pretensions to a distinctive colour; and when I looked round for a seat, I could perceive only two chairs flanking a deal table, the material of which was almost concealed by a worn-out cover of green baize.

I had some reluctance to trust myself to either of the unsafe supporters, and therefore took up my position by the square window which opened on a small quadrangular garden. Accustomed as I had been so recently to the luxurious flowers and foliage of the East, I could not but remark the cheerless aspect of the poor plants before me, which with heads hanging down, and leaves fast withering, seemed to be carrying

on a hopeless struggle with the numerous weeds that clustered round them, and choked their growth. The scene suggested to my mind a fanciful comparison between the garden and the district, both being places where evil weeds flourished luxuriantly under the congenial influence of a polluted atmosphere.

My reflections were soon interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Pemberton, the perpetual curate of St. Austin's, in the district of Shadwell Green, as I learned from a printed paper lying on the study table. He was a man in the prime of life, and evidently not unacquainted with its troubles. His pale and thin features seemed to have caught the sallow anxious appearance which distinguished most of the people I had met in the neighbouring streets. He begged me to sit down; and after a few preliminaries, we plunged at once "in medias res," and entered upon the subject of the interview.

The proceeds of his incumbency, Mr. Pemberton said, amounted to about one hundred

and fifty pounds a year, out of which, fifty at least were set apart for charitable purposes. Owing to the poverty of the district, there was great distress, while the people could not contribute anything, nor was it easy to approach the poorer sort, except as the ministrant to their temporal wants.

“Under these circumstances,” continued he, “I must have carried on my solitary work alone and unaided, had not the bishop kindly interested himself with the —— Society, and procured for me the annual grant of one hundred pounds for an assistant, which sum I can now offer you, if you would like to take a curacy in such a place as this.”

I thought over the matter a few minutes, and at last determined on accepting the post; but being rather anxious about apartments, on account of my wife, I asked Mr. Pemberton where I could lodge, as there seemed no decent house in the whole district.

“You are welcome to part of the Parsonage,” he replied, “as it is larger than I require, or

indeed than I have the means of furnishing. My wife will be delighted with the society of Mrs. Singleton, and I think you will be quiet enough, as we have but one little girl left now."

The mention of his child seemed to excite some painful remembrance, for his lip quivered, and he turned to the window. After remaining silent for a few minutes, he asked me to walk into the front room, where I was introduced to Mrs. Pemberton, a lady of about the same age as her husband.

She welcomed me with simple and unaffected kindness, and hoped, like Mr. Pemberton, that we would take up our abode at the Parsonage, "where," she added, "Mrs. Singleton's society will be very welcome to me, as we have no friends in town, and no means of entertaining them if we had, so that I scarcely ever see any person with whom I can converse familiarly."

The room in which we were sitting contained very few articles of furniture, and their appearance was so very shabby, that I was surprised

to observe over the mantel-piece an elegantly framed picture, representing two little girls seated together on a mossy bank, with a country landscape in the back ground.

“That is one of our relics, Mr. Singleton,” said Mrs. Pemberton, with a sad smile. “Those are the two dear children whom we lost soon after we came here. It was taken when Lawrence was curate of Eversleigh, that little village you see in the back-ground, and was presented to us by an artist of our acquaintance who lived there, and whom my husband had attended in his sickness. Poor Emma and Kate did not long survive the change from the fresh country air of Eversleigh. They pined away here, and we were not rich enough to afford a trip to the sea-side, though the doctor said it might have saved their lives.”

The remembrance was too much for the mother, and she wept.

“Do not distress yourself, darling,” said Mr. Pemberton affectionately, as he placed his arm

on his wife's shoulder, and whispered some words of consolation.

I saw that she was struggling with the sad memories of by-gone days, and as it was no scene for a mere acquaintance to witness, I at once took my departure.

On my way home, I did not cease wondering at that excitable and vagrant benevolence which can only be moved by the sorrows of individuals ten thousand miles away, as well as that species of caste compassion which vigorously excludes, from a share in its charity, any individual who does not wear a flannel jacket and corduroys. There are hundreds—perhaps thousands—in this metropolis whose misfortunes are aggravated by the delicacy and refinement which not only increase the miseries of their position, but withhold them from soliciting assistance or relief. The daughters and widows of clergymen, the families of ruined merchants and professional men, whose incomes cease with their lives, are often found enduring an amount of wretchedness, which it is always

hard to discover, and difficult to relieve. Yet, perhaps, if benevolence would give itself a little trouble, and keep its ears open a little more, something might be effected even for these. This virtue, I apprehend, when in healthy exercise, does not content itself with merely subscribing its guinea, or with ministering to the necessities of the common beggar. It investigates, it searches into, and pursues distress through every hole and corner till it has unearthed it, and then it relieves as if conscious that it is only aiding a poor brother or sister to bear the common burden, and rather thanks them for helping it to work out its own share of the great responsibility, than considers them as fettered from henceforth by the icy chains of indissoluble obligation.

CHAPTER X.

THE district of Shadwell Green presented, about thirty years ago, a painful specimen of the neglect and irreligious indifference of the last century. One solitary church with two clergymen attached to it, was the sole provision made for the spiritual necessities of seventy thousand immortal beings, sunk for the most part in the lowest abysses of debauchery and crime. The brutal pastimes which had long been driven out of more civilized parts of the country and the metropolis, and were beginning to be regarded even by antiquaries as things out of date, and therefore worthy of their study and attention, found here their last home and

asylum. Decent people shunned the locality as they would have shunned the pestilence, and regarded a walk through it as an undertaking replete with peril to both pocket and person.

At length an eminent merchant turned his attention to this neglected region, and being fortunate enough to secure the co-operation and support of one of the most active and energetic bishops on the bench, succeeded in erecting there a number of churches and schools, which although lamentably inadequate to the necessity they were designed to supply, have been the means of effecting a wonderful amelioration in the condition of those whose squalid dwellings encircle them. The churches were soon filled, and the schools crowded with children, very much to the disappointment of sundry far-sighted persons, who had foretold the utter failure of the whole scheme, and denounced it as the self-exalting policy of an Episcopal Hildebrand.

Mr. Pemberton had been for five years labouring hard among the almost savage race by which he was surrounded. The poor under-

stand and appreciate self-denial, and when they saw this poor clergyman living in their midst, and although for his station as indigent as themselves, yet relieving their distress out of his scanty income, they felt his actions were a practical evidence, that he believed the doctrines he taught, and therefore deemed that after all there might be some truth in them. They flocked to his church in great numbers, and gladly welcomed his pastoral visits. A new generation, recruited continually from the schools, was growing up in habits of cleanliness, order and industry—their influence is now making itself felt even by the older people, and soon with a few more churches, many more instructors, and the introduction of prudent sanitary measures, we may hope that Shadwell Green will cease to be a synonyme for low vice, unmanly cruelty, and brutal debauchery.

In three days time we were settled in the Parsonage, and had made our arrangements for the future. We were all to have a common table, and each family was to contribute a

certain monthly sum towards the supply of it. Our fare was meagre enough, and could hardly be surpassed by the provisions doled out in the most rigid conventual establishment. Yet we were happy and contented. An affection, almost sisterly, had sprung up between the two ladies, while Pemberton and I regarded each other as brothers, not only in name and profession, but in truth and reality.

Of all the virtues which poverty has generated or developed, and they are not a few, the most remarkable is a readiness to sympathise with, and assist persons who are tottering under the same burden as ourselves. Those who have lived among the poor will be struck by the prompt and unselfish manner in which one neighbour will help another, though the aid given may involve no small share of discomfort to him or her who affords it. A woman will traverse half London on an errand for her sick friend, or take charge of a fractious and squaling child for whole days together. I have met indeed with many more cases of real and dis-

interested kindness among the extreme poor, than among the rich or the respectable classes of society. Hollow flatteries and honeyed phrases seem, too often with these latter, to act as the substitute for that earnest and genuine sympathy which shows its concern rudely and coarsely, perhaps, but at least means what it says and embodies its professions in unmistakable actions.

Pemberton was a man of considerable attainments, and possessed a fluency and eloquence in preaching which rendered his discourse both attractive and useful. His scholarship too was of no mean order, and he showed me the copy of a work he had published on the early Liturgies, enriched with original dissertations that might have done honour to a Bingham or a Pearson. He got little, however, by it, except a certain short and evanescent reputation, which like some airy bubble vanished as soon as it was full blown. The learned world was indeed pleased for a few weeks to vouchsafe to the book that species of semi-contemptuous

patronage, which any attempt to illustrate Christian antiquities always meets with in this country, a circumstance exhibiting rather a painful contrast to the attention bestowed on such researches in Germany and elsewhere; but a more important inquiry soon arose, which diverted the interest into another channel. A learned man had written a very learned treatise on the form of Nebuchadnezzar's slippers, said to have been handed down to posterity in a Cuneiform inscription. Ordinary readers thought it a dull affair, but it became by some means or other the rage, and an eminent boot-maker at the West End nearly made his fortune by devising a new kind of shoe, entitled the "Nebuchadnezzar." Poor Pemberton's treatise was, of course, put on the shelf, and though the publisher did not lose by the transaction, he was unable to afford even the smallest sum to the author as a recompense for the time, learning and ingenuity lavished on his ill-requited undertaking.

One could hardly have expected to have

found such a man starving in such a neighbourhood. In the Roman Communion he would, perhaps, have been a portly, well-fed Benedictine; among the Dissenters he might have had a large and well-filled chapel, or the headship of a college. At any rate, he could not have been worse off than where he was. Yet Pemberton never spoke of his hardships, and even felt vexed if any one alluded to them. He thought that such remarks nourished dissatisfaction without leading to reform, and he was quite willing to be a martyr, provided his Church could be saved any scandal. Anglicanism, indeed, was a passion with him. It was almost amusing to mark the deep veneration, the simple, child-like enthusiasm with which he would mention the names of Hooker, Andrews, Taylor, and Bull, or pause to contemplate with a kindling eye the portraits of some of those great divines who flourished in the golden age of English Theology. To hear him talk of that period, you might have imagined you were listening to one of the old rectors or vicars that the pious

Puritans, whom it is now so much the fashion to admire, turned out with their wives and families to starve. Yet, with all this, he was no narrow-minded bigot. You never heard from his lips those bitter diatribes against Dissenters, which with some seem to be considered the essence of true churchmanship. Though he would not have surrendered one jot, or one tittle of the Anglican institutions, even if death had been the penalty of non-compliance, he could think charitably and kindly of those who differed from them.

“We must not confuse,” he said, one day to me, “the modern Dissenter with the fierce, intolerant Puritan of Charles’ time, or charge upon him the fault of a schism which all Christians must equally deplore. Many earnest minded and good men are Dissenters, because the prejudices of family religion and early education have too powerful an influence over them to be cast off at once. Others, again, have a strong and exaggerated sense of those defects in the practical administration of our

Church, which grieve many zealous Churchmen among ourselves. Want of zeal, and that kind of decent coldness which seems at all times to have been fatal to our communion, may account for the secession of hundreds in past times. After all, Dissent is decreasing, and I believe will decrease yearly, in proportion to the zeal and energy displayed by our clergy. In fact, remove the fetters of poverty which now depress the spirits, and cramp the activity of many a deserving clergyman; let our Presbyters feel that their duty is to attend exclusively to the ministry of the Word, and not to devote the best portion of their time to school-keeping and pupilising, and Dissent could hardly survive the increased impetus which such a reform would give to the efforts of Churchmen."

"Still," said I, "you could hardly expect men to give up those schools and pupils which are now their chief means of subsistence."

"It would be an act of the most flagrant injustice to demand it of them. The members of the Church of England are bound to see

that every one of their instructors is properly remunerated, before they can ask any renunciation of this sort. And knowing, as I do, the feelings of the majority of the clergy so employed, I am convinced that they would gladly hail the prospect of a release from labours and pursuits which must in a great measure abstract their minds from the great duties of their calling."

"And how would you propose to raise the funds for this?"

"Surely, if the Methodists, a body recruited principally from the humble classes of society, can maintain their Ministers in a position far superior in comfort and freedom from pecuniary difficulties to that occupied by thousands of Anglican clergymen, we who number among us the noble and the wealthy of the land, ought not to raise any obstacles on that score. What the Methodists do, we can surely perform."

"And do you believe that clerical distress is so widely extended as is imagined?"

"I think even, that it is considerably under-

rated, and that hundreds of our brethren are undergoing all the miseries of semi-starvation.”

“But may not much of this distress be attributed to imprudent marriages, want of economy, and so forth.”

“I think not. In the first place, what right have you to debar a clergyman from marrying, when the Canons of the Church, and the dictates of common sense, both declare the marriage of the clergy to be not only lawful, but preventive of the many disgraceful scandals too frequent in another communion. If the celibacy of the ministers of religion is desirable, come forward and tell them so, as the Church of Rome does at the time of ordination, and then every one knows what he has to expect. But do not permit and encourage a man to marry, and then blame him for marrying. I would rather, indeed, trust to a celibacy that sprang from religious motives, than from pounds, shillings, and pence considerations. Again as to economy. Can a family of six or seven people live decently, and as the family of a clergyman ought to live,

on eighty pounds a year? Why it is little more than four shillings a day, and you talk of economy! The thing is absurd.”

“But there are very active and liberal societies established for the relief of the poorer clergy.”

“There are, and God forbid that I should seem to underrate or to censure their truly charitable and Christian exertions. But they can only afford to give small sums, so extensive is the destitution, and so many the claimants. What real help to a struggling family is an additional ten or fifteen pounds a year?”

“Yet, perhaps, the abilities of some persons may be of such inferior description, as deservedly to close to them the gate of promotion. In times like these, it is particularly desirable that the Church’s defenders should be men of learning and ability, since intellectual more than moral error is perhaps the besetting sin of the age.”

“Then why do the bishops admit such men into the Church in the first instance. Let

them be civilly dismissed when they present themselves for ordination, and sent to the factory, the counting-house, or the plough. If a blockhead be intolerable as a rector, he surely is not fit for a curate, especially since, in the latter capacity, he has generally the largest amount of work to perform. Besides, what kind of talent do you want? May not a man be a true successor of the fishermen of Galilee, although he is unable to make good Latin verses, and is not versed in the philosophy and subtleties of a defunct paganism? Look at the early fathers and ancient bishops who, next to the apostles, were the converters of the world. Almost all of them were ignorant of Hebrew, and most of the Westerns did not even know Greek, although it was then as vernacular as French is now. Besides, if the prizes of the Church are always the reward of talent, how is it that some whom I could name have so large a share of them? They are quite innocent of anything of the kind, I am sure."

Among the members of our congregation,

whom I used more specially to visit and converse with, was a retired veteran, who had been present in almost every battle of the Peninsular War, and now supported himself by making bullets for a celebrated gun manufacturer in —— Street. I had been attracted in the first instance by his straight, upright figure, and by the measured and ceremonious manner in which he made the responses at church. I soon found out that the inattentive urchins in his vicinity had a great dread of “Muster Jobson,” and feared him more than even the schoolmaster himself. One Sunday morning I missed him from his place, and the noises of all kinds which proceeded from the hitherto quiet corner, caused his absence to be sensibly felt. In the evening he came, and the effect of his presence on his youthful neighbours was too marked to escape attention. I felt interested in the old soldier, and after a few visits we grew very intimate.

His two little rooms were always neat and clean, for during his campaigns he had acquired

many of the mysteries of the housemaid's art. He had been an officer's servant during his military career, and picqued himself upon being able to cook and make a bed "better, Sir, than any woman under the sun." His old musket, and neatly pipe-clayed belts, were suspended in his sitting-room, and one of his chief amusements was to polish and clean these relics of a more stirring time. A few coloured wood-cuts of well-known battles, decorated the walls, while over the chimney-piece, in a handsome frame, was a large copper-plate engraving of "the Duke," on which the old soldier had expended nearly the whole of a week's wages. He rarely read anything but the Bible and Prayer-book, which he said were "the best manuals for soul-exercise he ever knew, or cared to know."

Though regarded by his neighbours with a certain feeling of awe, he had managed to obtain great influence over them. If any one were to be comforted, exhorted, scolded, or

advised, Jobson was sure to take the offer upon himself, and in this way he sometimes saved the clergyman a vast amount of trouble. In a less rigid disciplinarian, all this might have led to an invasion of some of the more special prerogatives of the spiritual office, but Jobson invariably abstained from arrogating to himself any portion of ministerial authority.

“ Discipline, Mrs. Peterson, discipline is the soul of every service, d’ye see,” said he once to a sick neighbour, “and therefore as touching your conscience, you had better let the clergyman, who is the proper officer, put you through your exercise. I’ll read the Bible and the Prayer-book to you as long as you like; but don’t you think I’m going to make such a fool of myself as old Mathison, the cobbler, who has got ‘a call,’ as he says, and goes about trying to create a mutiny in the district. No, no! I know better than that; and so I shall make my report, and fetch the clergyman to you in less time than you could bite a cartridge.”

Such was the person whose rigid features, erect form, and military salute, thrust themselves upon my notice, soon after I had parted from Pemberton.

“Well, Jobson,” said I, “have you any more sick for me to visit to-day?”

“Why, Sir,” he replied, “my list is not so full as it generally is. In fact, there are very few in hospital just now; but there is one case about which I wished to speak to your Reverence too. They live in the opposite house to me.”

“Oh! you mean the old woman and her daughter, who never come to church, and whom I can never by any chance see.”

“Yes, Sir; but now the old lady is very bad, and the young one almost out of her wits with trouble. They say they were high people once, and perhaps that’s the reason they keeps so close. It was just so with Captain Somers, of the —th, when he lost his wife’s fortune.”

“And did they ask you to apply to me?”

“Not exactly, Sir; but the woman of the house has been rowing at the poor gal on account of the rent, calling her a cheat, an impostor, a baggage, and I don’t know what. Then hearing all the hullabulloo, I stepped in, you see, to appease matters. ‘So,’ says I, to the landlady, ‘Mrs. Pierce,’ says I, ‘if we all had our deserts, who could escape a court-martial? And remember,’ says I, ‘if you come the martinet over your poor neighbour, somebody by-and-bye will come the martinet over you.’

“‘Do you want me to lose my money?’ says she.

“‘No,’ says I; ‘but even if you do wait a little for it, there’s a sure paymaster and an overflowing treasure-chest up there.’

“‘Ah! but,’ says she, ‘I prefer a bird in the hand to all your fine stories of what’s a coming by-and-bye.’

“‘Mrs. Pierce,’ said I, very sharp-like, for she put me out with that last speech, ‘it’s my belief you’re a talking mutiny, and if you don’t

mind what you say, you'll be handed over to the provost-marshal, whom in this case I take to be the devil, d'ye see?"

"Well, Sir, I went on for some time, mixing up a soft speech and a threat, 'a medal and the black-hole,' as old Major Calton said to us, just before we stormed Badajoz; and at last I got her pacified, and promised to be security that all should be right. And then you see, Sir, the poor gal being softened a bit, could not help talking to me a little, and so, among other things, she said she should like her mother to see a clergyman. So I came off at once upon that, to try if I could find either you or Mr. Pemberton."

"I will go with you there immediately," said I. "But what is the occupation of these poor people? I suppose they do something for their livelihood?"

"I can't say about the mother, Sir," he replied, "but I am sure the girl works like a nigger, or even worse; for when I was in the West Indies after the 'mancipation, as they

calls it, I can't say that I saw the niggers work at all. But however this gal does, and no mistake. I see the light of the candle through her window sometimes for a whole night; and all day she sits there too. Ah, Sir! it has often made my old heart ache to watch the pale, dejected face looking up from time to time at God's blessed sunshine outside, and then turning away in despair, as if the sight and the longing for pure refreshing air were too much for the poor, breaking heart."

"You describe a sad and distressing case," said I, "but, I hope, not a common one."

"Common enough in this great city, Sir, Heaven knows!" answered the old soldier—"common enough to call down God's curse and man's upon them as in their selfish luxury lets such things be, and upon them as makes their money out of these poor critturs' flesh and blood. Why bless you, Sir! I have seen so much of all this in my day, that if I were a parson, I would preach about nothing else."

“ I was not aware you had lived so long in London.”

“ Why, Sir, I had two sisters in that line, and my only brother was a working tailor. When we all four came up from the country, we were as healthy and fresh-looking as ever you'd wish to see ; and though all of us, even the best, are but as sinners before His sight, yet as regards man, I'll make bold to say, no one could utter a word against us. When I left England, they were full of joy and hope, poor things, and talking about getting a large house, where we could live together, and where they could receive me when I came back. But when I did come back, what did I find, Sir ? My eldest sister, poor thing, after working herself to a skeleton, died of sheer starvation ; and the youngest and prettiest of the two, my old father's darling, went astray as hundreds and thousands have done before her, and ended her miserable, wretched life by a leap off Waterloo Bridge. It was my only brother that told me this, and I shall never forget the place

where I found him. It was a dark, damp cellar underground, with one or two gas-lights burning; and what with the gas and the closeness, I thought I'd got into the Purgatory that them Catholics used to talk about in Spain. There was a raised place in the middle, and upon it about a dozen men, looking as pale and thin as though they'd been ghosts. And, Sir, when my own brother stood before me, I didn't know him, so much had hard living and wretchedness changed the fine, healthy lad that came up with me from the country. I took him to my lodging, which, poor as it was, seemed a paradise to him, and put a leg of mutton on the table. Bless you, Sir, he attacked it like a hungry wolf, and left not a bit of it for the morning. And then he told me all the sad story about my sisters, and took me to see the kennel where him and his comrades lived. I heard enough misery that night, Sir, to last me for a whole life. I remember, when the French laid waste Portugal, and treated the people so shamefully, we saw

a great deal during our march after 'em to grieve the heart, and to make the hand grasp the musket tighter, but nothing ever shocked me so much as the wretchedness of those poor critturs. I did what I could for my brother, but help came too late—he had taken to drinking; and when I went out again, I heard in two months after I landed in Spain, that he had died of *delirium tremens*. But here we are, Sir, at the door.”

We were met at the entrance of the sick-room by the daughter, a pale, sickly-looking girl, in whose wasted cheek, sunken eyes, and wearied, worn-out appearance, one might have read at a glance the signs of unremitted and unlightened toil, carried on by protracted and over-tasked exertion. Her reception of us was apathetic and indifferent in the extreme, though there was a sort of formal courtesy in her manner which, however, appeared rather to proceed from past habits or early training than from any present feelings of gratitude or respect. In fact, thought and sentiment

seemed to have died away in her, together with all those ennobling emotions and impulses, deprived of which the human form resembles but a machinery-moved automaton or a galvanized corpse.

“This is Mr. Singleton, our clergyman, Miss Smith,” said Old Jobson, by way of introduction to a conversation which the young woman herself seemed unwilling to commence. She turned her eyes listlessly towards me, and said, in a chilling tone :

“I suppose he comes to see my mother? She is in bed in the next room.”

“Can I speak to her for a few minutes?”

“I will see.”

She went into the adjoining room, and closed the door after her. When she was gone, I whispered to Jobson, “Our visit does not seem very welcome here.”

“Ah, Sir! you musn’t judge by appearances. That poor thing now, I’ll be bound to say, has not had more than three hours’ sleep for these two nights, and her obliged to work like a

horse in the day-time. No, Sir ; all that manner of hers is nothing but sheer weariness and despair. I'll warrant you might throw her out of the window, and she'd make no resistance. Speak to her gently, Mr. Singleton, and I think she'll come round in time ; though, poor lamb ! she has a hard burden to bear. And now, Sir, I'd better leave you ; for women folk don't like men to look upon their sorrows, and I should be as much in the way as an awkward, undrilled recruit in a crack company on parade."

He made his military salutation and retired, whilst I cast my eyes round the small apartment. It was uncarpeted, and full of draughts, proceeding from the numerous crevices in the dilapidated walls, which appeared as if each moment their fall might be expected. Large pieces of plaster had fallen from the ceiling, and in one or two places I could even see through the laths that had been thus laid bare into a dark hollow vacuity, formed by the angle of the gable-sides. The rude deal table was

covered with coarse calico and other materials of labour, while near it stood a broken chair, which was the sole seat in the chamber. I looked out from the window, which opened on a narrow street, where the height of the houses opposite almost hid the sky of heaven from the gazer.

It might have been, I thought, some consolation to the poor white slave, if, in moments of despondency and gloom, her eye could have wandered over the fresh, smiling face of nature, or looked longingly at the deep-blue azure above, while the breaking heart murmured, "I am weary of this captivity; Father, call me home." Yet even here was a portion of sweet-scented mignonette, in its little pot out on the window-sill, that seemed to draw the mind off from smoke-dried houses, and narrow, pestilential streets, to the verdant fields and the fragrant gale.

As I turned from the window, my attention was attracted by a handsome and curiously-carved oaken box, standing on the narrow

mantel-piece, beneath which a small heap of coal-dust was smoking, rather than burning, in a rusty-barred grate. Such an article seemed so incongruous with the room and its furniture, that I went up to make a nearer inspection of it. The workmanship was Flemish, and exquisitely done, each side representing some scene from the New Testament. What, however, principally excited my surprise and astonishment was to observe, on a small silver shield, tastefully fitted into the lid, the armorial bearings and motto of the family of Walsingham. I should have been less certain as to their identity, if a particular commission given me by Walsingham himself, shortly before he left England, had not tended to impress specially on my memory both the symbolical figures, and the phrase inscribed beneath them. He was desirous that his crest should be engraved on a small number of books, which he had lately purchased; and not wishing to be detained, had requested me to superintend this operation, and forward them, when completed, to him at

Paris. Some discussion had taken place with the binder, respecting the proper spelling of one of the old English words occurring in the legend, and I had written two or three letters on the subject.

The more I looked at the armorial bearings and the motto, the more certain I was that they could be none other than Walsingham's. But how had the article in question come into the possession of these poor people? If they had merely purchased it in times past as a curiosity, it was not likely that they would have retained it when, under the pressure of severe poverty, they had parted with everything else? Was it possible that Walsingham's mother-in-law could be reduced so low in her temporal circumstances, when I had always understood from him that she had been comfortably, though not luxuriously provided for. A third more uncharitable hypothesis remained, to which at first I was not indisposed to give credit. It was probable that these people had been servants in the house of the Walsinghams, and had purloined

an old family relic, which they were afraid to sell lest the armorial bearings and motto should lead to their recognition, and perhaps punishment.

There were inconsistencies in this latter view, but I had no time to detect them, for at that moment the younger woman entered, and asked me in a short, dry manner, to walk into her mother's room. I followed her, and was surprised to notice the comparative neatness of the inner apartment. Everything, indeed, from the worn and patched coverlet to the broken jug, bore the unmistakable marks of the most abject poverty; but there was a cleanliness in the appearance, and an order and regularity in the arrangement of the different articles that I had not anticipated. The sick woman appeared about fifty, and possessed well-proportioned features, though want and suffering had rendered them gaunt and hollow. She had cold, proud eyes that seemed to repel either familiarity or friendship, and there was a slight curl about the lips expressive of indifference and contempt.

I stood by the bedside, and endeavoured to rouse in her mind some sense of the nature of her present position. She listened with impatience, frequently shifting her place, and manifesting by her looks, displeasure not unmingled with disdain. When I paused awhile, she said with a dignified air:

“I think, Sir, you are not aware whom you are addressing. I am a lady by birth and education, and have kept my carriage in past days. Do not fancy you are talking to one of these low, ignorant creatures with whom I have the misfortune to be surrounded.”

“Both rich and poor,” said I, gravely, “are equal in the eyes of God.”

“That is one of your new doctrines,” she replied with a sneer. “I can remember the time when my father rode from the church to the Hall, and rector and curate walked by his side with their hats off.”

“Mother—mother!” murmured the daughter.

“Ann, my dear,” said the invalid, “you are a perfect fool, and have no sense of the dignity

of your position. Is it not necessary that the clergyman should know that he is not speaking to a low vulgarian who is daily in the habit of breaking all the commandments, like the woman who was here yesterday? And now, Sir, I shall be obliged to you if you will read me a a prayer or two."

I had already resolved to defer more serious and searching conversation till we were better acquainted, and accordingly complied with her request. When I left, the daughter gently closed the door of the sick chamber, and accompanied me into the outer room. I turned to speak to her, and saw the tears in her eyes.

"You must have a melancholy time of it," I observed, soothingly.

"I have not made any complaint."

She endeavoured to answer in the dry, cold tone in which hitherto her conversation with me had been carried on. But the sight of her mother had evidently stirred up feelings habitually dormant, or kept under strict control. The

rigid features quivered for an instant, and then she burst into a flood of tears.

I spoke to her kindly and consolingly, but at first my words only increased the emotion which they were designed to repress. In a short time, however, her grief was exhausted by its own violence, and she replied, though in a voice broken and interrupted by sobs :

“ You are kind—very kind, and I feel I am very ungrateful. Pray do not take notice of what poor mamma says. It is her way, and she has known better and brighter scenes than these. And oh, Sir ! they tell me she is dying, and I fear sometimes she is not fit to die. Will you come and talk to her often ? I should be so glad if you would.”

There was an earnestness in her manner now which presented a painful yet pleasing contrast to her former apathy. I assured her that I should frequently repeat my visit, and then asked her for her name, that it might be placed upon our sick-list.

“We call ourselves Smith,” she said, in a hesitating tone.

The suspicions I have alluded to recurred to my mind as I fixed my eyes steadily upon her countenance, and inquired in a somewhat stern manner :

“Is that your real name?”

The girl looked steadfastly and proudly at me as she replied :

“It is not ; but, as I have said, we have known better days. To call ourselves by our true name, would but make us seem ridiculous, and perhaps bring disgrace on the family of which we are members.”

I was at once satisfied, and after adding a few words of apology, took my departure. During my walk home, I pondered over what I had seen and heard lately, and was so much engrossed in thought, that I did not notice my wife, who was wending her way to the school on the other side of the street. She saw me, however, and crossing over, accosted me.

“George, there is a letter at home from your friend Walsingham. He has arrived at Cairo.”

“I am glad of it,” I replied; “I want to write to him to-night.”

CHAPTER XI.

THERE is a great power in little miseries. When we are called upon to endure on a large scale, the very magnitude of our visitation produces a deadening and benumbing sensation that acts in some measure as the soother of our pain. We feel too stupified at the calamity which has overwhelmed us to be fully sensitive to its sting, and like the tortured malefactor of old, drink from the opiate-mingled chalice, that arms us with insensibility against even the sharpest and most searching agonies.

There is also a species of encouragement and support which may be derived under great misfortunes from a sense of the sympathy and

approval of others. Like the combatants in the Grecian games, we look around the arena, and our gaze is reflected back by glances which bid us take courage and persevere. Hope whispers that the agony of the struggle will soon be over, and that the brow which now rolls down the perspiration of conflict shall soon be shaded by the palm-leaves of the victor's crown. But our little miseries are rarely capable of admitting any counteractive influence. We quarrel with ourselves for allowing them to grieve us, and we complain that others look upon our sufferings with indifference, or perhaps with ridicule. Thus we become in a degree, self-tormentors, and that which was wanting in our petty misfortunes, we supply from our own exaggerated sense of their magnitude, and keen sensibility to the stripes which they inflict.

There are few patients who would not rather endure a sharp course of medicines, than that constant course of watchfulness and self-denial which under the name of diet is now tormenting so many. In the one case, we make up our

minds to suffer a short restraint and a transient inconvenience, in the other we feel as if constantly haunted by a spectre, which, like Sancho's physician, is for ever carrying off from us the choicest morsels, and debarring us the most alluring recreations. I was not long in discovering that poverty, like sickness, had a diet of its own, which was both wearisome and vexatious. It was not that my habits had ever been luxurious or expensive. I could have given up voluntarily many things which it seemed hard to surrender against my will. And besides, I was not alone. My wife, it is true, rarely complained or murmured; her smile was ever encouraging, and her words consolatory. But I knew that a change had taken place in our circumstances, for which previous education and habits had ill prepared her, and I was aware that she must feel it keenly. It was a subject that we never discussed together, but I felt her misfortunes even more poignantly than my own.

On the morning after my visit to the aged invalid, I was seated at a very rickety table with

some sheets of foolscap before me, endeavouring to collect materials for a sermon on "Contentment." I had already written the text, and was pausing, pen in hand, over the opening sentence, when my eye fell upon my wife, who was seated opposite endeavouring to repair some rents in my only cassock. As I looked up, she held the garment before the light, and pointed out a goodly array of patches and stains.

"I am afraid it will never look decent, George, dear; the next time you put it on, it will certainly break out in a fresh place."

We both paused to digest this uncomfortable intelligence, the more distressing, perhaps, because just then I had but two pounds in my pocket, and thirty-five shillings was to go that very morning towards the baker's bill. At last my wife said in a hesitating tone :

"Could not you have a new one, dear? It would not cost much, and then I might go a little longer, you know, without another dress. I should not mind it at all, and I do like to see you properly arrayed in church."

I looked at her own patched and mended gown as she spoke, and remembered the time when I first saw her surrounded with every comfort, and adorned with all the choicest and refined luxuries a fond father's tenderness could bestow. There was a movement of self-reproach within, as if I had brought her to this, and I felt repinings that I would not utter. I rose abruptly, for I was in no mood to proceed with my sermon on Contentment, and walked out to struggle with the discontent which was striving to gain the mastery. Pemberton encountered me at the door.

“Singleton, I'm glad I have met you, for I want your advice about a sad case of distress which I have just been witnessing. A brother clergyman too. It is a shame that such things should happen.”

“Why, what is the matter?”

“I was told about an hour ago,” he replied, “that a sick person wanted to see me immediately. It was your old friend Jobson who brought me the intelligence, and handed me

this card, on which there is written, as you see, 'Rev. Theodore Gorman.' Of course I went off immediately, and found the poor man and his wife in a wretched attic near here, enduring the greatest possible misery. She has just become a mother, and there are two elder children with them. What is to be done?"

"Cannot he apply to some of the societies for the relief of poor clergymen?"

"He has done so in times past, and they behaved very kindly; but his spirit is now so broken by misfortune, that I do not think he could be induced to take any active steps at present."

"Well," said I, "Pemberton, we are poor, and have our wives to consider; but he is our brother in a double sense, and we ought to do something for him. I have been in countries where the poorest Arab will share his crust with the wandering stranger. Has civilization so spoiled us, that we cannot do likewise?"

"It was just what I was thinking of, my dear fellow," he replied; "but I was dubious

about proposing it to you, on account of our small means. However, I am so glad you see the thing as I do. Come along at once, and let us take our measures forthwith."

On entering the house, we were directed to a garret up-stairs, where we found father, mother, and children together. There was a flush on the poor lady's face when she saw us, and she attempted to cover her head with the ragged coverlet, while the two little girls left the large twopenny loaves with which Pemberton had already furnished them, and gazed at the strangers with a mingled air of astonishment and dread. Poor Gorman himself had been sitting on the floor, and rose up to receive us. He was a middle-aged man, with dull, heavy features, and hands that seemed to have been more accustomed of late to agricultural or mechanical labours, than to clerical or scholastic pursuits. There was a simplicity and almost overwrought humility in his air, manners, and language, which might have

excited ridicule if it had not previously inspired pity.

As I looked upon this distressed family, I was ashamed of my own murmurs and repinings. What were my necessities to theirs? And as I breathed an internal prayer for forgiveness, and petitioned for that strength from on high, which could alone make me bear the little crosses of life with resignation and contentment, I felt a quiet, placid calm dispelling my former gloomy sensations, and even breathing into my mind a species of exhilaration. Under this influence, I played with the children, comforted and encouraged the poor mother, and even succeeded in raising a faint momentary smile on the woe-begone countenance of Gorman himself. Pemberton even was astonished at my sudden vivacity; it re-acted upon him, and in half an hour we had infused new hopes into the unfortunate family persuading them that there might yet be roses in store, lurking among the harsh thorns and briars of the

desert of life. Gorman showed us several letters and papers, which testified in a very satisfactory way to his respectability and high moral character, and was almost too grateful to thank us when he heard our proposal that his family should be removed as soon as convenient to the Parsonage.

Three days afterwards, they were comfortably settled in two of our upper chambers, an arrangement which rather cramped us for room, though every one acquiesced in it without the slightest repining. Each of us indeed was so busily engaged in his or her schemes for the poor family, that we found no leisure for grumbling. Mrs. Pemberton, with her kind heart and matronly experiences, had a thousand things to talk of with the young mother, and my dear Rachel was hourly revolving sage plans and arrangements for little Caroline and Julia. Pemberton and I took the father in hand, and one evening when the ladies were up-stairs, we drew from him a broken and somewhat uncon-

nected history, which I have put in order a little, and now present to the reader as

THE POOR PARSON'S TALE.

“ My father was a substantial farmer in one of the midland counties of England, who had married in early life the daughter of a neighbouring curate. To her I owe the first tender cares of a mother's love, my education, and perhaps some portion of my misfortunes. My father was a thoroughly English yeoman, being passionately devoted to agricultural pursuits, towards which he was always trying to direct my attention, but the effect of his paternal admonitions was counteracted by my mother, who insisted that I should be brought up to the Church. A strong attachment to her father's profession was indeed her only fault, if fault it could be called. A good education and a refined mind made her naturally impatient of the coarseness of those about her, and as she

was sincerely imbued with religious feelings, she considered that by following my father's calling, I should be exposed to many temptations which might otherwise be avoided.

“I am afraid that of the two I took more after my father, for I was considered rather a dull boy at school. The master, however, a good-natured old man, consoled my mother with the reflection that lads of genius generally developed their abilities in later life. In my case, I fear, he was mistaken, for although I obtained my degree at college, it was mainly owing to a fit of illness which enabled me to get an *Ægrotat*. This illness had been mainly owing to the grief I felt at the death of my mother, to whom I had been fondly attached. She used to bear so patiently with my dullness, and always cheered me on with kind words, while my father, poor man, whether from having been disappointed in his plans respecting me, or what, I don't know, but he invariably was cross at my slow progress. Although no scholar

himself, he thought he had a right to quarrel with me for not being one, and once because I could not translate off-hand a page of Latin from a book that he had taken up at random from my study table, he declared that his money was all wasted upon me, and that I should never be good for anything.

“After he had recovered a little from the effect of my mother’s death, and I had returned from College, he still continued very harsh to me, so that I was often driven from home to spend my evenings at the house of my old schoolmaster, who lived hard by. Here I met his daughter, who had been an old playmate of mine in days gone by. Mary was but a simple country-girl, though she had a kind, sympathising heart. Her father’s means were too limited to allow of his giving her such an education as perhaps he could have wished, and her mother had died while she was yet very young. But, as I said, she had a kind heart, and no one felt its soothing influences more

than her old companion. She was proud of my acquaintance, poor thing, and looked up to me as a scholar and an university man. It might have been girlish vanity, it might have been a better feeling, but she always liked to walk out with me, and I never found myself so happy as when with her. In short, a mutual attachment grew up between us, before even we ever dreamed of love. Heedless, happy creatures that we were, we never looked forward to the future, but sauntered thoughtlessly along together, as if life could always be spent in wandering about the green meadows, borrowing pleasant thoughts and joyous emotions from the merry sunshine and the sweet-scented air.

“We had engaged ourselves mutually to each other before my father was made acquainted with our position. This step on my part was not premeditated; it had grown out of our daily companionship, and the vow was uttered and accepted before either of us thought of its import or consequences. My father was very angry. He denounced me for daring to think

of the daughter of a beggar, and ordered me to prepare instantly for ordination. I obeyed him, for religious principles had been deeply implanted in my mind by my mother's teaching. Our parting was sorrowful and sad, as all partings are ; but we promised to be true to each other, and I went away.

“ I was to read with a clergyman for a year before I was ordained, and in his humble dwelling I found a kind-hearted host, and a comfortable home. He consoled and encouraged me, ever directing my attention to those solemn truths, and supporting promises the remembrance of which in many a weary hour have preserved me from despondency and despair. I had given over corresponding with Mary by her own wish, for, poor girl, she had a strong sense of right ; and she feared lest I might get into trouble through her. Thus I was naturally led to more serious thoughts, and to a deeper trust in God than I had hitherto experienced. We are all self-deluding creatures, but when I was called upon to declare solemnly to the bishop that I

trusted I was moved by the Holy Ghost to take the sacred and responsible office of the ministry upon me, I felt that the assertion was unaccompanied by any conviction of insincerity, or by any emotion of self-reproach.

“ While I was a curate at E—— my father died, leaving me a small sum of money. Mary also had lost her natural protector, and was then residing with a family not far from E——, in the capacity of governess. Circumstances, which it would be tedious to do more than allude to, brought us together. I found the girl, whom I had loved so fondly, a domestic slave, treated worse than the lowest menial, worried daily by her lady employer, and persecuted by the dishonourable and degrading attentions of that lady’s brother. Oh, Mr. Pemberton ! she had not said ten words to me before she began crying as if her poor heart would break. She was resting her head on my shoulder, when her mistress, or slave-driver, as I must call her, came in. She immediately, without a word of inquiry, and without listening to a syllable of

explanation, overwhelmed the poor girl with a storm of invective which I had no patience to listen to. I told her what I thought of her behaviour, and in return she ordered Mary and me to leave the house immediately.

“I related these circumstances to my good rector at E——, and the kind old man at once offered to receive Mary into his house. He had known her father, who had been at College with him, and respected his memory too much to allow his daughter to want a home. There was now no obstacle to our union, and though I was not very well off, I could not bear the thought of exposing one whom I loved so much to the temptations and vicissitudes of a governess’s life. We were married, and soon after the good old rector died.

“His successor and I did not agree so well, for his wife, a fine London lady, disliked my preaching, and considered Mary vulgar. We parted, and I obtained another curacy of eighty pounds a-year, on which we lived, or rather starved for a few months. The incum-

bent could not have been expected to increase my stipend, for the annual value of his vicarage was only twenty pounds, the greater tithes, to the amount of three hundred a-year, being in the hands of a lay rector.

“I will not weary you with an account of the different curacies which I served, or the hardships which I underwent. Suffice it to say, that I was lured up to London by the hope that a distant relative might do something for me. He had made his fortune in India, and always led me to expect that I should be his heir. He, however, discarded me entirely one day, because I remonstrated with him for cruelly maltreating his black servant, and died the next week, leaving all his property to an hospital.

“I then set up a small day-school, but finding that I wanted capital to carry it on, was induced to answer an advertisement which offered loans to clergymen on moderate interest. I thought a few months' hard work would enable me to pay off the sum I wished to

borrow, and accordingly went forthwith to the place indicated.

“The office of the advertiser was situated in one of the streets leading from the western end of the Strand. After some delay, which I attributed to the vast amount of business on hand, he condescended to grant me an interview. I found him a civil, smooth-spoken man, with dark hair, moustaches, and military appearance. He talked so glibly of the thousands which daily passed through his office, that I was almost afraid to mention the small sum I required. However, he said kindly that, as his father was a clergyman, he would waive a point in my case, if I could get him the security of two other names. With some difficulty, I found two old College companions, then curates in the metropolis, and as poor as myself, who undertook this for me; and I was thus enabled to hand over to the bill-discounter an acceptance for double the amount which I had originally intended to obtain from him. He promised to let me have the money in a week;

but after waiting ten days and receiving no intelligence, I called at his office, and found he had left the place.

“ When the bill became due, it was presented by a stranger, who declared that he had given value for it, and threatened me with an execution if I refused to pay. As I was certain that this would have ruined my school entirely, and had no money to go to law with, I parted with the little property I possessed to satisfy the harpy, and rescue my two innocent friends from the annoyance to which they had been subjected at his hands. I was told by some one afterwards, that I might have had my remedy by an action, but this was a vain idea for a penniless man. Not having money sufficient to go on with, I was at last obliged to sell my furniture in order to discharge my rent. After this, one misfortune followed another, till I was driven to move with my poor wife, who was just on the eve of her confinement into the wretched lodging where you found me.”

The poor curate's narrative inspired us both with the liveliest feelings of sympathy and compassion. We consulted together on his case, and determined to leave no effort untried to obtain some employment for him. Pemberton said he was sure one of the Church societies would grant a little temporary assistance; but the present and most pressing point was to furnish him with attire more befitting his sacred profession. His clothes were threadbare, and in rags; their miserable condition being only partially concealed by an old dressing-gown, with which Pemberton had supplied him. Neither of us could help smiling when we found that we could not muster sufficient habiliments, even from our united wardrobes, to eke out the deficiency; but for once woman's wit came to our assistance, and Mrs. Pemberton, who was a party to our consultation exclaimed:

“Dear me, I had forgotten. Why my aunt, Mrs. Mornington, belongs to a poor clergyman's clothing society. She is the very person to apply to in this emergency. You know dear,

she collects old clothes from every quarter, and sends them to distressed curates."

"And incumbents, too," added Pemberton smiling, "I know some who have been exceedingly thankful to receive an old coat at her hands."

"Is it possible," I exclaimed in astonishment, "that in the wealthiest Church in Europe, there should be found among those who minister at her altars persons thankful for old clothes!"

"Why, Singleton, you are quite a novice in the mysteries of clerical existence. Come, to enlighten you a little you shall have a note of introduction to Mrs. Mornington, and negotiate this business yourself."

Before I departed on my embassy, however, my two friends vouchsafed a few words in explanation of what I thought then, and consider still, a singular and painful anomaly. It appeared that a short time ago, a noble-minded and zealous woman, whose name, though now concealed from motives which may be easily appreciated, is as worthy of remembrance as

many which have figured in calendars, and borne the blushing honours of red-letter type, conceived the idea of aiding necessitous clergymen by collecting for them second-hand clothes, and other articles of wearing apparel. Honour to her, eternal honour for her pious liberality. It has often refreshed the spirit of the weary, and cheered the mind of the desponding. May she who has so often relieved the Redeemer himself in the persons of His poor servants, receive at last the blessing addressed to those of whose charitable works it shall be said, "I was naked and ye clothed me."

Animated by such a noble example, many ladies contributed their time and exertions to this pious work until a society was formed, and annual reports of their proceedings published. This Association, an association which should be alike the pride and disgrace of our Church, has already continued its useful and charitable labours for upwards of thirty-two years. I cannot wish it a long existence, and I trust that before another thirty years have passed away,

its deeds of charity may have become simply unnecessary; but I am anxious to ascribe every praise and honour that my feeble pen can convey to those who have given themselves up to this unostentatious labour of love.

Mrs. Mornington received me with great kindness, and listened with a grave smile to my expressions of astonishment and surprise in respect to the operations of the Society, which she was good enough to explain in detail. If I were to say that I have rarely encountered, even in the lowest and poorest neighbourhoods, such sad cases of poverty, such heart-rending accounts of distress, I am certain I should not be conveying an exaggerated or unnatural idea of the impression which these accounts left on my mind. Here were letters from venerable men in my own country, who had been aged curates when I was a school-boy, thanking their benefactress for worn-out coats and second-hand vests. Some of these documents gave evidence of the refined and highly-cultivated minds from

whom they emanated, men who might have been Heads of Colleges, or sat upon the Episcopal Bench, if merit in this world always obtained its due reward. Others, again, were simpler, and more homely in their style and phraseology; but all were evidently the productions of educated and pious men, of men the excellence of whose early training could now only add bitterness to their poverty, and make them doubly sensible of its cruel privations.

In the course of conversation, I related the history of poor Gorman, and easily obtained from Mrs. Mornington a supply of ready-made articles for present use.

“I must bring the case before our Foundress and the committee at our next meeting,” she observed, “but as the wants of this poor family are so urgent, I will furnish them on my own responsibility. You will let me know if anything more is required, and in the mean time I hope you may be able to procure some pecu-

niary assistance for Mr. Gorman. It was very kind of you and my nephew to act as you have done, but he must not remain a burden on the liberality of two young married men with small incomes."

As I walked homewards very well satisfied with the success of my mission, it was natural that my thoughts should be much occupied with what I had just heard. The present lamentable inequality of clerical incomes is undoubtedly owing, in the first instance, to the unbridled rapacity and greediness of the nobles and gentry at the Reformation, incited, I must admit, by the luxury and covetousness of the monastic order. Another cause of this evil may be traced to the increase and depreciation in value of the different lands attached to particular benefices, while a third originates in the fact that the multiplication of congregations in communion with the Church of our country, has not been attended by an amplification of those resources from which the remuneration

of additional clergy might be derived. The old endowments remain unchanged from what they were in the reign of Elizabeth, when the population of this kingdom was infinitely inferior in number to what it is now, and during succeeding generations sectarian jealousy has put a stop to all further assistance from the State. Any attempts, therefore, to create an equality or a lesser discrepancy in clerical incomes must be founded on the reorganization and redistribution of the property of the Church. This would at once affect the patrons of livings, who could hardly be expected to view with satisfaction a measure so injurious to their vested interests.

There are indeed some eager reformers who imagine that the deficiency might be filled up by the spoils of the bishops and of the Cathedral Chapters. Whether the few thousands which could be raised in this way, by not the most satisfactory means, would be at all adequate to the sum required, in order to place every cler-

gyman on an equal footing, I must leave deeper and more able calculators to determine. For myself, I conceive that such spoliation would not only be useless, but might prove, humanly speaking, detrimental to the Church. No one can have lived in this country for a twelve-month, without becoming sensible of the homage paid by all classes of the English people to rank and wealth. It may be lamentable, but it is true. In fact, the great reason why the masses desert the meeting-house, and flock to the Church, is because they attach certain ideas of respectability to the latter. It seems, therefore, fitting that the dignitaries of the Church should in some measure correspond to the higher class in society. For the one to have weight with the other, their positions must be equal, and therefore the income of a church dignitary should in common fairness be in proportion to the expenditure expected of him. It must be remembered also that many a man has only obtained preferment when age is stealing

upon him, and after a long course of arduous and ill-requited labours. Far be it from us to compare such a one with the ecclesiastical Dives, who, cradled in lawn, and nourished up in luxury, has never even dreamed of the poverty and misery which are racking the hearts of his less fortunate brethren.

The present, however, is not an auspicious generation for dignitaries. Evil eyes are upon them from every quarter; and it is now more than ever specially needful that they should walk warily. The sleek well-beneficed divine, who looks down condescendingly on the "inferior clergy" may be painfully convinced some day, that he is after all but the equal of those whom he affects to despise, if he is unable to bear his present accumulated honours with moderation, and without invidious reflections. Happily, however, the great majority of English dignitaries appear fully alive to the importance of doing something towards the relief of their poorer brethren, and their large contribu-

tions to the two principal societies, who afford relief to distressed clergymen, seem an indication that past apathy will be atoned for by present liberality and augmented zeal.

CHAPTER XII.

THE fortunes of poor Gorman were now much better than he had known them for many years. Dressed in the clothes which I had brought for him, he accompanied Pemberton and me to the office of one of the charitable societies, and easily obtained from them a small grant of money, which enabled the whole family to support themselves without any further assistance from us. Not long after, a bishop from the colonies, who was in great want of clergymen, agreed to take Gorman out with him, and to find some work for him in his ample diocese. The prelate was one of those simple and laborious men, whose exertions in

our own days conferred more true lustre on the episcopal order, than scores of titles and carriages, or legions of purple-clad menials. He was much pleased with our poor friend, and seemed likely to prove a trusty supporter and a kind patron to him.

The young mother wept very much when she thought of parting from us, and still more when she was obliged to take a last farewell of her native shores. We administered such consolation as we could; and the last glimpse I caught of her, as the vessel sailed away, she was leaning fondly on her husband's arm, and looking up trustfully to him as if feeling that his society and affection would prove an ample compensation for the home and friends she had left behind.

"A long march this for the poor lady and the children, Mr. Singleton," said old Jobson, who stood beside me at the entrance of the Dock.

"It is an undertaking, indeed, Jobson," I replied; "but there is One who has promised to direct the path of those who trust in Him;

and though trouble and danger may surround the traveller on every side, and the heart may often be wrung with weary longings for our distant mother land, yet as a wise man once observed in ancient days, 'There is a road from every country to heaven.'"

"Ah! Sir, that was much what I said to poor Tom Jackson of ours, who was shot down by my side in Spain. He was raving, poor fellow, in his 'delirium,' as the doctor called it, of the old village church and the clump of trees over his father's grave. 'Tom, my boy,' says I, 'you know I'm no scholar, but it seems to me that at the last great muster day, nobody will be very particular from what quarters you come out when the trumpet sounds. These Dons and Portegees, Tom, may appear very queer fellows to you and me, and their country nothing after old England, but yet one God made all.' And thinking of poor Tom reminds me, Mr. Singleton, that Miss Smith was asking about you this morning. I don't know, but I'm afraid her mother is worse."

“True,” said I, “it is some days since I was there; I must pay them a visit at once.”

We proceeded the rest of our way in silence. I was considering in my own mind, whether I could by any means ascertain the connection which I was sure there existed between these poor people and the Walsingham family. The daughter had hitherto repelled all my inquiries with chilling reserve, but perhaps the mother might be less disposed to evade my questions. A vague suspicion crossed me that she could throw some light on the mysterious silence, which had been preserved by poor Adeline from the time when she abandoned the Manor-house, until the fatal termination of her illness. The more I thought over the matter, the more strange it appeared that she should never have given a clue to her address, although eager as she must have been for the presence of her husband at such a period.

I was determined, therefore, to satisfy myself on this point without farther delay, and leaving Jobson at his own door, I ascended at once to

the chamber of the invalid, having dispatched the woman of the house first to prepare her for my visit. The daughter had just stepped out, and her absence afforded me an opportunity which I resolved not to throw away. I advanced to the bedside, and looking steadfastly at the sick woman, said :

“ I believe I have the pleasure of speaking to Mrs. Walsingham.”

One glance convinced me that I was right. She gazed on me for some minutes in astonishment, and then said with more composure than I had expected :

“ You have then discovered who we are. Did my daughter tell you ?”

“ She has told me nothing,” was my reply, “ but I knew the younger Mr. Walsingham abroad, and from the description he gave me of his mother-in-law, and other circumstances, I was led to recognise her in you.”

“ And now that you have found me out, what will you make of your discovery? You are perhaps the bearer of some communication

from my affectionate son-in-law?" she added, in a sneering tone.

"Mrs. Walsingham," I replied, "the time allotted you here may be short enough, and therefore I will at once proceed to what I have to say. Allow me first, however, to tell you, that I am a near relative of your son's deceased wife."

"What of her!" she exclaimed in an alarmed tone, "she is dead, and her child too. Did you not say she had a child? I am sure you said so, though perhaps my mind is wandering."

"There must have been a letter from her intercepted," I remarked, still keeping my eye fixed steadily on her countenance, which was beginning to show the visible signs of emotion with difficulty suppressed.

"Letter! what letter?" she murmured incoherently. "To whom should she write when her husband was away? Not to me surely, whom she hated so. Well, I hated her too with her foreign manners and upstart airs."

“This is no time for such unchristian thoughts,” said I seriously. “Think how soon you may have to appear before your Maker, and make some reparation for your unkindness to Walsingham, by revealing all you know about this matter.”

“Ha!” she exclaimed, raising herself in the bed, and gazing at me with a look of sarcastic triumph, “he is unhappy then? He thinks of his lost wife still? Marvellous constancy! Heroic tenderness! Tell me,” she continued, “is he miserable, is he wretched, is his cheek pale as mine is now. Does he still wander from country to country, and find no rest?”

“He has indeed suffered much,” said I, thinking to appeal to her compassion.

“I am glad of it. I hated him, that pale spiritless lad, born only to cross my path, and undo all my best plans. Had it not been for him, I should have been rich and honoured, instead of lying here in this wretched hovel. May the curse of a dying woman cleave to him and his.”

“Peace!” said I, “if not for charity’s sake, at least for your own. Think upon where you are going, and before whom you will shortly appear.”

“I tell you, Priest,” she exclaimed wildly, “I have done something more than curse. Who sowed discord between him and his pretty plaything, who drove her from the house, and kept her letters from him, who tried to force his dotard father to disinherit him? I did all this; and I glory in it, glory even now. Why shouldn’t I? Does he care for me? Has he not left me to starve? Yet I have had my revenge after all.”

“Cease to speak in this way,” I said, “and let me offer up a prayer for you.”

“Prayer! it is too late; none of your juggling tricks for me. Go to the poor, the ignorant, and the low born. Tell them of your religion if you will, but preach not to one who despises this childish babble. And yet—I feel it is terrible to die.”

She sank back exhausted when she had finished speaking. I immediately hurried off to procure assistance; but when I returned, I gazed upon the cold motionless face of a corpse. A loud exclamation of grief startled me from my sudden stupor. I looked round, and beheld the daughter who, regardless of my presence, threw herself on her knees by her mother's side, and implored her to speak but one word to her child—to her poor heart-broken child. Proud, haughty, malicious, as the departed woman had been, there was one then that loved her.

I attempted consolation, but the mourner waved me impatiently away.

“Not now, not now, I cannot bear it. Oh! leave me now.”

I saw it was no time to persist in unseasonable exhortation, and telling her I would come again the next day, I departed. As I went out at the door, I turned and contemplated for the last time the proud rigid features

of the dead woman, and the kneeling figure of her daughter, as her frame quivered with the effect of her violent sobs.

It was a scene which made my heart ache, and I was almost glad when I reached the outer door, where I found Jobson waiting for me.

“I fear, Sir, that death-bed has not been a satisfactory one,” said the old soldier, inquiringly.

“We must not judge,” was my reply; “but I am afraid there was, indeed, little ground for hope.”

CHAPTER XIII.

As I entered the little hall of the Parsonage, our maid-of-all-work put a tastefully embossed card into my hands, on which was engraved "Baron de Monçada, Regent's Park." I found the owner of this appellation in our drawing-room engaged in conversation with my wife. Both rose at my entrance, and Rachel said :

"George, this is my uncle whom I think you have never seen."

"Pardon me," said the stranger, "I believe I met Mr. Singleton once on an occasion which both of us would do well to forget. I was very bigotted and prejudiced at that time, and,

perhaps, I said some rude things, for which I trust your husband does not bear malice."

I shook warmly the hand which he extended to me, and assured him that I had quite forgotten any discourtesy with which he might be pleased to charge himself.

"Well, that is right," said the Baron, cordially; "and being now good friends, I trust we shall continue so. In fact, as I am going to settle in this country, I hope we may often meet. One thing I must say, and that is, that you do not seem very well off here. However, we can soon mend matters. What do you say, Mr. Singleton, to a nice district church in the suburbs? I have given some ground for one, and expect to get the patronage of course, or at least to receive the first nomination."

"But, Baron, you are not a Christian, I believe."

"No, but what does that matter, you know, now-a-days, when your Christian Parliament is going to admit us to all its privileges. Come,

come, you must not entertain old-fashioned prejudices against our people. We are good Protestants, for we hate the Pope, and, indeed, have as much interest as you have in keeping him out of this country. We do not want the Ghetto and the Inquisition introduced here, let me tell you. Besides, did not our co-religionist, Ben Davids, go in state to St. Paul's the other day?"

"I am much obliged by your kind offer," replied I, "which I will take into careful consideration."

"Do so," said the Baron; "and even if you should not like this, I shall be in Parliament soon, and my influence may, perhaps, be able to secure you a good living."

"You think, then, that you will be ultimately successful?"

"I am sure of it. We have carried the matter through the Commons, and the Lords cannot, and dare not, stand out much longer. But even if they do, there are ways and means of eluding, if not overpowering, the voice of that

venerable and somewhat prejudiced branch of the Legislature.”

“The House of Lords will never give in.”

“So it was said at the time of the Reform Bill,” returned the Baron, taking a pinch of snuff. “The compelling power only wants a little more screwing down.”

“But really, my dear Sir,” said I, “it has always been a puzzle to me why a gentleman of the Hebrew race should wish to sit in an English Parliament. You are a member of one of the proudest aristocracies on the face of the earth. There were Jewish nobles and princes, when the ancestors of the haughtiest Norman were wandering as naked savages among the woods of the Caucasus. You boast deservedly of the purity of your race. You are justly proud of having taught us our religion, and formed our literature. You claim as your own, one of the finest and best-situated countries in the world, to which I believe that your people will soon be restored; and yet you seek for privileges which will turn out no

less injurious to the Christian character of our constitution, than to your own strong feelings of special and exclusive nationality."

"My good friend, you talk like a very young man with romantic notions, such as I had myself at your age. Leave us to take care of our nationality, which I never heard was impaired, because Daniel was prime-minister to three successive Kings of Babylon. And, by the bye, what do you say to that? Are your Christian prelates and senators prepared to be less liberal than a heathen monarch, towards those whom they acknowledge to have been once at least the chosen people of God?"

"The cases are somewhat dissimilar. A conscientious Jew must long for the destruction of Christianity, the more especially since it is so interwoven with our legislative enactments, that it would meet him at every moment, if he should ever become a legislator."

"A conscientious Jew would, I hope, have

a greater abhorrence for heathenism, and yet idolatry was not destroyed under the administration of Daniel. But let us, if you please, leave the past and come to the present. What is your legislature now? It is not Protestant, for the exclusive Protestantism of Parliament was abolished in 1829. Is it Christian? Why you have Socinians in the House, and many others, who perhaps neither believe in Moses nor in Christ. How long is this sham to continue?"

"What security should we have for our religion, if this principle were once infringed?"

"What security have you now? Considered as a member of the Church of England, you have at present, in the national councils, worse enemies than we should prove. The Romanists and the Dissenters would gladly see the Church prostrate to-morrow. We wish for nothing of the kind. Our danger arises from fanaticism and intolerance. The Church of England is neither fanatical or intolerant. We know our

own interests better, therefore, than to ruin an institution not unfriendly to us, and to substitute in its place the Puritan, who might banish, or the Papist, who might burn us. Again, you need not be afraid of proselytism, for we never proselytize, while the Romanists and Dissenters rob you of your people from time to time. So that you see our admission into Parliament will not be such a terrible blow to your Church after all."

There were arguments which occurred to my mind during this colloquy, and which I could easily have brought forward, had it not been for the fear of hurting the feelings of a new relative, and of one, moreover, who seemed disposed to behave kindly to us. I mentioned them after the Baron's departure to Pemberton, who told me, much to my astonishment, that he looked upon the admission of Jews into Parliament with the utmost indifference.

"Our Christianity, nationally speaking, is gone, and why keep up mere formulas? Be-

sides, if the Jews come in, we shall get Convocation back.”

“ I am afraid, you are deceiving yourselves.”

“ Nonsense, John Bull is obtuse enough ; but he will hardly stomach the dose of Jewish Ecclesiastical Legislation.”

“ Nor will he tolerate a purely Ecclesiastical Convention. I think a mixed Synod of clergymen and laymen might go down ; but people are as much frightened at the Convocation as if it was the Inquisition in *propria personá*.

“ All ignorance and prejudice.”

“ Perhaps so, but you can neither convince a man nor a nation against his or their will. The mass of the people would in my opinion grumble a little at the admission of Jews into Parliament ; but after that they will submit quietly enough. It will be said that as the Legislative influence of a few Roman Catholics has not yet destroyed the Protestantism of the Church, that of a few Jews will not injure her Christianity.”

“ You put me out of patience with your croaking, Singleton,” said Pemberton with an

air of good-humoured irritation, "you will attempt to persuade me next, I suppose, that we shall have a Jew Archbishop of Canterbury."

"I think there would be many people slow at discovering the difference."

Our conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of the servant to announce the Rev. Theophilus Dimity.

"Who is he?" I whispered to Pemberton as the Reverend visitor was wiping his shoes on the mat.

"An old college acquaintance of mine, with not a very modern character. John Bunyan has hit him rather hard in the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' But, hush! here he comes."

Mr. Theophilus Dimity was a tall young man with a countenance which appeared to have seen much service in the smiling way. I noticed that he smiled at every remark, even during the discussion of the state of the weather, a topic usually treated with mournful gravity, or at least with a certain timid frigidity. But I soon

discovered that our new visitor possessed another, and rather an opposite characteristic, that of sighing deeply whenever it did not suit him to commit himself in words. Some one has spoken of beings all smiles and tears, Mr. Dimity was a composition of sighs and smiles.

He informed Pemberton that he had just obtained the secretaryship to a charitable society, and was every day acquiring influence that would at some period or other effectually promote his rise in the Church.

“You see, my dear fellow,” continued Mr. Dimity, “I am what everybody calls a safe man. People of all parties confide in me. A High Churchman comes up, talks of screens, candlesticks, anthems, surplices, and all that. I listen attentively and smile assent. He abuses the ignorance and prejudices of the middle classes. I shake my head, and sigh. He invites me to some little festive ceremony, and then, of course, I smile again. In all this, you see, I don’t commit myself, for no-

body can bring forward the evidence of a smile or a sigh, and it is necessary to be very cautious in these days you know. The High Churchman goes away perfectly satisfied; he says to himself, 'Dimity is quite orthodox; just the man we want.' Then comes the Low Churchman, praises up the foreign Reformers, silyly commends the Puritans, and is in raptures with the speech of that dear Dr. Vappington, the dissenting minister at the last meeting of the Bible Society. I listen smilingly to all he has to say, and when he begins to talk of Romanizing practices, Jesuits in disguise, the abomination of preaching in the surplice, and of turning to the east, I sigh deeply, and he takes it for granted that I am wholly on his side. Thus, you see, being in favour with both parties, they all speak well of me, and I am sure to reap the advantage of it in the long run. As, for instance, we'll say the Bishop has a church to give away, 'Let Dimity have it,' says one. 'He is perfectly sound, my Lord, such an excellent Churchman; Dimity

would be the person,' echoes a second; 'he is so popular, has no prejudices, not at all an extreme man, and decidedly Evangelical.' The Bishop weighs the different statements and begins to think, 'This Dimity must have something in him; safe man—decidedly safe man. I shall never be troubled with him. He will not excite tumults nor abuse his Bishop from the pulpit. Dimity shall be the person.' Now what do you think of that, Pemberton, eh?"

"Since you ask me," was the reply, "I must tell you that I don't like your course at all, nor, to speak candidly, do I think it worthy of a Christian clergyman."

"Well, but," said Mr. Dimity, apparently much disconcerted, "you know St. Paul became all things to all men; and I know I have often heard you abuse party spirit."

"St. Paul used caution and prudence to convert men to Christianity, not 'to get himself a Church,' in the modern acceptance of the word. I never reprobate either of these qualities if

employed for the good of those committed to our charge. I think a clergyman should be specially careful of wounding the consciences or the feelings of weaker brethren. But when he employs these qualities for his own advancement, and trims between two parties, not because he disapproves of party spirit—which I still hate as much as any man can do—but simply because he is afraid to join either, and covets the high honour of being thought “a safe man,” then I consider him totally unworthy of his sacred vocation.”

Mr. Dimity sighed, and changed the subject. He had lately returned from the south of France, and spoke with much feeling and taste of what he had seen there. In fact, on any subject where his natural timidity did not come into play, he displayed great amiability and good sense, which made one the more regret that a man so little blessed with fortitude and decision should have been thrust into a position where both are so much required. What evils have

not churches and communities suffered in all ages from timid, time-serving, yet perhaps at the bottom, well-intentioned men?

When he rose to take his departure, Mr. Dimity recollected that he had brought a model of the Cathedral of Milan to show Pemberton. He placed it on the table, and we both admired the clever execution of the numerous details.

“Pretty, isn’t it?” said Mr. Dimity, drawing back and gazing upon his property with owner-like complacency. It was given me at Paris by an English gentleman, in exchange for some sketches I had made in Provence. Perhaps one of you may know something of him, his name is Walsingham.”

“The very person I was wishing to hear of,” I exclaimed. “Is he on his way home?”

“I expect he will reach this in a week’s time,” said Mr. Dimity. “He had some purchases to make for his son, or he would have come over with me. I can give you his address in Paris if you like.”

He wrote it down on a leaf of my pocket-book, and then bade us good morning.

“It is a pity that man was ever in the Church,” said Pemberton, after he was gone. “As a layman, he might have been respectable; as a clergyman he is, I fear, in great danger of becoming despicable. The able and the conscientious of all parties see through him; and, in fact, I do not think that he has such a chance of rising as he seems to imagine.”

On two occasions afterwards I met with Mr. Theophilus Dimity. The first time I saw him on the platform of Exeter Hall, applauding noisily, with voice and stick, the oration of a tall gentleman with a loud voice and Hibernian accent, who was bitterly denouncing the Bishop of ——. The next view I obtained of his person was in a procession of surpliced clergy, at the consecration of a newly-erected church, when he was chanting very loudly, and endeavouring to look as mortified and mediæval as possible.

The next morning, I went to see Miss Wal-

singham, for the purpose of offering her some counsel and assistance in respect to her mother's funeral. I found the poor girl much calmer, but her calm seemed rather the result of sullen apathy than of a better and more Christian feeling. She listened, in a sort of stupor, to the arrangements that I submitted to her, and scarcely thanked me for the small sum which I placed at her disposal. Beyond general topics of consolation, however, I did not proceed during this interview. I had gained enough experience of late to know that, until the dead are buried out of our sight, their remembrance will haunt and weigh down our spirits, since it is always kept from slumbering by the sight of what was once the being whom we loved.

After the funeral, I again visited the mourner, and discovered, as I had anticipated, that she was more willing to listen to my consolatory exhortations. Of the departed, unhappily, little could be said that was satisfactory; but I did not fail to urge her decease as a warning to the survivor, and a call to a more earnest

and religious state of mind. For some time, she heard me with an impatient and discontented air, as if she was being compelled to listen to what was repulsive and disagreeable. At last, raising her head, she addressed me slowly, and with considerable fluency :

“ Mr. Singleton, you have been very kind to me, and to her that is gone,” (here her voice quivered a little), “ so that I am loth to say anything that would shock or grieve you. But misfortunes have changed me sadly ! When these troubles first came upon me, I prayed to God for help. He never heard me : at least, He never helped me. I was driven, at last, to toil and fag like a slave—yes, worse than many slaves. Night and day, night and day, I was at my needle, wearying myself out for a few pence daily, and exposed besides to the vulgar capricious tyranny of a mean, mercenary wretch, who drove me nearly to distraction, sometimes by threats of dismissal. My mother’s property was all lost by her uncle’s failure, so that she had nothing but my labour

to depend upon, and I could not see her starve. At first I tried to think of religion, and to hope that all was for the best. But work became so pressing, and the remuneration so small, that I was forced to labour on Sundays as hard as on working-days. Of course I could not get to church, and though Mr. Pemberton called here several times, I would not see him. I could not bear that one whose equals we had once been, should see the misery to which we were reduced. Sometimes I tried to think of God and heaven, and good things, but then I grew discontented, and asked why God did not interfere to save me from all this misery. Poor mamma had read a great many of those brilliant French philosophical writers of the last century, and in her troubles their arguments began to tell upon her mind. Her scepticism has communicated itself to me."

She paused a few moments; but finding I did not speak, continued in a more vehement tone:

"Why was I left to all this wretchedness—to

all these temptations? What crime or fault had I committed that I should be reduced to poverty? Other people are rich, and comfortable and happy, who I know have done nothing to deserve it, and why should I, and others like me, be made the exceptions. You will tell me, perhaps, that I ought to have prayed and thought about religion. But my work took up every moment of my time; and when it was over, I was glad to lay my weary head down for a few minutes' sleep. Still I have worked and worked on till my brain has been on fire, and my eye balls nearly started from their sockets with agony. Why was I suffered to endure this?"

"Yet the nature of your occupation was favourable to reflection."

"So the fine lady will tell you," she continued, sarcastically, "who wiles away half an hour with her needle, not the woman who works for bread. Reflection! Why, after a few months of this drudgery, the power of thought seemed dead within me, and I went

through my toil like a machine. It has revived now only to make me feel how wretched I am."

She pressed her hands to her forehead and was silent. I pointed out to her the evil tendency of the thoughts and feelings which she had avowed, reminding her that social inequalities cannot be considered entirely as evils, and that they will soon give place to a state where the sufferings of the miserable shall be fully atoned for by an inexhaustible amount of eternal felicity.

"Ah!" she said softly, "I have dreamed of this. Many a time have I looked up at the clear, blue, smiling sky as I hurried to the shop with my work, and thought how much I should like to be there. And then, when I came back to my window, I felt my heart was softened for a moment, and I could pray that God would take me there at once, out of all these toils and troubles. But He never did, and then I thought it was all fancy and delusion, as my mother said it was."

I resumed my exhortation, and tried to alarm her conscience, by depicting the strict and unswerving justice of God, which would not allow Him to pass unpunished those doubts which were an insult to His goodness, and mental rebellion against His authority.

She raised her head haughtily; there was pride on her brow and defiance in her eye.

“I know not what you call justice,” she exclaimed. “Is it justice to pass over unheeded the prayer of a breaking heart? Is it justice to suffer an unhappy creature to be so engrossed day after day with necessary labour that she has no leisure nor inclination for religious thoughts, and then punish her because she does not acknowledge a paternal tenderness, which she has never known. If such be indeed the justice of Heaven, I scorn and defy its vengeance.”

Shocked by her words, and by the increasing violence of her tone, I made an appealing and pacifying gesture, but she was too excited to heed it.

“No,” she continued, “I am roused now from

my lethargy, and am ashamed of the miserable patience with which I have so long borne the tyranny of both Heaven and earth. This morning the fellow for whom I work rated me worse than he would a dog, because I had not brought home some things which I could not finish on account of poor mother's death, and now you tell me that God is angry with me because I repine. I can bear it no longer. I will throw away this wretched life at once, and take the chance of what comes after. It cannot be worse than what I have already endured."

She seized her bonnet and shawl, but I rose from my seat, and implored her to pause for a few minutes. Walsingham, I told her, would soon arrive in London, and from what I knew of him I was certain that he would never allow his half-sister to depend for subsistence on the disgusting drudgery which she so much disliked. I spoke of his noble character, of the readiness with which he at least would bury the past in oblivion, and only remember that he saw before him the daughter of his father, and one

of whom he had never in the slightest degree occasion to complain.

Miss Walsingham heard me in moody silence. When I mentioned her half-brother's arrival, she testified neither emotion nor surprise, but muttered in a low tone :

“No, no, I can never be indebted to my mother's enemy for food and shelter.”

I had exhausted, as I thought, every topic of consolation, and remained silent in my turn. Yet, though I spoke not, the internal strain upon my thoughts was becoming intensely painful. I felt that if I could hope to rescue a soul from destruction and save a fellow-creature from the suicide's grave, now was the moment. The time was flying on, and each instant was adding energy to her resolution, and nerve to her purpose. I was certain that she would elude my vigilance, and that no physical restraint could divert her from her design. Only moral suasion could bend that iron will, and soften that determined and obdurate soul. Yet, although feeling all this, and being as morally

sure of the fatal result, as if I had seen it pictured before my eyes, I felt that for the ransom of worlds I could not wring from my now barren invention a single argument, or a solitary idea that my judgment told me would be of use. At length a suggestion seemed to dart across my mind with the rapidity of lightning, and I hastened to carry it out.

I spoke no more of God's justice, or of the awful character of His Almighty wrath. I told her in subdued tones of One who had assumed our nature, that He might bear our sorrows and sympathise with our grief; of the pains and privations which He had endured, that those privations might become a sacred medium of communion between Him and those who should have courage and faith to follow out His example. I bade her remember that He for her sake had borne the world's contumely, and drained to the dregs the chalice of the world's scorn, while even His nature, blended with divinity as it was, had known the abasement of human despair, and had besought in the

garden of Gethsemane that the cup of suffering might pass away.

I paused. The once haughty and sceptical girl had sank upon her knees, while the tears were fast chasing each other down her cheeks.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE demeanour of Miss Walsingham gradually became calmer under the influence of my exhortations, and I began to perceive with satisfaction that hope was once more reviving in her mind. She listened with composure when I again spoke of her half-brother, and seemed as much astonished as pained on hearing the history of Adeline, whom, on account of her having been during that period at a continental boarding-school, she had never seen. She was equally surprised when I told her of the disinterested and generous manner in which Walsingham had increased her mother's fortune, as she had been led to believe that the second

family were, to some extent, defrauded of their just rights. Altogether, I left her very much disposed to take a favourable view of his character, and not so disinclined as formerly to receive assistance from him.

My wife met me in the hall of the Parsonage, with the joyful intelligence that Walsingham was waiting for me within. He had arrived sooner than was originally expected, on account of my letter, which his agent at Malta forwarded to Paris, and which, therefore, he had only received a day or two before. Our meeting was very welcome to both parties, though he gently blamed me for not having made him acquainted with my loss, and the subsequent hardships I had endured. Of the late Mrs. Walsingham, he spoke in a feeling and forgiving manner.

“She has wronged me deeply,” he said, “and most, if not all, of the troubles which have fallen to my share in life, may be either directly or indirectly traced to her instrumentality. But she is gone, and may God forgive her, as I

do. My resentment shall be buried in her grave. And now, with regard to this poor girl. She is my father's daughter, quite innocent, as you seem to think, of any of her mother's faults, and she must not be left in that miserable hole half-an-hour longer. I should like to see her immediately, if you can find time to accompany me."

Of course I consented at once to this; but as the thought occurred to me that it would be better if I spoke to Miss Walsingham myself in the first instance, and prepared her for her brother's visit, I advised my friend to wait a few minutes for me below. He approved of my plan; and happening to see Jobson standing at his door, I asked the old soldier if he could let Walsingham have a seat in his room for a short time. They went up-stairs together, while I proceeded over the way on my mission.

Miss Walsingham was both surprised and perplexed when I informed her that her brother was so near at hand, and mentioned his inten-

tion of paying her a visit immediately. A sense of her mother's past injustice towards him, and a sort of shame that he should find her in such a condition of abject distress, made her feel nervous and embarrassed. She assented, however, to the propriety of seeing him at once, and I promised to return with him in ten minutes' time.

When I entered Jobson's room, I found him in very animated conversation with Walsingham, who seemed to enjoy drawing the old man out, and making him speak of long past military scenes and adventures.

"What a shame it is," said Walsingham to me, as we walked across the street, "that an old veteran who has fought and bled for us, the careless sons of prosperity and affluence at home, should be thus forgotten and neglected in his old age! Everybody now would readily contribute towards a monument in honour of his commander, and yet what would the best General be without brave and energetic men to back him?"

“My dear friend, the ‘*sic vos non vobis*’ of Virgil is as much the rule now as it was nineteen hundred years ago. Shame on us, that we have improved so little in social morality since the days of Paganism !”

“These things make a thinking man despise the world and those who inhabit it.”

“They teach us, at least, to expect in another state that perfect justice and happiness which we never can find here.”

The meeting of Miss Walsingham with her brother was full of embarrassment on either side. Though such near relations, they were utter strangers to each other, while the unnatural estrangement which had existed so long between them, as well as the prejudices and misunderstandings resulting from it, rendered it difficult to adopt at once a cordial and familiar tone. Walsingham was the first to break down a barrier of reserve that was becoming each moment more painful, and, to borrow a metaphor from my old acquaintance, Mr. Rusk, “came at once to the point.”

He began by blaming himself for not having made inquiries sooner respecting his mother-in-law's circumstances, touched lightly and delicately upon the unhappy feud which had existed between them, and hoped in conclusion that his newly-found relative would prove her forgiveness of the past by accepting a home in his house for the future. With great feeling, he endeavoured to remove the sense of obligation involved in the proposal, by a mirthful allusion to the necessity for female supervision and superintendence in a place only inhabited by bachelors; but the attempted jest evidently excited painful recollections, and he broke off abruptly.

With the quick perception and ready tact of her sex, his sister penetrated at once the nature of his feelings, and without farther hesitation, exclaimed:

“Brother, I will go with you, and henceforth you shall be to me all she has been, only do not think harshly or unkindly of the dead.”

She laid her hand upon his arm as she spoke, and looked up to him with an expression of

sympathising confidence. He felt the force of the appeal, and answered cheerfully.

“I am sure you will be happy at the old place, and Jack will be delighted that his aunt is neither cross nor ugly. He is such a tall, strapping fellow though now, that you may be ashamed to own him as a nephew.”

Miss Walsingham remained in her present lodgings until she could make such additions to her wardrobe as enabled her to move to her brother's hotel. Perceiving that the oaken box had taken my fancy, she begged me to accept it as a slight token of her gratitude for my past kindness.

“It is the only thing I have to bestow,” she said, “though I hope you will feel no scruple on that score, since keeping it by me would only keep alive painful associations.”

I deposited my new acquisition in the safe keeping of my wife, and went to return the visit of Baron Monçada. I found him inhabiting a handsome house near the Regent's Park, where, at the period of my arrival, he

was receiving a deputation of would be constituents, who were anxious that he should become their representative in Parliament. In token of their admiration, they had just presented him with a silver cup, shaped like a boar's head. It was a curious gift for a swine-hating Hebrew, but the gentlemen of the deputation erred in ignorance. Many of them, indeed, entertained very limited ideas upon the subject of boars, and doubted, perhaps, whether this mysterious animal possessed any affinity to pork.

When they had retired, I was asked to walk into the Baron's study. He was in high spirits, and rubbing his hands, inquired what I thought of their cause now?

"You see," he continued, "we are carrying all before us. Public opinion will soon force the Lords to surrender the point, and in less than two years the humble individual before you will be a senator. Patience and money can do anything now-a-days, my dear Sir."

“They are, indeed, powerful auxiliaries,” I observed.

“Nothing like them. There was my title for instance, which I got for a mere song, though in my mind the Austrians had still the best of the bargain. But it was useful to me, and I bought it, as I could have bought the empire which sold it, if that had been an object. Now I want a seat in the House of Commons, and in time, by means of money and patience, I shall get that too. In fact, I never fail in anything I set my mind upon.”

There was a proud glance in his eye as he uttered the last words, which reminded me strongly of his brother, and seemed to recall a time when the Hebrew had not yet become the outcast of the world. There are, doubtless, great destinies in store for this people. Why, alas! will they persevere in their old national faults, of endeavouring to work them out in their own way?

“By the bye,” resumed the Baron, “I want

to speak to you about the church, which is to be built on my ground. The first nomination will be placed in your hands, for I shall not, of course, meddle with it. Still I thought that as I had given my money, I might do something for so near a kinsman. It is a maxim with me never to throw money away. Spend as much as you like, but take care you always have some equivalent."

I thanked him for his consideration, as I did not feel that I ought to decline an offer of this kind, the more especially as I by no means intended to exercise the privilege for my own benefit. My close intimacy with Pember-ton had made me well acquainted with his worth, abilities, and piety. I knew, moreover, that the health of his child was suffering from the unwholesome atmosphere of his district, and he was also my senior in the diocese, therefore I at once begged to recommend him for the post. The Baron at first objected to what he termed my romantic idea, but finally gave way, and did

not seem ill-pleased, upon the whole, that I had preferred the claims of justice and friendship to the dictates of mere self-interest. He gave me a note to one of the principal persons connected with the erection of the church, and I may as well mention here, that finally I had the pleasure of seeing Pemberton installed as its minister.

On my return, I found a note from Walsingham. It stated that the living of Wickley-cum-strete, a small village close to his country residence, and the patronage of which rested with his family, was now vacant, and he wished me to accept it. At first I hesitated, having become much attached to the poor people among whom my lot had been cast. After some consultation with Pemberton and other friends, however, I gave way to Walsingham's solicitations. The living had been well endowed in times past, but the present population was by no means numerous, while the neighbouring parish afforded its vicar only one hundred and

fifty pounds a-year, and contained about five thousand souls. I therefore deemed it my duty to transfer to this ill-paid benefice an annual sum of one hundred pounds, from my stipend. The transfer was effected through the medium of Walsingham, who also added something from his own purse.

While we were packing up, I found myself at a loss how to dispose of a small bundle of sermons and other manuscripts which I was anxious should not be lost. My wife, however, reminded me of the oaken box given us by Miss Walsingham.

“That will be just the thing,” said I, “go and fetch it, my dear.”

We found the box locked, and I was obliged to have the lock forced. When we opened it, I perceived two letters inside, with the seals broken and was about to burn them, when an idea darted across my mind which led me to examine their contents. After reading two or three lines, I suddenly snatched up my hat and

hurried out of the house, much to the amazement of my wife and the locksmith.

Walsingham was not yet gone from his hotel when I arrived there, breathless from the haste I had used. He was alone and gazed upon me with a look of inquiring astonishment, as I thrust the papers I brought with me into his hand.

“They are the letters of Adeline.” The information was almost needless; he had already divined it, as I saw clearly by his changing colour and agitated countenance.

“I am not equal to the perusal of them in the presence of another, even though that other is my dearest friend. Go now, Singleton, but be sure you come here to-morrow, as I shall no doubt have much to say to you.”

I came as he requested, on the following morning, and he then told me that these letters had been written to him by poor Adeline from her lodging, whither she had begged him, in the most moving terms to repair immediately. It

was, of course, quite clear to him as well as to me that they had been intercepted and kept back by the mother-in-law, who had chosen this base method of gratifying the hatred which she had always entertained towards Walsingham, and had latterly manifested to his young bride.

What the state of his feelings had been, on the discovery of this act of treachery may well be imagined. He was now calmer, and perfectly disposed to agree with me that his sister should be kept in ignorance of her mother's guilt. The perpetrator of the injury herself had gone to her dread account, and neither of us wished to shock the feelings of her surviving child.

"May God have mercy on the unhappy woman;" said Walsingham, solemnly, "but I feel as if the aspiration were almost a mockery."

"We are all sinners," I answered, "and, perhaps, it is better for us to abstain from discussing in what degree each has merited the displeasure of the Almighty. One thing we

are sure of, that 'the Judge of all the earth will do right.' ”

I am now quietly settled in my village parsonage where it has pleased the Great Bestower of all good to grant me no limited amount of happiness. My wife still continues what I have always found her, a comforter in my sorrows, a sharer and heightener of my joys. Walsingham resides near me at the Manor House. His sister lives with him, and is called the “Lady Bountiful” of our village, an appellation which she has done her best to merit by numberless and inobtrusive acts of benevolence and piety. Jack is reading hard at Oxford, and they tell me will probably take high honours.

Old Jobson, the worthy veteran of Shadwell Green, has been appointed by Walsingham a sort of deputy-steward in his service. The post is nearly a sinecure, but it gives him something to occupy his leisure, and takes away from his mind that painful sense of obligation which none feel more keenly than the respectable poor.

He has latterly been nominated parish clerk, in which capacity he is the terror of refractory school-boys, and reads the service some think almost as well as the parson himself.

My old friend Ranson goes on dabbling in literature, and frequently runs down to stay with us for a day or two, on which occasions he cross-examines the most intelligent of my parishioners as to their personal histories, with a minuteness that now and then quite alarms them. He has established a particular friendship with the dame of the little school here, our chief authority in legendary lore, and hints mysteriously that some day his researches may see the light under the somewhat striking title of "Peeps from the Window of a Country Parsonage." Pemberton has collected round him a large congregation, by whom he is much respected, and is considered in high quarters a valueable and trustworthy Presbyter.

My wife's uncle, the Baron, is not in Parliament yet, and seems to doubt whether, in spite

of "money and patience," he ever will be. It is, however, very satisfactory for me to be able to add that he is now studying the evidences of our Divine Faith, and though neither Rachel nor I like to be sanguine on such a matter, yet we are looking forward to the result of this inquiry with deep interest and earnest hope.

And now before I conclude, let me invite the reader to take a seat for a few minutes in my study where are assembled the principal personages of this narrative. Their conversation may form a species of Hibernian preface to the foregoing pages.

Mr. Ranson commences by stating it as the general opinion of my friends that I should write a book.

"You have," he continues, "after performing your clerical duties a great amount of leisure which, from the small size of the village, you cannot fill up by professional labours. Then the next town is too far off for you to assist the clergy there. I think, therefore, that under these

circumstances you should address yourself to the public at large. The press is now become almost as important as the pulpit in its influence over the general mind. The spread of education augments daily the number of readers, and it has been, I believe, pretty clearly demonstrated that if wholesome mental food is not provided for them, they will put up with any garbage that falls in their way."

"I have thought of this," said I, "and feel much disposed to follow your advice. But the question is what to write?"

"A poem," said Walsingham.

"A treatise on the Greek liturgies," said Pemberton.

"A sketch of your travels," exclaimed Ranson.

My wife glanced at Mrs. Pemberton, and deriving encouragement from her sympathizing looks, suggested "a nice religious novel."

All paused for my reply, which I delivered from my leathern chair with eyes fixed on the

ceiling, and without addressing myself to any one in particular.

“For poetry I have no vocation. Ecclesiastical subjects demand a vast amount of learning and a number of books. I have neither the one nor the other. The public have been indulged *usque ad nauseam* with voyages and travels. Besides I think my natural taste would lead me more to a work of imagination.”

“What do you say then to a religious novel?” said Pemberton, “written on sound Church principles, and proving that Convocation is indispensable?”

“I think a hit at Popery might be more popular,” suggested Ranson; “could not you write a thrilling narrative that would make the flesh of every Protestant householder creep upon his bones, and call it the ‘Nun in the Cupboard,’ or the ‘Jesuit in the Coal-cellar?’ The thing would sell amazingly.”

“My good friends,” I replied, “I have no

great liking for polemics in any shape, and least of all in this. To discuss grave and solemn doctrines in works of a light nature seems to me out of place, and liable to detract from their sacred character. If you explain them fully, an ordinary reader is wearied, if superficially you may unintentionally be grievously misunderstood. Besides is it fair or honest to create a number of puppets that the one we especially favour may knock down all the rest, or to state our own opinions in the strongest possible way, while we leave to our opponents only the mockery of a defence?"

"You object then to a religious novel?" said Walsingham.

"In the popular sense, yes. But yet there is a species of fiction free from these objections, which I conceive a clergyman might write, and a bishop read without detriment to either. It has been attempted with some success in Italy, and I am convinced would meet with favour here."

“Oh! you mean such works as those of D’Azeglio and Manzoni,” said Ranson.

“Yes, and you might have added the names of authors nearer home. What we want in fact is a series of tales, free from party opinions, yet delineating accurately and correctly the scenes, habits, and sentiments of the age we live in; tales in which most of the personages introduced should be in the best sense of the word Christians, yet able to open their mouths without delivering a sermon, tales which might show the gradual quiet influence of religion upon the mind without exhibiting either fanaticism nor Pharisaism, and which every father of a family might, without hesitation or fear, place in the hands of his daughters. Such is the works I would write if I were able.”

“Then why don’t you?” urged Ranson.

“Because I am afraid I have not ability for the task. I shall, however, try and draw out a plain, simple story, which if kindly received by the public might encourage me to attempt further efforts.”

“And what is to be the subject?”

“My own autobiography.”

Each of them looked rather confused, and my wife exclaimed to Mrs. Pemberton with a countenance of alarm :

“I declare he is going to put us all in print.”

Reader from these remarks thou may'st gain some glimpses of my intention. It is for thee to say whether or no it has been successfully carried out.

THE END.

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