

E. J. Melford.
1844

STRAY LEAVES

FROM

A FREEMASON'S NOTE-BOOK.

BY

A SUFFOLK RECTOR.

"Every Christian is a stone in this spiritual edifice, in which, when properly modelled and polished by the exercise of religion and the practice of morality, and fitted for translation to a celestial building, he is cemented with his perfected brethren, by charity, into a beautiful temple, prepared on earth and put together in Heaven."

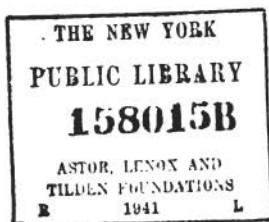
Dr. Oliver's STAR IN THE EAST.

L O N D O N :

RICHARD SPENCER, 314, HIGH HOLBORN.

1846.

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Printed by J. & H. COX, BROTHERS (LATE COX & SONS),
74 & 75, Great Queen St., Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

Neale, Erskine
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PREFACE.

IN claiming the attention of the reader to the present volume, it may be proper for me to state, that it originated in a wish to aid those charities which are at once the boast and ornament of our order, and more particularly to strengthen that which I conceive to be so full of promise — THE PROJECTED “ASYLUM FOR THE AGED AND DECAYED FREE-MASON.”

In waiving, for myself, *all* pecuniary advantage, the far higher gratification will be mine of devoting *the entire proceeds of the copyright to Masonic charity.*

If the reader will bear in mind this design, some defects will more readily be excused. Moreover, it is incumbent on me to state, clearly and candidly, that some three or four of these sketches have appeared elsewhere. “Canning

in Retirement," "The Foreign Sorceress and the British Statesman," "A Sovereign, a Lady in Waiting, and a Secret," figured in the fugitive literature of the day; while "The Measure meted out to Others measured to us again," was honoured with a niche in "Blackwood."

Would they were, one and all, more worthy of the cause they are designed to serve!

That some of the inferences which they suggest will be controverted is probable enough: especially such as have reference to the condition of the poor. Let me hope, however, that whatever deficiency my *brochure* may contain, there will be found in it no want of Christian tenderness.

For the rest—"None of these things move me!" Who is it that says: "The triumphs in evil which men call great, are but clouds passing over the serene and everlasting heavens. Men may, in craft or passion, decree violence and oppression; but silently, irre-

sistibly, they and their works are swept away. A voice of encouragement comes to us from the ruins of the past—from the humiliations of the proud, from the prostrate thrones of conquerors, from the baffled schemes of statesmen, from the reprobation which sooner or later visits unrighteous policy. Men, measures, and all earthly interests pass away; but **PRINCIPLES ARE ETERNAL.** Truth, justice, and goodness partake of the omnipotence and immutableness of God, whose essence they are. In these it becomes us to place a calm, joyful, and unfaltering trust in the darkest hour. “Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?”

E.

Rectory,
October 1st, 1846.

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STRAY LEAVES FROM A FREE-MASON'S NOTE-BOOK.

CHAPTER I.

SIR WILLIAM WEBB FOLLETT IN EARLY LIFE.

A BOYISH REMINISCENCE.

“ I fear not fate thy pendent shears,—
There are who pray for length of years;
To them not me allot them :—
Life's cup is nectar at the brink,
Midway a palatable drink,
And wormwood at the bottom.”

HORACE SMITH.

THERE is something pleasing yet solemn in the review which, as life's evening advances, we take of our early contemporaries. The roll-call recurs to us; and with each name a thousand associations are instantly blended. Of those whom we recollect to have entered the race with us, how many have long since reached

the goal! How few,—comparatively speaking,—after a lapse of nine-and-twenty years remain! Upon some, the drama of life has closed in poverty and exile. Upon others, bitter disappointment has fallen. The manhood of not a few has been steeped in sorrow. While more than one has sunk to sleep in the bosom of our common parent, with prospects finally and hopelessly over-shadowed by ignominy and disgrace.

Thus musing, it is delightful to turn to one whose whole progress was “*onward*,” and whose career amply justified the affectionate expectations of those to whom his fame was dear.

✓ Sir William Webb Follett and myself were school-fellows. We had the advantage of being under the discipline of Doctor Lempriere—the author of the well-known Classical Dictionary,—during the period he presided over the Exeter Free Grammar School.

Of him it is not too much to affirm that he was at once the scholar and the gentleman—a most patient instructor, and a most gifted companion. Poor fellow! he laboured long and cheerfully; but the evening of his active life was painfully overcast. The “*otium cum dig-*

nitate" was his only in prospect. Persecution assailed him from a quarter whence he had a right to expect only friendship. "*Dis aliter visum!*" He was ejected from the Head Mastership—the victim, as he averred, of some wretched intrigue; and the object of accusations which could never be substantiated.

But the period during which Sir William and my humble self were under his control, was that of his "high and palmy" days; when the school was in the zenith of its fame, and he of his popularity—when the eldest sons of distinguished county families were domesticated beneath his roof—and no accents save those of commendation arose around him.

One peculiarity he had—that of forming a tolerably correct estimate of a boy's after-success in life. I do not affirm that his opinion was always framed independent of prejudice, or that all his predictions were verified. I contend only that, mainly and generally, he was right. One instance I remember well. We had on the roll of our class a lad of extraordinary promise. His quickness and clearness of apprehension were remarkable. His command of language was great, and his facility in composition enviable. The under-

masters petted A—— as a prodigy; and boldly predicted, on his leaving us, that he would rise, and rise rapidly, to distinction.

From this opinion the Doctor invariably dissented. “Pshaw!” he was heard to say, on one occasion, “he will attain no distinction; unless it be that of leaving the country at his Majesty’s expense. He wants ballast—the ballast of PRINCIPLE.”

The Doctor was right. Poor A—— is now at Sydney.

Equally judicious was his estimate of the late Attorney-General. “Webb Follett is not brilliant, but he is solid. He will not snatch, but he will earn distinction. I shall not live to see it; but it will be so.”

Now, this conclusion was the more curious, because Follett was not one of those spirits who hit peculiarly the Doctor’s taste. Follett, as a boy, was rather slow. There is no use in denying it. There was at school nothing dashing or brilliant about him. His articulation in boyhood was thick; and his demeanour somewhat sluggish. Now sharpness, quickness, and readiness, the Doctor delighted in. Again: Follett was not fond of classics. The Doctor revelled in them. And yet he appreciated his

pupil, and did him justice. In proof of this, I well recollect that when one of the under-masters—Osborne was the reverend gentleman's name—said to the Doctor, after a hasty perusal, "*Webb Follett's verses, Sir, want imagination:*" the rejoinder instantly followed—"But, Sir, they possess—what many verses do not—SENSE!"

There was one peculiarity about the late Attorney-General in boyhood, which, I am inclined to think, accompanied him in after-life. He possessed the entire confidence of our little community.—The sentiment he inspired, generally, was respect. "Well! that's Webb Follett's opinion"—was a dictum which settled many a boyish quarrel, and stilled many an angry difference. Perhaps this might mainly be owing to his manner: for even in boyhood he was calm, and grave, and self-possessed. There was a composedness about him which no petty irritations could ruffle. Webb Follett in a passion would have been a rare spectacle on the play-ground.

I remember accompanying him and two others to the Nisi Prius Court, at Exeter, during the assizes. We little thought at that moment what a distinguished rôle our calm

and thoughtful companion was himself destined to play in a court of judicature. Talent there was in abundance on the Western Circuit at that juncture; Gifford and Lens, and Pell and Abbot, all in the very zenith of their powers, and in the full swing of successful exertion, and all since passed away from the scene!

We, the juniors, were desirous to bribe our way into the Crown Court; but Follett was resolved to enter none but the *nisi prius*.

"I want," was his remark, "to hear Gifford cross-examine a witness;" and, much against our will, we accompanied him. We staid till the court broke up. When the sheriff's carriage approached to convey the judge to his lodgings, with the pomp and parade usually observed on such occasions, we loitered and gazed at the spectacle with lighter hearts, perhaps, than those of the principal performers.

"Who knows but that *I* may come here as judge some day myself?" said our companion, as we reluctantly turned our steps homeward.

"Judge Follett!" we exclaimed and roared with amusement.

"Well, Follett, you would be a grave judge

at any rate!" said Edward Gater, our spokesman.

"Grave or not," was the rejoinder, "I hope I should be able to see when a counsel was *bamming* me; and not listen on, as that old woman did this morning, while Pell was regularly *cramming* her!"

The "old woman" was no less a personage than the late Sir Alan Chambre.

And yet, daring and strange as the remark may seem—those who remember him in youth will bear out its truth—law was not his choice. His early predilections leant towards a military life. I remember going down to stay with him a couple of days at his father's at Topsham. A general officer had died in or near Exeter: he had commanded the district, and a military funeral on an extensive scale and of an imposing description awaited him. Follett and I witnessed it. During the visit, he reverted to this spectacle more than once, and told me how much and ardently he had wished to be a soldier. He dwelt on the many attractions which the profession of arms possessed for him; the perpetual change of scene which it involved; the probability of visiting foreign climes; the careless, light-hearted, joyous life

led by the military man; the independent position which the soldier maintained in society;—"but," so ran his summary, "this is an idle train of thought: my father's past experience leads him to oppose me, decidedly, on the point; and," added he, with his calm, sweet, thoughtful smile, "ours is a struggling family; we want money."

In after-life he was accused of being sordid; but might not the unwavering and untiring earnestness with which he followed up his determination to accumulate wealth have had its origin in those prudential considerations, pressed on him by Captain Follett in the outset of his career, and which undoubtedly swayed him in his choice of a profession? Nor, while glancing at the past, does it escape me that, politically, the bias of the youth and of the man was identical. Follett, even in his early days, was an unflinching Tory. A boyish incident fixes this firmly in my memory. Near the grammar school lived a saddler of the name of Cooke: this eccentric had a strong political mania, and used, during the stirring period of the war, to issue, for the benefit of the masses, large written placards detailing, in quaint phraseology and most original spelling,

the leading events of the day. These monster placards were nailed to his shutters, read by many hundreds in the course of the current twenty-four hours, and were called "*Cooke's Bullenteens*." The saddler was a disciple of Lord Eldon's school; thought Billy Pitt "the greatest man that ever drew the breath of life," and Buonaparte the incarnation upon earth of the evil one; hated the French with a perfect hatred, and regarded Cobbett as "a traitorous villain, whom the axe would make a head shorter some summer's day;" spoke of George the Third as a martyr—the train of reasoning by which he arrived at this conclusion I could never very clearly follow—and Peter Pindar "a wretch unfit to live!" His idol was Lord Rolle: he called him "the glory of Devon," "his country's pride," one of the "bulwarks of the state," "Lord Liverpool's prized counsellor," and "the ornament of the peerage." Alas! poor peerage!

But despite of all their absurdity, prejudice, and strange orthography, John Cooke's "*Bullenteens*" had a host of "constant readers." Among them, at any and every opportunity he could seize, the future Attorney-General. His

penchant did not escape comment: the entire sixth form assailed him.

“What can induce you, Follett, to stand and read such trash?” cried one senior. “Saddler Cooke is little better than a maniac,” shouted another.

“And should be taught to spell,” added a third.

“Which Follett, for the love he bears him, is about to attempt,” was the sly suggestion of a fourth.

Follett finished the “bullenteen” without heeding the small shot that was firing around him. He decyphered the hieroglyphics and mastered the orthography with his wonted deliberation, and then calmly rejoined—

“No one denies the coarseness of Cooke’s remarks, or the general absurdity of his arguments, when the reasoning fit is on him; but I like the man—like him hugely. I like his honesty, his sincerity, his obstinate devotion to his party; and, more than this, I like him because, himself sprung from the rabble, he is no democrat, but, on the contrary, never fails to warn his fellow-men how they would fare were a mob government in rule over them.

Laugh on as you will, I'm to the death John Cooke's ally, admirer, and constant reader."

Meanwhile, if the saddler had his adherents, he had also his opponents; and, as he never could be brought to use parliamentary language, or study refinement in the epithets which he applied to men and parties, there was occasionally a row around his "bullen-teens." At one of these Follett was present. The obnoxious paper was about to be pulled down and torn to atoms by an incensed bystander, when Follett dashed in, rescued the state paper, and restored it to its amazed and angry owner.

Tidings of this escapade reached head quarters.

"By what fortune were you present at this paltry brawl," said the Doctor, "and what motive had you for interfering? I address myself to Follett."

"If you please, Sir, Cooke belongs to our party," was the response.

"Oh!" said the Doctor, drily, "I was not aware that my sixth form troubled themselves about parties: and pray, Mr. Follett, which may you favour?"

“Church and State, Sir.”

“I wish most devoutly,” said the Doctor, turning away, “that the Exe had the saddler and his bulletins and his ink-horn in its waters; I shall now be treated to a political mania in the school, and have this to combat in addition to ignorance and idleness. Pleasant! My obligations to Mr. Cooke are great.”

Those who saw Sir William only in public, and noticed the gravity, quiescence, and dignity of his demeanour, would credit with reluctance that quiet humour formed any part of his character. It did. One brief trait must suffice. At the period I am referring to, there lived in Colleton Crescent a lady of the name of Hewitt. She was a person advanced in life; a widow, possessed of West India property to some amount; of extremely cheerful habits; fond of society; and very partial to young people. To amuse a nephew and niece who were staying with her, she issued cards for a masquerade. This was a novel species of entertainment in Exeter; created a good deal of expectation among the young; and marvellous comment among the old. But comment was not all which the projected evening's

amusement aroused. The gay old lady was doomed to meet with opposition. A few days before the masquerade was "to come off," a clergyman—I shall term him the Reverend Goliah Ghostly—called on Mrs. Hewitt to demand her reasons for giving so objectionable an entertainment. The lady faltered a little in her reply; and at length observed, that she "imagined the Exeter people would like it—the young folks more particularly." Upon which, Mr. Ghostly upbraided her for her godless tastes; told her in plain terms how reprehensible were her doings; and finished, by inquiring, "what would become of her if she should die with a masquerade going on in her house?"—The elderly lady meekly answered, that she "had certainly not provided against such a contingency: and was aware that death could be at no great distance from her whether she was at home or abroad." Mr. Ghostly then assured her that she was corrupting the morals of the young: setting a perilous example in a cathedral city; that all sober people looked upon the projected masquerade as an abomination; that thenceforth she would be a marked person; and that the public, as they passed Colleton Crescent, would point to her dwell-

ing, and say, "that is the infamous house where the masquerade was given!"

This last figure of speech overpowered Mrs. Hewitt. The "finger of scorn" was too much for her. She shed tears: confessed the error of her ways: and vowed that she would recall her cards, and that the masquerade should be forthwith relinquished.

Had Mr. Ghostly paused here and vanished, all would have been well. His triumph so far was complete. But not satisfied with the concession he had won, he renewed the attack, by inquiring when this satanic imagination first took possession of her mind; asked her if she had ever attended a revel of the kind; and added his fears as to the frightfully lethargic state of her conscience, which could permit her to contemplate an entertainment of such an equivocal description. Mrs. Hewitt upon this dried her tears; reflected in silence for a few moments; and then amended her position.

She observed, she thought at sixty she was able to distinguish between right and wrong; that she held there was a marked difference between a public and a private masquerade; that she fancied she was at liberty to spend her income as she pleased; that Mr. Goliah

Ghostly was not her parochial minister, or even a personal acquaintance; that she at no time attended his church, or formed part of his congregation; that she denied his right to call her to account, or to decide upon her future destiny; and further, she was resolved that—*the masquerade should go forward!* On that she was firm, come what would of it!

Mr. Ghostly professed himself unutterably shocked, and commenced *de novo* his threats and warnings. These the hospitable old lady waived by asking him to take luncheon; and on his declining, rose and said, "their most unforeseen and *agreeable* interview was ended." She "had promised to take an invalid friend a drive, and expected the carriage round every moment."

This conference—its object—its results—the dialogue which passed between the parties, formed a glorious theme for gossip for many days in Exeter. The sixth form, who had sisters, brothers, cousins bidden to the frolic, and who were all agog themselves on the subject, discussed Mr. Ghostly's visit most assiduously; the characters which *it was surmised* their various relatives intended to assume were enumerated and criticised.

“The masquerade will be a dead failure,” remarked Follett, slyly, who had been a quiet but most observant listener—“a decided and acknowledged failure, if one character be not present at it.”

“Name! name!” exclaimed a dozen eager voices.

“Mr. Goliah Ghostly,” said Follett, with a low musical laugh.

“But how? by what means? The thing is impossible!”

“Nothing easier! And what lots of fun his presence would cause in the motley assembly.”

“Whether the same idea struck another party, or whether Follett’s suggestion was deemed too good to be lost, was repeated by some one of his youthful auditory, and immediately adopted by some relative or friend, who was at a loss for a character, and deemed it a happy one, cannot now be ascertained. Certain it is, that about midnight, a mask, professionally attired, and calling himself the Reverend Goliah Ghostly, presented himself at Mrs. Hewitt’s mansion with proper credentials; obtained admission, and duly and warmly anatomized the amused and uproarious party.

Who he was never transpired; though many

and shrewd guesses were hazarded respecting him. His voice was as musical as his denunciations were bitter. This much is indisputable, that for weeks and months afterwards, the real Mr. Ghostly was ever and anon asked what he thought of masquerades in general, and of Mrs. Hewitt's in particular?

Nor was this the extent of the annoyance endured by him. There were some bull-headed people who believed, or affected to believe, that, unable to resist the prevailing mania, Mr. Ghostly's scruples had given way, and that, after all, he was present at Mrs. Hewitt's misdoings:—they averred, *as a fact*, that “it was *the real* and no fictitious Mr. Ghostly,” who solemnly paraded the apartments, and in good set terms reprov'd the merry-making assemblage. This was filling the cup of bitterness to the brim.

The future Attorney-General had been for many months called to the bar when we again met. This was early in 1826. He then spoke calmly but feelingly of the professional jealousy which existed among those to whom he was now affiliated.

“Players' rivalry,” said he, “is a joke to it. You can have no conception of its extent, or

strength, unless you yourself belonged to the profession."

He then reverted to past scenes and mutual friends: and in the course of conversation, I inferred, from a passing remark, that he had become a Mason. I asked if my conclusion was correct.

"It is," was his reply: "I was initiated at Cambridge."

LIGHT had not then beamed upon myself; and I expressed in scoffing terms my astonishment.

"In your early struggles at the bar," remarked he with quiet earnestness, "you require something to reconcile you to your kind. You see so much of bitterness, and rivalry, and jealousy, and hatred, that you are thankful to call into active agency a system which creates in all its varieties kindly sympathy, cordial and wide-spread benevolence, and brotherly love."

"But surely," said I, "you don't go the length of asserting that Masonry does all this?"

"And more! The true Mason thinks no evil of his brother, and cherishes no designs against him. The system itself annihilates par-

ties. And as to censoriousness and calumny, most salutary and stringent is the curb which Masonic principle, duly carried out, applies to an unbridled tongue."

"Well! well! you cannot connect it with religion: you cannot, say or do as you will, affirm of it that Masonry is a religious system."

"By-and-by, you will know better," was his reply. "Now I will only say this, that the Bible is never closed in a Mason's lodge; that Masons habitually use prayer in their lodges; and, in point of fact, never assemble for any purpose without performing acts of religion:—I gave you credit," continued he with a smile, "for being more thoroughly emancipated from nursery trammels and slavish prejudice."

"You claim too much for your system;" was my rejoinder.

"Not at all! But hear me. Many clergymen were and are Masons. The well-known Dr. Dodd belonged to us."

"I presume," said I, jestingly, "you attach but slight weight to his name? The selection is unfortunate."

"It occurred to me," said he, "from my having recently read some very curious letters

connected with his case. The Masons, both individually and as a body, made the most extraordinary efforts to save him. They were unwearied : but—I must break off ; when I can call you brother you shall see these letters. Meanwhile, is it not worth while to belong to a fraternity whose principles, if universal, would put down at once and for ever the selfish and rancorous feelings which now divide and distract society ?”

CHAPTER II.

THE SOLDIER-MASON.

A SKETCH FROM REAL LIFE.

“As a military man I can say, and I speak from experience, that I have known many soldiers who were Masons: I never knew a good Mason who was a bad soldier.”

LORD COMBERMERE.

DURING an early period of my life, it was my fortune to hold a curacy in Worcester.

The parish in which I had to labour, though limited in point of size, was populous; and in it were to be found densely packed together, in two narrow, close, unhealthy streets, some twelve or fourteen hundred of the working classes. It was a post at once interesting and distressing;—interesting from the varied aspect it presented of human sorrow, struggle, and suffering; and distressing from the poverty which prevailed in it, and the utter inability of an individual clergyman to cope with its many wants and requirements.

In my rounds I lighted upon a party, whose name—I know no reason why I should conceal it—was Parker. He had been a soldier, a corporal, and had served with some degree of distinction in India and the Peninsular war. Subsequently he was stationed at Gibraltar; and there, from some peculiar circumstance which at the moment I forget, came under the personal notice of General Don. He had a certificate as to conduct and character from the general written by himself throughout. If I mistake not, he had been orderly for months together to the old chief. At all events, the testimony borne by him to Parker's services and character was of no common-place description. There was something in the bearing and conversation of this man which arrested attention. He was in bad health, suffered at intervals acutely from the effects of a gun-shot wound, and was frequently disabled for weeks together from all exertion. In his domestic relations, too, he had much to try him: his means were narrow, not always prudently administered, and he had some little mouths around him clamorous for bread. And yet no murmur escaped him;—he suffered on in silence. But personal suffering did not render

him selfish. To eke out his scanty pension, he resolved on returning to Worcester (still famous for its gloves), and there resuming the calling of his boyish days—leather staining. Now this department of labour, though it may be carried on with tolerable impunity by the strong and the healthy, is, to the feeble and the failing, most pernicious. Dabbling with cold water hour after hour, and walking about in garments dank and heavy with moisture, tell, eventually, even upon a vigorous constitution. Imagine, then, its effect upon a frame enfeebled by a tropical climate, and worn down by continuous suffering.

“It mauls me, Sir, somewhat!” was his cheerful reply to my close inquiries on this point one bitter November morning. His surgeon had told him—and this I knew—that his only chance, not of checking his complaint, for that was impossible, but of staying its progress, was to keep himself warm and dry, and to avoid, systematically, cold and damp.

Of this I reminded him.

“He may talk,” was his answer, “but these”—looking at his children—“must not starve!”

Once only his equanimity failed him. I surprised him one evening in excruciating pain, without fuel or food in his dwelling, or money in his pocket.

He then said to me—the admission was wrung from him by bodily and mental agony—that, “considering the cripple he was, and why; where he had served, and how; he thought that his country should have done something more for him. My lot,” continued he, “has been a hard one. I was compelled by bad health to quit Gibraltar. The doctors ordered me home: they said, if I remained on The Rock six weeks longer death was certain: I obeyed. Three months afterwards General Don died; and, to the man who succeeded me in my post under him left his wardrobe, his arms, his personal valuables, what, in fact, proved a competence for life. This was trying: but *certain tenets* tell me that I ought to be satisfied with whatever portion of work or labour is allotted me. Fidelity to my mighty Maker is one point; tranquillity, stillness, and silence, while I perform my task, and that cheerfully, are others.”

“You are a Mason?” said I.

He smiled.

“ You may guess wider of the mark than even that.”

“ Why not apply to your brethren in Worcester? you are aware that here there is a lodge?”

He shook his head.

“ A soldier cannot beg : it is hateful to him : he fears a repulse from a board of gentlemen at home far more than an enemy’s bayonets abroad.”

“ Then I must act for you. Your case is pressing ; and, giving full credit to your narrative from past experience of your character, I shall now take my own course. Of intentional mis-statement I believe you to be incapable.”

“ I have my credentials with me,” said he calmly ; “ I was made in a military lodge in Ireland. My certificate, duly signed, is in my oaken chest : all will bear ‘ *the LIGHT,*’ and on all is stamped ‘ FIDELITY.’ ”

I took the initiative and succeeded. The order was worthily represented in Worcester then and now. The appeal was heard and heeded.

Poor Parker has long since escaped from earthly trials and bodily ailments, and no feelings can be wounded by referring to his history.

But it may be instanced as involving a lesson of some moment. Here was a man who unquestionably had spent the prime of his life in his country's service. He had carried her standard and had fought her battles. His blood had flowed freely in her cause. His adherence to her interests had cost him dear. Wounds which neither skill nor time could heal, disabled him from exertion, and rendered life a burden. To acute bodily suffering positive privation was added.

Who relieved him?

His country? No. She left him to perish on a niggardly pension. Who succoured him? The great duke, whose debt to the private soldier is so apparent and overwhelming? No. His grace had become a statesman, and in that capacity wrote caustic letters (from *any other pen* they would have been pronounced *coarse*) to those who ventured to appeal to him.

Who aided the wounded and sinking soldier in his extremity?

The brotherhood—a secret band, if you will, but active—which requires no other recommendation save desert, and no other stimulus than sorrow.

And yet, how little is it understood, and how strangely misrepresented !

In "The Crescent and the Cross," by Mr. Warburton, there is a glowing passage, which winds up with the remark—"Freemasonry, degenerated in our day into a mere convivial bond."

I laid down the volume with a smile and a sigh ; a sigh that a writer of such highly cultivated intellect and generous impulses should have so sadly misunderstood us. A smile—for taking up an able periodical, "The Morning Herald," my eye rested on the passage,—
"This day 3,000*l.*, contributed in India principally among the Free-masons, was lodged in the Bank of Ireland to the credit of the Mansion House Committee, for the relief of the destitute poor in Ireland."

Weighty results these from a society which is "*nothing more than a mere convivial bond.*"

CHAPTER III.

THE ANTI-MASONIC VICAR.

“ Turn your attention to that magnificent structure, the Temple of Jerusalem. Observe, no clay substance, no brick, was used ; lest any inferior material should give rise to base ideas. Every part and particle of that grand dwelling of HIM, whose existence is SECRET, was perfect of its kind. Its commonest fragments were matter of attentive survey. Even the stones were quarried in the country of Judæa. And every measure was taken to steep the mind in that serenity, calmness, and intensity of devotion which are essential to the true worship of the ALMIGHTY. The stones, too, were levelled and squared before they were brought to the place, and the waste was left behind, that all might be fully prepared and cleanly wrought. So, in like manner, should all Free-masons level and square their hearts, purging them of every impurity, in order to arrive at that glorious state of mental and spiritual perfection, of which the Temple and its composition was beautifully symbolical.”—*Lebanon*, by JOEL NASH.

“ I HAVE sent for you, although I know my summons must be inconvenient, because I choose you to be present at an interview which has been forced on me by a deputation from the Free-masons : they aim at persuading me to allow them to assemble in my church. A likely matter indeed ! a very likely matter !”

So spake, with flushed cheek and quivering lip, my well-intentioned but nervous incumbent, one memorable Saturday in the month of August.

“Very well, Sir,” was my reply; “you may depend on my heeding and recollecting the sentiments of each party.”

“Would to heaven!”—this was an aside—“that these Mason people had chosen some other day than Saturday for their conference! Neither sermon written! The Lending Library accounts all in confusion; Mrs. Watkinson’s sick baby to baptize; and two funerals in the afternoon to a certainty!”

“They must be cut short—yes! very, very short!” ejaculated the vicar decisively and emphatically.

“What! the sermons?” cried I, reverting at once to the topic uppermost in my own mind; “oh! very well. Your views, Sir, are mine. They shall be shortened to a certainty.”

“You are dreaming,” remarked my superior pettishly. “I allude to the speeches, the oratorical displays, the verbiage of these mystics.”

“Ah! precisely so,” was my dutiful reply. “You, Sir, and no other, hold the check-

string: the length of the interview must depend on *your* pleasure. Masons!"—this was another *aside*—"I wish they were all walled up in the Pyramids. Six: and no tidings! It will be midnight before I shall have completed my preparations for to-morrow."

"I am not narrow-minded," resumed Mr. Gresham, fidgeting fretfully in his chair, "far from it; my views are liberal and enlarged; I never by any chance indulge in a harsh surmise touching any one of my fellow-creatures. But these Mason people alarm me. They have a secret; there is some extraordinary bond, stringent and well understood, by which they support each other. I look upon them as little better than conspirators:"—then, after a brief pause—"in fact, they ARE conspirators!"

"You really think so?" said I, for the first time feeling an interest in the subject.

"I do; seriously and solemnly," said the vicar, with an air of the most earnest and portentous gravity.

"Rat-tat-tat! Rap, rap!"

"The Deputation, Sir," said the butler, bowing five middle-aged gentlemen into the study.

For a set of "conspirators" they were the

oddest-looking people imaginable. There they stood, a knot of portly, frank-featured, cheerful men, upon whom the cares of life apparently sat lightly, who greeted their pastor with a smile, and seemed in high good humour with themselves and all around them. Nor, while I curiously scanned their look and bearing, could I, for the life of me, imagine a reason why men so happily circumstanced should take it into their head to turn *plotters*. The foremost of the group I knew to be a man of wealth. He had "a stake," and no small one, in the permanent prosperity of his country. His next neighbour was a wine-merchant, with a large and well-established connection, and blest with a rising and most promising family—what had he to "conspire" about? The party a little in the background was a Dissenter of irreproachable character, and tenets strict even to sternness. Moreover, on no subject did he dilate, publicly as well as privately, with greater earnestness and unction than on the incalculable evils arising from war, and the duty of every Christian state, at any sacrifice, to avoid it. What! *he* "a conspirator!" Fronting the vicar was the banker of our little community. And to him I fancied

nothing would be less agreeable than "a run" upon his small but flourishing firm in Quay-street. And yet "runs" severe—repeated—exhausting "runs," would inevitably result from any widely-spread and successful conspiracy. The banker's supporter was a little mirthful-eyed man—a bachelor—who held a light and eligible appointment under government, and looked as if he had never known a care in all his life. He perplexed me more than all the rest. He, of all created beings, a conspirator! Marvellous!

The spokesman of the party began his story. He said in substance that a new Lodge being about to be opened within a mile and half of Fairstream, it was the wish of the Brethren (the more firmly to engraft on the noble tree this new Masonic scion) to go in procession to church, and there listen to a sermon from a clerical brother. In this arrangement he, in the name of the Lodge, represented by the parties then in his presence, most respectfully requested the vicar's concurrence.

That reverend personage, with a most distant and forbidding air, replied, that he could sanction no such proceedings.

Perplexed by this response, which was

equally unpalatable and unexpected, the Deputation, with deference, demanded my incumbent's reasons for refusal.

"They are many and various," replied he; "but resolve themselves mainly into these FOUR. *First: There is nothing church about you!*"

The Deputation stared.

"I repeat, that of Free-masons as a body the Church knows nothing. You admit into your fellowship men of all creeds. Your principles and intentions may be pure and praiseworthy; and such I trust they are. But the Church is not privy to them. The Church is in ignorance respecting them. The Church does not recognize them. And therefore, as a ministering servant of the Church, I must decline affording you any countenance or support."

The banker here submitted to the vicar, that in works of charity—in supporting an infirmary, a dispensary, a clothing club, a stranger's friend society—identity of creed was not essential. Men of different shades of religious belief could harmoniously and advantageously combine in carrying out a benevolent project. And one of the leading principles of Free-

masonry was active, and untiring, and widely-spread benevolence. Could success crown any charitable project, any scheme of philanthropy, any plan for succouring the suffering and the necessitous (*the operation of which was to be extended, and not partial*), if no assistance was accepted save from those who held one and the same religious creed? *Charity*," he contended, "*knew no creed*. No shackles, forged by human opinions, could or ought to trammel her. He was no friend to his species who would seek to impose them."

The vicar shook his head repeatedly, in token of vehement dissent from these observations, and proceeded:—

"Next I object to you because you are friendly to processions; and, I am given to understand, purpose advancing to church in long and elaborate array. All processions, all emblems, all symbols, I abominate. Such accessories are, in the sanctuary, absolutely indecent; I will not call them unholy: I term them downright profane. What has a thinking being—particularly when proceeding, for the purposes of worship, to the temple of his Creator—what has *he* to do with processions? They are, one and all, abominations."

The little placeman here briskly stepped forward and said, that "in that Book, with which he was sure the vicar was better acquainted than any one of them, processions were repeatedly mentioned, and never condemned. They occur in all parts of the sacred volume, and in a *very* early portion of it. A procession of no ordinary description followed Jacob's remains when, with filial love, Joseph brought them out of Egypt into Canaan. A procession, long and elaborately arranged, attended the removal of the ark from its temporary sojourn in the house of Obed-Edom. A procession, glorious and imposing, preceded the dedication of Solomon's temple. A procession——"

"Pray," said the vicar sharply, "do you mean to contend that any one of these processions was at all the counterpart of a Masonic procession?"

"I do not; I disclaim all such irreverent intention," returned the other, gravely: "my object was simply to shew that, by the **VERY HIGHEST** authority which man can produce, processions are not forbidden. Usage sanctions their adoption among ourselves. They

form a part of our most august ceremonies. When the peers present an address to the sovereign on his escape from the hands of an assassin; on the birth of an heir to the throne; on the marriage of one of the royal family; they repair to the royal presence in procession. At the coronation of the sovereign one of the most important features in the pageant is a gorgeous and lengthened procession. That procession, let me remind you, Sir, wends its way to the house of God; and for the purposes of worship. It enters the abbey. There divine service is performed: in the course of which the sovereign receives the crown and takes an oath to the people. These points are pressed on you, as pertinent to the subject. Surely, after considering them, you will hold us blameless if, as Masons, we wish to 'Go up to the house of God in company'—in other words, 'in procession?' "

"Plausible, but hollow!" was the vicar's comment: then, after a pause, "you have failed to convince me. I object to you, strongly, on the score of your processions; and I object to you still more decidedly on the score of your ——— secret. You are a secret

society; are held together by a stringent oath; now I hold that wherever there is mystery there is iniquity!"

"A harsh conclusion, indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Walford, the wine-merchant, who now took part in the discussion; "you cannot be serious in maintaining it? When you assert secrecy to be criminal, you have forgotten its universal agency. It has escaped you how largely it pervades both public and private life. In every department its operation is traceable. The naval commander sails from his country's shores under sealed orders. He has private papers which contain his instructions. These he is to open in a certain latitude and longitude. Meanwhile their import is 'secret' to him and to those who serve under him. But he accepts his trust unhesitatingly. The 'secrecy' in which his orders are veiled does not indispose him towards their fulfilment; make him suspicious of their origin; doubtful of their necessity; or render their faithful performance one whit less obligatory upon his part. His duty is to obey.—Take another instance—The cabinet council which deliberates on the interests of this great country,

and advises the sovereign in matters of policy, is sworn to secrecy. No member of it is allowed, without distinct permission from the reigning prince, to divulge one syllable of what passes at its sittings. *It is a SECRET conclave.* But no one questions, *on that account*, the legality or propriety of its decisions. In private life secrecy obtains. In a commercial partnership there are secrets—the secrets of the firm. To them each co-partner is privy; but is solemnly bound not to disclose them. In a family there are secrets. In most households there are facts which the heads of that household do not divulge to their servants, children, and dependants. Prudence enjoins secrecy. So that, in public and in private life, in affairs of state and in affairs of commerce, secrecy, more or less, prevails: why, then, should it be objected to the Free-mason, that in his order there is a secret which is essential to the existence of the fraternity, and which he is bound to hold sacred?"

"Ha! ha! ha! An adroit evasion of a very awkward accusation!" cried the vicar with an enjoyable chuckle: "who is the general of your order? There must be Jesuits amongst

ye! No argument from Stonyhurst could be more jesuitically pointed!" And again the vicar laughed heartily.

The Deputation did not join him. They looked on in silence. Perhaps they thought the refusal of the church a sufficient annoyance, without the addition of the vicar's bantering. His pleasantry was not infectious. Perchance they held with the delinquent Negro in one of our West India colonies, who was first severely reprimanded, and then soundly thrashed, by his owner—"Massa, massa; no preachee too and floggee too!"

At length one of them, with great gravity, inquired, "Whether Mr. Gresham had any further objection to urge?"

"Oh dear, yes! I am hostile to you because you COMBINE."

The banker now fired his broadside.

"We do. We are as a city at unity in itself. We form a band of united brethren: bound by one solemn obligation; stringent upon all, from the highest to the lowest. And the object of our combination? boundless charity and untiring benevolence. We must be charitable and kindly-affectioned to all; but more especially to our brethren. With them

we are ever to sympathize readily, and their necessities to succour cheerfully. Respect are we to have none, either as to colour, creed, or country. And yet is our charity to be neither indiscriminate, wasteful, nor heedless. We are to prefer the worthy brother, and to reject the worthless. And our warrant for so doing is HIS command who has said, "Thou shalt open thine hand wide to thy brother, and to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land."

"The latter remark none can gainsay," said the vicar coldly; "and thus, I believe, our interview terminates."

The Deputation retired, desperately chagrined.

The church was closed against them. The new lodge was opened; but there was no public procession, and no sermon. To me, lightly and carelessly as I then thought of the fraternity, there seemed much that was inexplicable in the rebuff which it sustained. Here was Mr. Gresham, a conscientious and well-intentioned man, who lamented, Sunday after Sunday, the prevalence of sorrow, care, and suffering around him; who spoke, with tears in his eyes, of the apathy of the rich and the endurance of the poor; who deplored the

selfishness of the age; who averred, bitterly and repeatedly, that "all sought their own"—here was he, withstanding to his utmost a brotherhood who declared—and none contradicted them—that their leading object was to relieve distress and sorrow. Of him they seek an audience. When gained, they use it to request the use of his pulpit, with the view of making their principles better known; of effacing some erroneous impressions afloat respecting them; in other words, of strengthening their cause.

That cause they maintain to be *identical with disinterested benevolence and brotherly love.*

Mr. Gresham declares "off:" refuses them his church; and will have nothing to do with them! "They may solve the riddle who can," said I, as, thoroughly baffled, I sought my pillow. "Each and all are incomprehensible. I don't know which party is the most confounding; the Masons with their well-guarded secret, or Mr. Gresham with his insurmountable prejudices!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE CURSE OF TALENT.

“ If you would enjoy happy anticipations when advanced in years, and when your bosom is becoming dead to the fascinations of life, you must circumscribe your thoughts and actions by the instruction of this significant emblem. You must keep within the compass, and act upon the square, with all mankind ; for your Masonry is but a dead letter if you do not habitually perform its reiterated injunctions.”—OLIVER'S *Signs and Symbols*.

WE “ Britishers,” as Brother Jonathan calls us, have some rather comical notions. We hug ourselves in our prejudices, pique ourselves upon our morality, and swell with conscious superiority if religious observances or social civilization be the topic adverted to. Touching the Jews—that mighty, mysterious, and enduring people—how often is the exclamation heard—“ That always mercenary and to the last idolatrous nation !” A comment which comes with but indifferent grace from an English lip, seeing that we escape with marvellous difficulty from the charge of idolatry

ourselves. Earnest worshippers are we of Mammon and Intellect. To both deities we pay homage blindly, recklessly, madly. Let the railway mania bear out the first assertion; and the caresses lavished on the witty, but the worthless, support the other.

Again and again do the heedless and the rash thus reason :

“An unprincipled fellow ! in private life far from exemplary ; but as to banishing him from one’s table, the idea is too preposterous—the penalty would *be self-inflicted*—his conversational powers are of the very first order ; and his aptness at repartee unrivalled !”

Or thus :

“That clever creature, ——, called here this morning. One must forget all one hears about him. In truth, much may be pardoned in a man of his intellect !”

But, in sober earnest, intellect is a curse—a heavy and a frightful curse—when the control of principle and the sanction of reason are absent.

Many years ago—how many I don’t choose at this moment to remember—I met Edmund Kean at the house of his early patron, Mr. Nation, of Exeter. Kean was not then the

leading tragedian at Drury Lane—the pet of Lords Byron, Essex, and Kinnaird; the idol of “The Sub-Committee;” fêted, followed, and flattered; but an obscure actor on a paltry salary of a few shillings a week; struggling for a maintenance on the Exeter boards; valued far more for his fencing and dancing than for his elocution and acting. His heels, not his head, constituted at that time of day his recommendation.

Mr. Nation, a shrewd, keen, clever man— independent alike in purse and feeling; whose delight it was to foster rising genius; who never spurned a fellow-creature from his presence because he was wretchedly clad, or pronounced an erring mortal irreclaimable because the gossips ran him down; came to the rescue of Kean’s fortunes with kindly and generous sympathy, and proved himself, when most needed, a judicious and discriminating friend. It was in vain that the old gentleman’s intimates, Dr. Collins and Mr. Paddon, rallied him upon his prepossession in favour of the “little fencer,” and the confidence with which he prophesied his future eminence. He was firm in his attachments, and not easily shaken in his opinions.

"Once fairly before a London audience, he will electrify the house!" was the banker's uniform reply to various cavillers.

"But his voice," said one—"so harsh, so rough, so rasping."

"Musical and sweet in the extreme, particularly in the earlier scenes; and so continues, till passion and over-exertion unduly strain it."

"His figure, so slight, *petit*, and unimposing!—height under six feet; a defect fatal to a tragedian!"

"Counterbalanced by his eye, unequalled for the brilliancy and variety of its expression since the days of Garrick: him I can remember."

"To Kean's indisputable disadvantage, I should imagine," said, somewhat flippantly, an inconsiderate bystander.

"No, Sir," was Mr. Nation's reply, "by no means; and ere long London critics will tell you that Kean has studied in Garrick's school, and is but slightly inferior to his gifted predecessor."

"And this"—whispered the gentleman as he withdrew—"of that little, dark-visaged man, one remove from a strolling player.

Good Mr. Nation ! with some men prejudices are passions."

It was not so with him. Where he was most in earnest he was most guarded.

His advice to Kean, like the aid which he rendered him, was always delicately given, and opportune. In the actor's moments of despondency—and they were many—he invariably pointed to a bright future; cheered him with auguries of future eminence; prophesied success, and told him that wealth—not mere competence, but affluence—lay before him. "And then," added he, "mind and keep *your elbow STRAIGHT* : you understand me !"

There was ample need then, as well as afterwards, of this caution.

Miss Hake—a little, quiet, staid, orderly body—a feather-dresser—was Kean's landlady at Exeter. She was rather attached to him, much to Mrs. Kean, and still more warmly to little Howard, their eldest-born; and bore, for his sake, with many of his father's vagaries.

But occasionally even her equanimity gave way. She presented herself one morning in Southernhay, her little frame quivering with agitation, and "entreated to see Mr. Nation, without delay, on urgent business." The

banker was just recovering from a severe fit of the gout—he was a martyr to it—declared he was not company for ladies, and begged to decline the interview. Miss Hake persevered; and when she sent up a second message, to the effect that her business related to Mr. Kean, the invalid at once adjusted his wig, declared that “the lady’s wishes were commands,” and became at once submissive. The little feather-dresser, on being admitted, gave way to a torrent of tears; and when her agitation permitted her to articulate, declared that “Mr. Kean was missing!” He had come home, she averred, from the theatre, terribly out of sorts; some remark, hastily made, had increased his displeasure; he had then committed the most horrible devastation upon her furniture and moveables; and had taken himself off, no one knew whither.

“How long has he been absent?” asked Mr. Nation, somewhat anxiously.

“Upwards of eight-and-forty hours.”

“Oh!” returned the oracle, confidently—“he will return. It is his habit to start off in this manner when offended. His predilection for a ramble is notorious; particularly on one of his *Satan days*. Be calm, Madam, he will be with you before sunset.”

“Oh! but” — sobbed Miss Hake — “my house! my house! I don’t care about my furniture. But my house! The character of my house! Oh that I should have lived to have had an uproar in my house at twenty minutes past midnight. Think of this, Mr. Nation: twenty minutes past midnight!”

“That’s somewhere about the hour that rows generally commence,” said the gouty gentleman, quietly.

“Oh, Sir, don’t be jocular!” cried Miss Hake, in an agony for her reputation: “Ladies of the very first fashion visit my quiet dwelling — quiet, indeed, it no longer is — relative to their feathers and their trimmings. What will Lady Elizabeth Palk say, when she hears that there has been a perfect hurricane in my dwelling, at twenty minutes past midnight? And my Lady Mallet Vaughan, who is known to be so particular. What *will* she say? What *will* she think? Oh! I’m a ruined woman! Oh! oh! oh!”

“I’ll stake my credit upon the issue that neither of their Ladyships will ever hear one syllable on the subject,” rejoined the gentleman, bluntly.

Miss Hake was still far from appeased.

"Counsel me, Mr. Nation, pray counsel me!" cried she.

"I will: and my advice shall consist of four words: 'Be silent and quiescent;' follow this, and all will be well."

"Ah! but my feelings are wounded—deeply wounded—grievously wounded."

"I have a plaster, Madam, that has been very efficacious in such cases. Indeed, I have never known it fail." This was uttered with a dash of sarcasm; a conversational weapon in which he excelled. "Its healing powers are remarkable, and acknowledged by all ranks." Thus saying, he drew from a small shagreen case a soiled piece of paper—one of his own one-pound notes; such were current in those days—and handed it to his visitor. "Give it a trial, Madam. Its soothing powers are highly spoken of."

The little feather-dresser smiled; sighed; curtsied; opened her hand; closed it; and withdrew.

"There's somewhat too much of the devil about Teddy," soliloquized the banker as the door closed upon his lady visitor; "but he is not to be 'whistled down the wind,' and abandoned as incorrigible, for all that!"

The after-career of this gifted but unmanageable artist is almost too painful to dwell upon. Opulence, influence, independence, all were within his reach; and all passed, by his own acts, from his grasp. It has been accurately ascertained that, during his successful career, no less a sum than ninety thousand pounds was paid into Kean's hands. Of this large amount, when disease, infirmity, and physical decay came on, what trace remained?

His early friend in Southernhay survived to witness his triumph; was present at his enthusiastic reception, as THE GREAT TRAGEDIAN, by crowded audiences on those very boards where, a few months previously, public support had barely kept him from starvation.

"Ah! well!" was the characteristic comment uttered as the curtain fell amidst reiterated rounds of applause, waving of handkerchiefs, and shouts of "Bravo!"—"We have reached the topmost round of the ladder; all we now want is a steady hand and a *straight elbow!*"

The speaker was Mr. Nation; and the comment shewed his correct estimate of Kean's dangers and besetting sin.

His days closed gloomily and sadly. True,

he was abandoned by those who would gladly have done life-long homage to his genius; but had he not previously severed himself, virtually, from reputable society? There are those who maintain that "*every* thing is to be forgiven to a man of talent." If this dogma—a most pernicious one for society—is to be held good, Kean is undoubtedly to be pitied, as an injured and ill-used man. Let us pass from the sad topic. It points but to one conclusion: that genius, unregulated, unchecked, and uncontrolled, is one of the greatest and heaviest curses with which frail humanity can be visited.

Contemporary with Kean, at Exeter, was another spirit on whom genius, lofty and indisputable, lighted—Mr. Nation's pastor and personal friend—Dr. Lant Carpenter. He filled the post afterwards occupied by the benevolent and universally beloved Mr. Manning. Dr. Carpenter's views were Unitarian. But though differing widely as to religious sentiments, that circumstance will never indispose me to the attempt of doing justice to the acquirements of a learned, and the social excellences of a most amiable, man. At the period I remember him he was giving at his chapel a series of

elaborate lectures on doctrinal views. One, written with peculiar point and polish, treated "Of the Sorrows of the Lost." These, he held, were not eternal.

"I never like him so little," exclaimed the banker, bluntly, "as when he dwells on these difficult doctrinal points."

"He never appears to such slight advantage," murmured a sweet voice at his side. It was that of his daughter—afterwards Mrs. Adams—lost, alas! too early to her family, and to the many who loved and lamented her.

"He will be here this evening," continued Mr. Nation; "and if a fair opportunity present itself, I shall be tempted to refer to the subject."

Dr. Carpenter did call; and his views were adroitly adverted to. Far from shunning the topic, he seemed well pleased to discuss it anew. He maintained, in eloquent terms, his opinions as to the individuality of the soul. He avowed his fixed persuasion that all the myriads of human beings who ever lived and moved upon this earth still lived, and were at that very moment in existence, all together. The old world, he maintained, still lived. "All of whom we read in the Old Testament as

having perished by famine, by pestilence, by the sword, still live. No soul can be swept away. It is still existent."

"In a distinct and separate place?"

"Unquestionably! Each soul is reserved by its Mighty Guardian for a separate and distinct award."

"Where?" was the inquiry uttered by more than one of his auditory.

"That we are not permitted to know."

The old gentleman paused for some minutes after his pastor left him. Then, addressing his daughter, he remarked—

"Those views of Dr. Carpenter seem to me to favour the doctrine of purgatory."

"Oh!" returned his hearer with earnestness, "that we heard less about doctrine and more about duty; and that he who is so exemplary and forbearing, himself, in his own life and conversation, would tell us more of what we owe to the Great Ruler above, and our fellow-men around us."

Her father signified his assent.

"I never knew any man the better for controversy," added he; "but can recollect many minds which have been unhinged by it. It will be well, should this line of preaching be

proceeded with, if the Doctor's name be not added to the mournful catalogue."

Years afterwards this apprehension was fulfilled. The well-stored brain yielded to the ceaseless demands made upon its powers. The Doctor became insane. Travel and change of scene were prescribed. The invalid visited Switzerland and Italy; and in the spring of 1840 was drowned on his voyage to Leghorn. Whether an accidental lurch of the vessel sent him overboard, or whether, in the phrensy of disease, he committed self-destruction, none can tell. He perished without other witness save the Infinite and the Eternal.

And thus that gentle, benevolent, tolerant being passed from this lower world.

Oh! Genius! is thy possession to be coveted when thy purchase is made at so dear a cost?

CHAPTER V.

CANNING IN RETIREMENT.

“To exhort to sacrifices—to stimulate to exertion—to shame despondency—to divert from untimely concession—are stern but needful duties to be discharged in gloomy times.”—**BURKE.**

“He knew nothing of that timid and wavering cast of mind which dares not abide by its own decision.”—**LORD BROUGHAM.**

“It is a severe but salutary lesson for human vanity to observe the venom which party spirit can scatter over the aims and intentions of eminent men. The actions of the best and most highly gifted of our race, when viewed in the mirror of party-feeling, become instantly distorted. Conciliation is called cowardice; courtesy is termed hypocrisy; high and unbending principle is pronounced pride; and religious feeling branded as cant. No epithet is deemed too bitter—no insinuation too base. By his own party the minister of the day is viewed as a demi-god; by his opponents as a demon.”

“I WAS present,” writes Mr. Hastings to a friend, “and heard Sheridan’s analysis of my character, inquisition of my motives, and condemnation of my government. For the moment I thought myself unworthy of the name of man, and that “monster” ought to

be my future designation. The delusion lasted not long. The impression produced by this splendid instance of the perversion of oratory gave way before the response of conscience; and

‘ *Conscia mens recti temnit mendacia lingue.*’”

Some few years elapsed, and the whole House of Commons rose as a tribute of involuntary respect to this very man upon his entering that august assembly to give evidence upon some disputed question!

Of Lord North, Junius writes, “ I will now leave you, my lord, to that mature insensibility which is only to be acquired by steady perseverance in infamy. Every principle of conscience you have long ago been hardy enough to discard.”

Of the same statesman another and very competent authority* affirms, “ Lord North was a man of public ability, the delight of every private society which he honoured with his presence, second to none in conducting the debate, possessed of an inexhaustible fund of pleasantries, and of a temper the last to be ruffled, and the first to be appeased.”

* Professor Smythe.

The malevolence of party, Canning did not escape. The author of the celebrated suppressed letter thus opened his attack upon him :—

“ I shall address you without ceremony, for you are deserving of none. There is nothing in your station, in your abilities, or in your character, which entitles you to respect. The first is too often the reward of political, and frequently of private crimes. The decency of your character consists in its entire conformity to the original conception formed of you in early life. It has borrowed nothing from station, nothing from experience. It becomes you, and would disgrace *any other man*.”

These are harsh and ungrateful assertions. They are worse than this—they are unjust. In private life Mr. Canning was as exemplary as in social intercourse he was delightful. As a son, his care for his widowed parent—the provision which he made for her by a transfer of the pension tendered him for his public services—his affectionate attention to her wishes during the busiest and most successful portion of his intoxicating career—the long weekly letter which he wrote to her, according to an early promise—a promise never broken

even in the most anxious and stormy period of his life—prove his to have been a heart alive to the noblest impulses of our nature. But more than this : to the sentiment of filial affection, which he preserved unimpaired throughout the whole course of his advancement, he delighted to do homage in others. Two days before his departure for Chiswick, whence he never returned, he sent for a young man whom he had heard favourably spoken of, and who, he learnt upon inquiry, had for years supported a paralytic mother and idiot sister.

“ I have requested to see you, Mr. ——,” was his opening address, when the young man, in utter ignorance of his intentions, presented himself at the premier’s residence, “ in the hope you may be able to tell me how I can serve you.”

A vague and not very intelligible reply was confusedly given.

“ Then perhaps you will allow me to make a suggestion? Would such a situation,” naming one, “ be at all compatible with your views?”

It was cordially and thankfully accepted.

“ The appointment will be made out tomorrow. I give it you entirely from respect.

I admire your abilities much, but I honour your devotion to your family still more."

This feeling, so identified with his character, many of his political antagonists were unable to understand. Some of them were even base enough to make it an object of attack, and sought to wound him through his filial affection. His sensitiveness on this point was peculiar. Any unfeeling allusion to Mrs. Hunn galled him to the quick. No attack did he resent so fiercely. For one *who did not on occasion spare others*, his temperament was singularly irritable. The point of indifference was never reached by him. He was never able to conceal that sensitiveness to political attacks which their frequent occurrence wears out in most English politicians.

The period which he spent at Hinckley, during the interval which elapsed between his retirement from office after the duel with Lord Castlereagh, and his entrance upon the Lisbon embassy, was a remarkable epoch in his life. It was with him undoubtedly a season of comparative seclusion, but it was one also of great and successful preparation. He lived at Burbach, a little village distant about a mile from the town, which he had sought mainly for the

benefit of his eldest son, whose health was in a most precarious condition, and whom he had placed under the care of the well-known Mr. Cheshyre.

This son—he died at the age of nineteen, and Mr. Canning's tribute to his memory is the most touching of all his writings—was a youth of remarkable promise, and indescribably dear to his father. He was indisputably his favourite child. In all his plans for the future, in all his visions of ambition, this son occupied a foremost place. He was an embryo statesman. His genius, discernment, quickness, and judgment, were topics on which Canning delighted to dwell. The opinions and expectations which his father had formed of him may be gathered from this single fact, that whenever he had spoken at any length in Parliament, the best and fullest report of the speech was sent down forthwith to George, who was required to write his father an elaborate and lengthened criticism upon it, pointing out where it was forcible and where it was defective, where the language was happy, and where it was common-place—and distinguishing between what was mere declamation and what solid argument.

“Can I think too highly of that child?” was the remark addressed by Canning on one occasion to his son’s tutor, Mr. Hay.

“You not only can, but do,” was the honest and unhesitating reply. “Your second son is but little inferior to him in point of capacity: and after all it may be that this infant”—pointing to Charles, who was born at Burbach—“may be the child destined to carry down to the succeeding generation your name and honours.”

“*I am persuaded he will not,*” was Canning’s quick rejoinder. He was wrong. The random remark has proved prophetic. Captain Canning’s career closed early; and upon Charles, the infant adverted to and scarcely noticed, have devolved the honour of his name and the associations it recalls.

With the exception of his struggles in early life, Canning’s residence at Hinckley extended over one of the most gloomy periods of his life. Retirement from office, under circumstances of painful notoriety, had been the result of his duel with Lord Castlereagh. Early in May, 1812, Mr. Percival was shot by Bellingham. The Prince Regent then laid his commands on Lord Wellesley and Mr. Can-

ning to form an administration. The project failed. The task was then intrusted to Lord Liverpool, who strongly urged Canning to join him; and such was the anxiety of the existing administration to secure his services, that the Foreign Office was offered him—Lord Castlereagh being a consenting party to an arrangement which would leave it open to Mr. Canning's acceptance. This tempting proposal was firmly negatived, solely upon conscientious grounds. It was understood that the administration was pledged, *as such*, to oppose Catholic Emancipation. To this compact Canning declined being a party—and thus, while he preserved his consistency, and shewed, by the costly sacrifice which it entailed, the sincerity of his desire to carry the Catholic question, he lost the opportunity of presiding over the foreign relations of the country, at a period when “events crowded into a few years the changes and revolutions of an age.”

But this interval, though spent in retirement, was fraught with preparation. There is a walk as beautiful as it is secluded, stretching from Burbach towards the village of Stoke Golding, known as Canning's walk. Along this he was seen, morning after morning,

wending his way, always alone, absorbed in thought, and not unfrequently thinking aloud. He invariably declined having a companion for his walk, disliked amazingly being interrupted in the progress of it, and to any chance salutation by the way, his invariable reply was a silent bow.

It was his hour of study. He was then forging weapons for the coming fight, inspecting his stores, and polishing his armory. No weather deterred him. Through shower and sunshine he paced rapidly on. What subjects might not these long silent walks embrace! In them how many a topic, argument, simile, invective, rebuke, was deliberately sought out and carefully laid up! Of the exquisite and elaborate finish bestowed on many of his lengthened speeches, who shall say how much may be traced to the severe scrutiny and repeated revision of his solitary rambles! The music of his periods, the easy flowing language with which he rounded the most unmanageable details, the remark of caustic irony, and the flash of cutting sarcasm, the epigrammatic point of a crushing reply, when a word more or less would have marred its force,—these are excellences which could not have been

attained, in the perfection to which he wrought them, without long and severe study. *Was this his workshop?*

About a mile and a half from Burbach stands an old hall to which some interest attaches as being the residence which peculiarly attracted Canning's attention, and which he was most desirous to purchase as "an asylum for *his old age*." Alas!

The offers which he made to induce the infatuated possessor to part with it were far beyond its value, and can be justified only by the extraordinary predilection which Mr. Canning had conceived for it. The more you examine Wykin Hall, the greater difficulty you experience in discovering its attractions for the statesman. It is a quaint old building in the Elizabethan style, with huge and somewhat unshapely wings, much dilapidated by time, and, when I saw it, rapidly sinking to decay from continued and undeserved neglect. It stands close upon the horse-road leading to Stoke Golding, in an exposed and rather bleak situation. On each side of the principal entrance are two yew trees of prodigious growth and great age, which throw a sombre air over the building, and materially darken the lower

rooms. A plantation rises on one side, and some unsightly farm-buildings on the other. In the background is the straggling, filthy, poaching village of Stoke Golding, perched on the summit of a high hill, topped with its handsome church and splendid spire. In the foreground is a home view of rich pasture land, skirted to the left by Burbach Wood, and embracing to the right the town of Hinckley, its parish church and tapering spire.

Wykin Hall is now a farm-house; the little lawn before the principal entrance is converted into a fold-yard. Poultry ravage the pleasure-garden—weeds flourish *ad libitum* in the plantation—the litter of a large farm is scattered thickly around the premises; and not one feature does it present, within or without, to corroborate the fact that it was once the coveted residence of one of the most accomplished of British statesmen.

The passion for farming cherished by Mrs. Canning at that period, might, in some degree, account for his wish to purchase Wykin. Some valuable grazing land was attached to it; and a dairy, not in theory, but in practice, was then that lady's hobby. Some very pleasant

and good-natured stories are current of her devotion to her calling, while the fit lasted—of her anxiety respecting the produce of her dairy—her quickness in calculating her gains, and her shrewdness in baffling the cunning of those who, on more than one occasion, sought to make her their dupe.

“She had a brave tongue and a clear head, had that Madam Canning,” said an old yeoman to me.—“The ways of Providence are inscrutable: but I’ve aye thought to mysel while I’ve been listening to her, that the bonniest farmer’s wife in all Leicestershire had been spoiled by making a lady on her!”

Canning’s readiness as a parliamentary debater is now matter of history. In reply, he stood confessedly without a rival. His quickness in detecting and instantly fastening upon a broken link in his opponent’s argument—his skill in unveiling a specious sophistry, or exposing a plausible fallacy, have once and again drawn forth the involuntary cheers, even of those who eschewed his political creed. One peculiarity he possessed, which is but partially known—*his thorough remembrance of a voice*, and his ability of connecting it, at any

interval of time, with the party to whom it belonged. More than one instance of this faculty is remembered at Hinckley.

He was dining with a large party at Mr. Cheshyre's, the medical gentleman before referred to, when a note was brought in and handed to the host, with an intimation that the bearer begged to see him for five minutes.

Mr. C. left his party with reluctance, and was absent some time. When he returned, he prefaced his lengthy apologies by observing, he "had been detained by one of the most remarkable men of the day;" that the gentleman "was by accident passing through Hinckley, and could not pause on his route;" that he "purposed placing one of his family under his (Mr. Cheshyre's) care;" and that "he (Mr. C.) was obliged to listen to all his arrangements."

"I will name him," said Canning gaily, and "then drink his health."

"The latter point may be very easily managed; but the former will, I believe, baffle even your acuteness, Mr. Canning."

This was said with some degree of tartness; for among other affectations which the wealthy quack indulged in, was that of profound mys-

tery with respect to the most trivial occurrences.

“Your visitor, Sir, was Wilberforce,” said Canning, stoutly.

“How could you possibly discover that?” cried his annoyed host. “We conversed with closed doors—he sent in no card—as we parted, he spoke but five words.”

“Of which I heard but two.”

“What were they?”

“Conventional arrangement,” said Canning, imitating Wilberforce’s distinct enunciation, and dwelling on each separate syllable.—“I needed nothing more to tell me that the man with the magic voice was hovering near us.”

Within a few months after this conversation, Sir Evan Nepean passed through Hinckley; he was proceeding to Holyhead, on some government business connected with the Transport Board, which admitted of no delay: and so rapid were his movements, and so anxious was he to arrive at his destination, that though a part of his family was at Hinckley under Mr. Chesyre’s care, he hurried through the town without even apprising them of his presence.

While changing horses at the inn, he inquired the distance to the next stage. These were the only words he uttered. Canning was returning from his ride at the moment—heard the inquiry, and said to Sir Evan's family the next morning—"I am happy to tell you Nepean is well—he passed through Hinckley last evening—his features in the twilight I was unable to recognize—his voice I did distinctly."

Their astonishment may be conceived. It bordered on incredulity. But, on inquiry, they found Mr. Canning's assertion borne out by the fact, that on that day and hour their relative had hurried through Hinckley on his route to Ireland.

This faculty seems to have remained unimpaired to the close of life. On the evening preceding his last appearance in the House of Commons, a foreigner met him in the lobby, and bowing, expressed his "pleasure at seeing him look so well."

'Twas an idle compliment. Fatigue, anxiety, and party-feeling were killing him hourly.

He acknowledged the intended civility with his usual courtesy, and adding, he "hoped his lady and son were better," moved away.

The foreigner ran after him and said, "Curiosity induces me to ask whether you know me?"

"Your voice I recognize, not your person: you are Mr. ——. We last met in Lisbon in the year 1815. I saw you under circumstances of great distress."

"Once! and for a few minutes only!"

"Your wife and son were pronounced to be dying—I am truly happy to learn they are still preserved to you. Good night, Sir."

"What a most extraordinary man!" said the gratified foreigner as, turning away from him with another and still more profound obeisance, he rejoined his companion, and fellow-countryman—"What a wonderful memory, to remember such an obscure individual as myself after so long an interval—and not only myself, but the very circumstances under the pressure of which his kindly sympathy cheered and consoled me."

These are trifles, I admit; but trifles often index the character of the man. And his has not yet received that measure of justice which it merits from those to whom he adhered in either fortune, and with whom he won the triumph—the triumph of reason over rashness,—of

sound principles over doctrines dangerous and pernicious,—of our ancient laws and glorious constitution over revolutionary madness and jacobin innovation. In a word, were I to describe his character briefly, I should say with the ancient historian, that he was “*Vitâ innocentissimus; ingenio florentissimus; proposito sanctissimus.*”

And He, be it remembered, was a Mason. We can point to this affectionate and dutiful son—to this watchful and devoted husband—to the successful debater—to the trusted and idolized chief—and claim him as a brother. This is not assertion, but fact.

George Canning, Esq., M.P., initiated and *passed* on the 30th of April, 1810, in the Somerset House Lodge, by the Right Hon. the Earl of Mountnorris, W. M. Proposed by the Earl of Mountnorris.

CHAPTER .VI

A LITERARY SOIRÉE.

“ Small is the rest of those who would be smart,
 A moment's good thing may have cost them years
 Before they find an hour to introduce it,
 And then, even *then*, some bore may make them lose it.”

LORD BYRON.

AMID the smoke and dirt and eternal din of the modern Babel, there is some advantage to be gained by living within its precincts. One's privations, 'tis true, are many. Adieu to fresh air and pure water, and a clear atmosphere! Adieu to the fresh springy turf, and the gay carol of the birds, and the music of the rustling leaf and the running stream! But then the mighty of the earth are near us; and we mingle, at intervals and for the moment, with the illustrious in intellect, in learning, in eloquence, and in art—the master spirits of the age.

During the period in which the firm of “Hurst and Robinson, of Pall-mall,” held a

conspicuous place in the world of letters, it was my fortune to be present at one of their public days. Sir Walter Scott, and Maturin, the author of "Melmoth," and Lætitia Hawkins, and the Porters—(who that has ever read them will forget "Thaddeus of Warsaw" and the "Recluse of Norway?")—and the accomplished authoress of "Rome in the Nineteenth Century," and Gifford, the editor of the "Quarterly," and the eccentric but ill-fated Colton, were among those who were gathered around that hospitable table. Alas! upon how many of these the grave has closed for ever!

To this hour I remember the impression which the language, opinions, and ardour of the last-named gifted being left upon his auditors. He had entered, half in jest and half in earnest, into an ingenious and lengthy argument with Gifford, that the sun was the residence of suffering spirits; in a word, that that luminary was hell!

Now Gifford, with all his critical acumen and vast resources, was no debater; he wanted temper; he chafed when contradicted; and in reply was querulous and waspish. His remarks under excitement ceased to be inge-

nious, and became personal and acrimonious. It may, therefore, easily be imagined that Colton had the best of it, even on this apparently desperate position.

Gifford saw this, and waxed still more angry; and the debate had assumed an almost personal turn, when Sir Walter put an end to it by good-humouredly observing, "Well, well, gentlemen, pray settle it your own way; for my own part, I desire no further light on the subject. May I ever remain in my present profound state of ignorance!"

Of him, I grieve to say, my impressions are by no means so distinct. He was not then the acknowledged author of "Waverley" and the other magnificent creations of the same fertile brain; and the deference paid to him then, though great, was not the same, either in nature or amount, as that subsequently awarded him.

I remember his telling a very amusing little tale touching the storming of an eagle's eyrie in the Highlands, to a slight, fair-haired little girl, who sat by his side during some part of the evening, and to whom, though always extremely partial to children, he seemed to have taken a sudden fancy. Of one fact I

have a thorough recollection. The conversation happened to turn incidentally upon the malady of the late king. He remarked, "He always hoped he should die before his faculties became extinct. To survive their decay was, to his mind, **THE GREATEST CALAMITY** which could befall a thinking being."

Maturin here reminded him of the incident recorded in the life of Dean Swift, namely, that almost immediately previous to his aberration of intellect, Swift, while walking in the park, paused before a majestic oak, green and flourishing in its lower branches, but decayed and leafless at the summit, and pointing to it, said, "I shall be like that tree—I shall die at top."

"I have often, Sir," rejoined Scott, slowly and thoughtfully, "mused upon that expression; and many as are the touching sentiments which the Dean has uttered, that, I think, in simple pathos, is superior to them all."

Gifford here struck in: "The texture of Swift's mind disposed him to insanity. He saw every thing around him through a distorted medium."

"But his writings," Maturin quietly observed, "are remarkably lucid as well as

forcible. At least"—he quickly added, observing the frown that was gathering on Gifford's brow—"such they appear to me."

"Sir, he was a disappointed man," said Gifford, gloomily and fiercely; "he possessed great talents, which brought not to their owner the advancement he desired. The gloom of his own prospects infected his writings; he thought harshly of human nature. But," he added after a moment's pause, with an expression of bitter satisfaction which is perfectly indescribable, "one quality he possessed in perfection: *he was a good hater!*"

"No very enviable faculty, after all, Mr. Gifford," said Sir Walter, with an easy, good-humoured smile.

"Rather an equivocal encomium to pass on a man to say that he is a good hater," said Colton, tittering.

"Sir," said Gifford, looking from one to the other *with an eye that seemed to speak*—(if the reader will pardon such an expression). For the moment he seemed uncertain which he should gore. At length, fixing on Colton, he burst out with—

"Priest, read your Bible: Scripture bids us 'pray for our enemies,' and 'love our enemies,'

but nowhere does it bid us TRUST our enemies. Nay, it positively cautions us against it. Read your Bible, priest—read your Bible.”

“But Swift was a poet,” said Maturin, anxiously interposing, in the hope of quelling the storm; “and are not poets privileged to live in a world of their own?”

“*You* do, Madam,” said Gifford, with a smile so awfully grim, so bitterly gracious, that the muscles of a marble statue, methought, would have relaxed more easily; “and your world,” turning to Miss Jane Porter, “is full of bright thoughts and happy images.”

The handsome novelist bowed and smiled, but not a word escaped her. At this moment a buz, or rather whisper, of—

“Lawrence, Lawrence,” went round the room; and in a few moments the prince of modern portrait-painters joined the circle.

He—be his prejudices and prepossessions what they may—who had ever the good fortune to meet in society the late Sir Thomas Lawrence, must have been struck with that graceful address and winning manner which so warmly endeared him to his friends, and rendered him so great a favourite with his

Royal patron. It was not the mere conventional politeness of society, manifested alike to all, and often worn as a mask to hide the bitter and goading passions of envy, avarice, and hatred; but a kindness and cordiality of feeling, which seemed to aim at making others happy, and appeared to spring fresh from the heart. His person was very striking. He bore a remarkable resemblance to Canning. He knew it, and was proud of it. But his temper, calm, even, and self-possessed, had no affinity to the irritable, restless, anxious, morbid temperament of that singularly gifted statesman. Having, in his usual quiet, graceful manner, paid his compliments to those of the party with whom he was previously acquainted, he singled out Maturin as the object of his special attentions. He expressed, in few but forcible terms, his "gratification at meeting one whose writings had beguiled him of many a weary hour." There was something kind in this; for Maturin was at that time struggling into fame, and notice from such a man as Lawrence could not be otherwise than grateful.

"So,"—said Gifford, testily, as the president paused beside his chair with a kind and cour-

teous inquiry,—“so you have found me out at last, have ye? Humph! much flattered by your notice! Humph! Have you seen the King lately?”

“I left his Majesty but an hour ago,” was the reply.

“And what may be the ruling whim of the moment?”

To this inquiry no answer was given, for Lawrence, with admirable tact, affected not to hear the question.

“The King’s private collection,” Sir Walter Scott interposed, with the charitable intention of giving a more amicable turn to the conversation, “is understood to have lately received some very valuable accessions.”

“Such is the fact,” said Sir Thomas, warmly; “and the British School of Art is at this moment cheered by no small share of the Royal favour!”

“His Majesty did not always boast so pure a taste,” said Gifford, who, from some unexplained slight, could never resist the temptation of giving a quiet hit at the Crown; “his pursuits, within my recollection, tended quite another way.”

“His Majesty’s taste for art, and his mu-

nificent patronage of it, have known no change or abatement since I had the honour of being admitted to his presence," said Lawrence, mildly, but firmly.

Some unimportant remarks followed. He then bowed profoundly to Gifford, and took his leave. His departure was the signal for the breaking up of the party.

CHAPTER VII.

“THE MEASURE METED OUT TO OTHERS,
MEASURED TO US AGAIN.”

I.

L. E. L. closes one of her sportive poems with the heartfelt exclamation—

“Thank Heaven that I never
Can be a child again !”

The remark falls harshly from a woman's lip ; and, after all, does not admit of general application. There are those who were never children—with whom the heart was never young. There are those who never knew that brief but happy period when the spirit was a stranger to guile,—and the heart beat high with generous impulses,—and the future was steeped in the colours of hope,—and the past left behind it no sting of bitterness,—and the brow was unwrinkled with care,—and the soul unsullied by crime,—and the lips poured forth,

fondly and fervently, with unbounded and unwavering confidence, the heart's purest and earliest homage to Nature and to Truth. And he whose career, on the second anniversary of his death, I am tempted to record, was a living illustration of the truth of this assertion.

Vincent Desborough's prospects and position in society embraced all that an ambitious heart would seek. He was heir to a large fortune—had powerful connections—talents of no common order—and indisputable personal attractions. But every good, natural and acquired, was marred by a fatal flaw in his disposition. It was largely leavened with CRUELTY. It seemed born with him. For it was developed in very early childhood, and bade defiance to remonstrance and correction. Insects, dogs, horses, servants, all felt its virulence. And yet, on a first acquaintance, it appeared incredible that that intelligent and animated countenance, those gladsome and beaming eyes, could meditate aught but kindness and good-will to those around him. But as Lord Byron said of Ali Pacha—one of the most cruel and sanguinary of Eastern despots—that he was “by far the mildest-looking old gentleman he ever conversed with;” so it

might be said of Vincent Desborough, that never was a relentless and savage heart concealed under a more winning and gentle exterior.

That parents are blind to the errors of their offspring has passed into a proverb, and Vincent's were no exception to the rule. "He was a boy," they affirmed, "of the highest promise." His ingenuity in causing pain was "a mere childish foible, which would vanish with advancing years;" and his delight at seeing others suffer it, "an eccentricity which more extended acquaintance with life would teach him to discard. *All boys were cruel!*" And satisfied with the wisdom of this conclusion, the Desboroughs intrusted their darling to Doctor Scanaway, with the request that "he might be treated with *every possible* indulgence."

"No!" said the learned linguist, loudly and sternly, "not if he was heir-presumptive to the dukedom of Devonshire! Your son you have thought proper to place with me. For that preference I thank you. But if he remains with me, he must rough it like the rest. You have still the power of withdrawing him."

Papa and Mamma Desborough looked at each other in evident consternation, and stammered out a disjointed disclaimer of any such intention.

“Very well!—Coppinger,” said he, calling one of the senior boys, “take this lad away with you into the school-room, and put a Livy into his hands. My pupils I aim at making *men*, not *milksops*—scholars, not simpletons. To do this I must have your entire confidence. If that be withheld, your son’s luggage is still in the hall, and I beg that he and it may be again restored to your carriage.”

“By no means,” cried the Desboroughs in a breath; and silenced, if not satisfied, they made their adieus and departed.

II.

In Doctor Scanaway’s household Vincent met with a congenial spirit in the person of a youth some years his senior, named Gervaise Rolleston. Gervaise was a young adventurer. He was clever, active, and prepossessing; but he was poor and dependent. He discovered that, at no very distant period, accumulated wealth must descend to Vincent, and he fan-

ciated that, by submitting to his humours and flattering his follies, he might secure to himself a home in rough weather. The other had no objection to possess a faithful follower. In truth, a clever coadjutor was often indispensable for the successful execution of his mischievous projects. Mutual necessity thus proved a stringent bond to both; and between them a league was struck up, offensive and defensive, which—like other leagues on a broader scale which are supported by wealth and wickedness—was formidable to all who opposed its designs and movements.

III.

Domiciled in the little village of Horbury, over which the learned doctor ruled with undisputed sway, was “a widow, humble of spirit and sad of heart, for of all the ties of life one son alone was spared her; and she loved him with a melancholy love, for he was the likeness of the lost.” Moreover, he was the last of his race, the only surviving pledge of a union too happy to endure; and the widow, while she gazed on him with that air of resigned sorrow peculiar to her countenance

—an air which had banished the smile, but not the sweetness, from her lips—felt that in him were concentrated all the ties which bound her to existence.

“Send Cyril to me,” said the doctor to Mrs. Dormer, when he called to welcome her to the village. “No thanks—I knew his father—respected him—loved him. I like an old family—belong to one myself, though I have still to learn the benefit it has been to me!”

“I fear,” replied the widow, timidly, for the recollection of very limited resources smote painfully across her, “at least I feel the requisite pecuniary consideration——”

“HE shall pay when he’s a fellow of his college—shall never know it before! *You’ve* nothing to do with it—but THEN I shall *exact* it! We will dine in his rooms at Trinity, and he shall lionize us over the building. I have long wished to see Dr. Wordsworth—good man—sound scholar! but have been too busy these last twenty years to manage it. It’s a bargain, then? You’ll send him to-morrow?”

And the affectionate interest which the doctor took in little Cyril, the pains he bestowed on his progress, and the evident anxiety with which he watched and aided the development

of his mind, were among the many fine traits of character which belonged to this warm-hearted but unpolished humorist.

To Dormer, for some undefinable reason, Desborough had conceived the most violent aversion. Neither the youth of the little orphan, nor his patient endurance of insult, nor the readiness with which he forgave, nor the blamelessness of his own disposition, served to disarm the ferocity of his tormentor. Desborough, to use his own words, was "resolved to drive the little pauper from their community, or tease his very heart out."

His love for his mother, his fair and effeminate appearance, his slender figure and diminutive stature, were the objects of his tormentor's incessant attack. "Complain, Dormer—complain at home," was the advice given him by more than one of his class-fellows.

"It would only grieve my mother," he replied, in his plaintive, musical voice, "and she has had much—oh! so much—to distress her. I might, too, lose my present advantages; and the good doctor is so very, very lenient to me. Besides, surely, Desborough

will become kinder by-and-by, even if he does not grow weary of ill-treating me."

And thus, cheered by Hope, the little martyr struggled on, and suffered in silence.

The 4th of September was the doctor's birthday, and was invariably kept as a sort of Saturnalia by all under his roof. The day—always too short—was devoted to cricket, and revelry, and manly sports, and a meadow at the back of the shrubbery, which, from its being low and marshy, was drained by dykes of all dimensions, was a favourite resort of those who were expert at leaping with a pole. The whole party were in motion at an early hour, and Cyril among the rest. Either purposely or accidentally he was separated from the others, and, on a sudden, he found himself alone with Desborough and Rolleston. "Come, you little coward," said the former, "leap this dyke."

"I cannot, it is too broad; and, besides, it is very deep."

"Cannot? You mean will not. But you shall be made. Leap it, Sir, this instant."

"I cannot—indeed I cannot. Do not force me to try it; it is deep, and I cannot swim."

"Then learn now. Leap it, you little wretch! Leap it, I say, or I'll throw you in. Seize him, Rolleston. We'll teach him obedience."

"Promise me, then, that you will help me out," said the little fellow, entreatingly, and in accents that would have moved most hearts; "promise me, do promise me, for I feel sure that I shall fail."

"We promise you," said the confederates, and they exchanged glances. The helpless victim trembled—turned pale. Perhaps the recollection of his doting and widowed parent came across him, and unnerved his little heart. "Let me off, Desborough; *pray* let me off," he murmured.

"No! you little dastard, no! Over! or I throw you in!"

The fierce glance of Desborough's eye, and the menace of his manner, determined him. He took a short run, and then boldly sprang from the bank. His misgivings were well-founded. The pole snapped, and in an instant he was in the middle of the stream.

"Help! help! Your promise, Desborough—your promise!"

With a mocking laugh, Desborough turned

away. "Help yourself, my fine fellow! Scramble out; it's not deep. A kitten wouldn't drown!" And Rolleston, in whom better feelings for the moment seemed to struggle, and who appeared half inclined to return to the bank and give his aid, he dragged forcibly away. The little fellow eyed their movements, and seemed to feel his fate was determined. He clasped his hands, and uttered no further cry for assistance. The words "Mother! mother!" were heard to escape him; and once, and only once, did his long wavy golden hair come up above the surface for a moment. But though no human ear heeded the death-cry of that innocent child, and no human heart responded to it, the Great Spirit had his observant eye fixed on the little victim, and quickly terminated his experience of care and sorrow, by a summons to that world where the heavy laden hear no more the voice of the oppressor, and the pure in heart behold their God!

IV.

The grief of the mother was frightful to witness. Her softness and sweetness of cha-

racter, the patience with which she had endured sorrow and reverses, the cheerfulness with which she had submitted to the privations attendant on very limited resources, had given place to unwonted vehemence and sternness. She cursed the destroyers of her child in the bitterness of her soul. "God will avenge me! His frown will darken their path to their dying hour. As the blood of Abel cried up from the ground against the first murderer, so the blood of my Cyril calls for vengeance on those who sacrificed him. I shall see it—I shall see it. *The measure meted out by them to others, shall be measured unto them again.*" It was in vain that kind-hearted neighbours suggested to her topics of consolation. She mourned as one that would not be comforted. "The only child of his mother, and she a widow!" was her invariable reply. "No! For me there is nought but quenchless regrets and ceaseless weeping!" Among those who tendered their friendly offices was the warm-hearted doctor. Indifferent to his approach, and in appearance lost to every thing else around her, she was sitting among Cyril's books—inspecting his little drawings—arranging his playthings, and apparently carefully collecting together every

object, however trivial, with which his loved memory could be associated.

To the doctor's kind though tremulous inquiries she had but one reply: "*Alone—alone in the world.*"

His offer of a home in his own house was declined with the remark, "My summer is so nearly over, it matters not where the leaves fall."

And when he pressed her, under any circumstances, to entertain the offer made through him—by a wealthy kinsman of her husband—of a shelter under his roof for any period, however protracted—"Too late! too late!" was her answer; "*Ambition is cold with the ashes of those we love!*"

But the feelings of the mourner had been painfully exasperated by the result of a previous inquiry. An inquest was indispensable; and rumour—we may say facts—spoke so loudly against Desborough, that his parents hurried to Horbury, prepared, at any pecuniary sacrifice, to extricate him from the obloquy which threatened him. Money judiciously bestowed will effect impossibilities; and the foreman of the jury—a bustling, clamorous, spouting democrat—who was always

eloquent on the wrongs of his fellow-men, and kept the while a most watchful eye to his own interests—became on a sudden “thoroughly satisfied that Mr. Vincent Desborough had been cruelly calumniated,” and that the whole affair was “*a matter of ACCIDENT* altogether.”

A verdict to that effect was accordingly returned!

The unhappy mother heard the report of these proceedings, and it seemed to scorch her very soul. “The covetous, craving earth-worm!” she cried. “He thinks he has this day clenched a most successful bargain! But no! from this hour the face of God is against him! Can it be otherwise? *He that justifieth the wicked, and condemneth the just, are they not both equal abomination in the sight of God?* For years the wickedness of this hour will be present before the Great, Just Spirit, and will draw down a curse on his every project. I am as confident of it as if I saw the whole course of this man’s after-life spread out before me. *Henceforth God fights against him!*”

It was a curious coincidence, the solution of which is left to better casuists than myself, that from the hour in which he was

bribed to smother inquiry and throw a shield over crime—misfortune and reverses, in unbroken succession, assailed him. His property melted away from his grasp with unexampled rapidity. And when, a few years afterwards, the kinsman already alluded to left poor Dormer's mother a small annuity, it so chanced that, as she quitted the vestry with the requisite certificates of birth and marriage in her hands, she encountered this very juror in the custody of the parish officers, who were bringing him before the proper authorities, to swear him to his settlement, and then obtain an order to pass him forthwith to the parish workhouse!

V.

A few years after the sad scene at Horbury, Desborough was admitted at Cambridge. He was the sporting man of a non-reading college. Around him were gathered all the coaching, betting, driving, racing characters of the University—the, "*Varmint men*," as they called themselves—" *The Devil's Own*," as others named them. It was a melancholy sojourn for Desborough. The strictness of

academical rule put down every attempt at a cock-pit, a badger-hunt, or a bull-bait. It was a painfully monotonous life; and to enliven it he got up a rat-hunt. Appertaining to him was a little knowing dog, with a sharp, quick eye, and a short, curled-up tail, who was discovered to have an invaluable antipathy to rats, and an unparalleled facility in despatching them. What discovery could be more opportune? Rat-hunts wiled away many a lagging hour; and the squeaks, and shrieks, and shouts, which on these occasions issued from Desborough's rooms, were pronounced by the senior tutor "*quite irregular*;" and by the master to be "by no means in keeping with the gravity of college discipline." To the joy of all the staid and sober members of the society, these sounds at length were hushed, for Desborough quitted the University.

"What a happy riddance!" said, on the morning of his departure, a junior fellow who had had the misfortune to domicile on Desborough's staircase. "His rooms had invariably such an unsavoury smell, that it was quite disagreeable to pass them!"

"And would you believe it," cried another, who used to excruciate the ears of those above

and below him by the most rasping inflictions on a tuneless fiddle; "would you believe it, after the noise and uproar with which his rooms were familiar—would you credit it, after the horrid din which, during all hours of day and night, might be heard there—that whenever I began one of those sweetly soothing airs of Bellini, his gyp used to come to me with his master's compliments, and he was sorry to disturb me, but really the noise in my rooms—fancy—**THE NOISE!** was so great, that he was unable to read while it lasted!"

"He was so little accomplished—played the worst rubber of any man I ever knew," observed the dean, with great gravity.

"He carved so badly!" said the bursar. "He has often deprived me of my appetite by the manner in which he helped me!"

"And was so cruel!" added the president, who was cursed with a tabby mania. "Poor Fatima could never take her walk across the quadrangle without being worried by one or other of his vile terriers."

"The deliverance is great," cried the musical man, "and heaven be praised for it!"

"Amen!" said the other two; "but surely—yes! it is the dinner-bell!"

VI.

In a fair and fertile valley, where the nightingales are to be heard earlier and later in the year than in any other part of England; where the first bursting of the buds is seen in spring; where no rigour of the seasons can ever be felt; where every thing seems formed for precluding the very thought of wickedness, lived a loved and venerated clergyman with his only daughter.

He belonged to a most distinguished family, and had surrendered brilliant prospects to embrace the profession of his choice. And right nobly had he adorned it! And she—the companion of his late and early hours, his confidante, guide, almoner, consoler—was a young, fair, and innocent being, whose heart was a stranger to duplicity, and her tongue to guile.

His guide and consoler was she, in the truest sense of the term. He was blind. While comforting, in his dying moments, an old and valued parishioner, Mr. Somerset had caught the infection; and the fever, settling in his eyes, had deprived him of vision.

"I will be your curate," said the affectionate girl, when the old man, under the pressure of this calamity, talked of retiring altogether from duty. "The prayers, and psalms, and lessons you have long known by heart; and your addresses, as you call them, we all prefer to your written sermons. Pray, pray accept of me as your curate, and make trial of my services in guiding and prompting you, ere you surrender your beloved charge to a stranger."

"It would break my heart to do so," said the old man, faintly.

The experiment was made, and succeeded; it was a spectacle which stirred the heart to see that fair-haired, bright-eyed girl steadying her father's tottering steps, prompting him in the service when his memory failed, guiding him to and from the sanctuary, and watching over him with the truest and tenderest affection—an affection which no wealth could purchase, and no remuneration repay, for it sprung from heartfelt and devoted attachment.

Satiated with pleasure and shattered in constitution, a stranger came to seek health in this sheltered spot. It was Desborough. Neither the youth, nor the beauty, nor the innocence of Edith availed her against the

snare and sophistry of this unprincipled man. She fell—but under circumstances of the most unparalleled duplicity. She fell—the victim of the most tremendous perfidy and the dupe of the most carefully veiled villany. She fell—and was deserted! “Importune me no more as to marriage,” was the closing remark of the deceiver’s last letter; “your own conduct has rendered that impossible.” That declaration was her death-blow. She read it, and never looked up again. The springs of life seemed frozen within her; and without any apparent disease she faded gradually away.

“I am justly punished,” was the remark of her heart-broken father when the dreadful secret was disclosed to him. “My idol is withdrawn from me! Ministering at His altar, nought should have been dearer to me than His triumphs and His cause! But lead me to her, I can yet bless her.”

The parting interview between that parent and child will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. The aged minister wept and prayed—and prayed and wept—over his parting child, with an earnestness and agony that “bowed the hearts of all who heard him like the heart of one man.”

"Is there hope for me, father?" said the dying girl. "Can I—can I be forgiven? Will not—oh! will not our separation be eternal?"

"Though sin abounded," was the almost inarticulate reply, "grace did much more abound. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

"We shall not be long parted," was his remark when those who watched around the dying bed told him he had no longer a daughter. "The summons has arrived, and the last tie which bound me to earth is broken."

Acting upon this conviction, he commenced and completed the arrangements for the disposition of his little property with an earnestness and alacrity they could well understand who had witnessed his blameless career.

The evening previous to that appointed for the funeral of his daughter, he said to those who had the management of the sad ceremony, "Grant the last, the closing request of your pastor. Postpone the funeral a few hours. I ask no more. A short delay—and one service and one grave will suffice for both."

His words were prophetic. The morrow's sun he never saw; and on the following Sabbath, amid the tears of a bereaved people,

father and daughter were calmly deposited in one common grave.

VII.

In the interim how had the world sped with Gervaise Rolleston? Bravely! He had become a thriving and a prosperous gentleman. There are two modes, says an old writer, of obtaining distinction. "The eagle soars, the serpent climbs." The latter mode was the one adopted by Rolleston. He was an adroit flatterer; possessed the happy art of making those whom he addressed pleased with themselves; had a thorough knowledge of tact; and always said the right thing in the right place. All his acquaintance called him "*a very rising young man.*" And for "*a very rising young man,*" he held a most convenient creed. For "to forget all benefits, and conceal the remembrance of all injuries, are maxims by which adventurers lose their honour, but make their fortunes." In a happy hour he contrived to secure the acquaintance of Lord Meriden. His lordship was an amiable, but moody valetudinarian, who had no resources in himself, and was entirely dependent on the good

offices of others. Rolleston was the very man for him. He was a fair punster; told a good story; sang a capital song; played well at chess and billiards, and, most unaccountably, was always beaten at both; could read aloud by the hour together; and never took offence. To all these accomplishments, natural and acquired, he added one most valuable qualification, which was in constant exercise—the most profound respect for Lord Meriden. Ah! how true it is that “we love those who admire us more than those whom we admire!”

Rolleston's advice, presence, and conversation became to Lord Meriden indispensable. And when ordered abroad, by those who foresaw that he would die under their hands if he remained at home, the sick nobleman's first care was that Rolleston should accompany him. He did so; and played his part so successfully, that, “in remembrance of his disinterested attentions,” Lord Meriden bequeathed to him the whole of his personal property. His carriages, horses, plate, yacht, all were willed by the generous nobleman to his pliant favourite. In the vessel which had thus become his own, Rolleston embarked for England. It was a proud moment for his

aspiring spirit. He was returning, an independent and opulent man, to those shores which he had quitted, fifteen months before, a penniless adventurer. His family, apprized of his good fortune, hurried down to Ryde, to receive him on his arrival. They vied with each other in the length and ardour of their congratulations. By the way, what extraordinary and overpowering affection is invariably evinced by all the members of a family towards that branch of it which unexpectedly attains wealth or distinction! The "Fairy Queen" was telegraphed, was signalled, hove in sight, passed gallantly on, and all the Rollestons, great and small, pressed down to the pier to welcome this "dear, good, worthy, accomplished, and excellent young man."

At the very instant of nearing the pier, in the bustle and confusion of the moment, Rolleston was sent overboard. Some said that he was overbalanced by a sudden lurch of the vessel; others, that he was struck by the jib-boom. One staid and respectable spectator positively affirmed that he had observed a sailor, to whose wife, it seemed, Rolleston had, some months before, offered insult, rush violently against him, with the evident inten-

tion of injuring him ; and this account, strange as it appeared, gained considerable credence. The fact, however, was indisputable. He struggled bravely for a few moments with the eddy that sweeps around the pier, then struck out boldly for the shore, waved his hand in recognition of his agonized family, who were almost within speaking distance, and—sunk to rise no more.

For many days his anguished mother lingered at Ryde, in the hope of rescuing the body from the deep ; and large was the reward promised to those who should succeed in bringing her the perishing remains. So many days had elapsed in fruitless search, that hope was fading into despair, when one morning a lady in deep mourning inquired for Mrs. Rolleston. On being admitted to her presence—

“ I am the bearer,” said she, “ of welcome intelligence : I have this morning discovered on the beach, at some distance, the body of your son, Gervaise Rolleston.”

“ How know you that it is he ? ”

“ I cannot be mistaken ! ”

“ Are his features, then, familiar to you ? ”

“ Familiar ! I am the mother of Cyril Dormer ! ”

VIII.

It is painful to observe how soon the dead are forgotten. The tide of fashion, or business, or pleasure, rolls on—rapidly obliterates the memory of the departed—and sweeps away with it the attention of the mourner to the ruling folly of the hour.

“ There poesy and love come not,
It is a world of stone :
The grave is bought—is closed—forgot,
And then life hurries on.” *

Engrossed in the all-important duty of securing the property which had been bequeathed to their son, and which, as he had left no will, there was some probability of their losing, the Rollestons had completely forgotten him by whose subservience it had been acquired. At length it occurred to them that some monument was due; or, at all events, that a headstone should be raised over him who slept beneath the yew-tree in Brading churchyard; and directions were given accordingly. Their intentions had been anticipated. A headstone

* L. E. L.

had been erected—when or by whom no one could or cared to divulge. But there it was. It bore the simple inscription of the name of the departed—the day of birth and the day of death; with this remarkable addition, in large and striking letters:—

“WITH THE SAME MEASURE THAT YE METE WITHAL, IT SHALL BE MEASURED TO YOU AGAIN.”

IX.

Some years after the circumstances detailed in the last chapter, a gentleman, in military undress, was descried riding slowly into the village of Beechbury. The size and architecture of the village church had apparently arrested his attention, and he drew bridle suddenly, to make inquiries of a peasant, who was returning from his daily toil.

“Ay! it’s a fine church, though I can’t say I troubles it very much myself,” was the reply. “There’s a *mort* of fine *munniments* in it beside. All Lord Somerset’s folks be buried there; and ’twas but four years last Martinmas that they brought here old parson Somerset and his daughter all the way from a churchyard t’other side Dartmoor, because, ye see, they

belonged to 'em; and these great folks choose to be all together. It's a grand vault they have! But here's Moulder, the sexton, coming anent us, and he'll tell as much and more than ye may care to hear."

The name of Somerset seemed to jar harshly on the stranger's ear; and, dismounting hastily, he demanded of the sexton "whether he could shew him the interior of the church at that hour?"

"Certainly," was the reply; "turn to the right, and I will overtake you with the keys before you reach the west door."

The church was one of considerable magnitude and surpassing beauty. It was built in the form of a cross, and had formerly been the chapel of a wealthy monastic order, suppressed at the period of the Reformation. Near the altar was a shrine, once the resort of pilgrims from every clime, from its inclosing a fragment of the true cross. You approached it by an aisle, which was literally a floor of tombstones, inlaid in brass with the forms of the departed. Mitres, and crosiers, and spears, and shields, and helmets were all mingled together—emblems of conquests, and honours, and dignities, which had long since passed away. The set-

ting sun cast his mellow radiance through the richly-painted western window, and tipped with living lustre many of the monuments of the line of Somerset. Some of the figures were of the size of life, and finely sculptured. And as the restless and agitated stranger gazed on them, they seemed to reply to his questioning glance, and slowly murmur, "All on earth is but for a period; joy and grief, triumph and desolation, succeed each other like cloud and sunshine! Care and sorrow, change and vicissitude, we have proved like thee. Fight the good fight of faith. Brave, as we, the combat; speed the race; stem the storm of life; and in God's own good time thou, like us, shalt rest."

"I wish," said the stranger, when he had traversed the church, "to descend into the Somerset vault. It's a sickly, foolish fancy of mine; but I choose to gratify it. Which is the door?"

"Nay, that's no part of our bargain," said the sexton, doggedly; "you go not there."

"I am not accustomed to refusals when I state my wishes," said the soldier, fiercely and haughtily. "Lead the way, old man!"

"Not for the Indies! It's as much as my

place is worth. Our present rector is one of the most particular parsons that ever peered over a pulpit cushion. He talks about the sanctity of the dead in a way that makes one stare. Besides, it is the burial-place of all his family."

"The very reason for which I wish to see it."

"Not with *my* will," said Moulder, firmly.

"Besides, there's nothing to see—nothing but lead coffins, on my life!"

"Here," cried the stranger; and he placed a piece of gold on the sexton's trembling palm.

"I dare not, Sir; indeed I dare not," said the latter, entreatingly, as if he felt the temptation was more than he could well resist.

"Another," said his companion, and a second piece of the same potent metal glittered in the old man's grasp.

"Well," cried Moulder, drawing a deep and heavy sigh, "if you *must* you *must*! I would rather you wouldn't—I'm sure no good will come of it; but if you *insist* upon it, Sir—if you *insist* upon it"—and slowly and reluctantly he unclosed the ponderous door which opened into the vault.

The burial-place of the Somersets was large and imposing. It was evidently of antique

construction and very considerable extent. Escutcheons, shields, hatchments, and helmets were ranged around the walls, all referring to those who were calmly sleeping within its gloomy recesses, while coffins, pile upon pile, occupied the centre. One single window or spiracle of fifteen inches in diameter passed upwards, through the thick masonry, to the external air beyond, and one of those short, massive pillars, which we sometimes see in the crypts of very ancient churches, stood in the centre and supported the roof.

“Which,—which is the coffin”—and the stranger’s voice seemed hoarse with agitation—“of Edith Somerset?”

“Edith!” cried old Moulder, carelessly—and the indifference of his tone formed a strange contrast to the eagerness of the preceding speaker—“Edith! ough! ah! the young girl that last came amongst us! a very pretty lass, they say, she was! Edith! ah! here she is—the second coffin on your right.”

* * * *

“Well, Sir, you are about satisfied, I take it,” said the sexton, coaxingly, to his companion, after the latter had taken a long, minute, and silent survey of the scene around him.

“No! no!”

“Why, how long would you wish to remain here?”

“At least an hour.”

“An hour! I can't stay, Sir, really I can't, all that time! And to leave the church, and, what's worse, the vault open—it's a thing not to be thought of! I cannot—and, what's more, I will not.”

“Dotard! then lock me in, I say! Do what you will. But leave me.”

“Leave you! Lock you in! And HERE! God bless you, Sir, you can't be aware——”

“Leave me—leave me!” said the stranger, impetuously; and he drew the door towards him as he spoke.

“What! would you be locked up and left alone with the dead——?”

“Go—go, I say, and release me in an hour.”

In amazement at the stranger's mien, air of command, courage, and choice, Moulder departed. “The Jolly Beggars” lay in his way home, and the door stood so invitingly open, and the sounds of mirth and good-fellowship which thence issued were so attractive, that he could not resist the temptation of washing

away the cares of the day in a cool tankard, were it only to pledge the stranger's health.

This indulgence Moulder repeated so frequently as at length to lose all recollection of the stranger, of the vault, and of his appointment, and it was only late on the morning of the following day, when his wife asked him "*if he had come honestly by what was in his pocket?*" that, in an agony, he remembered his prisoner.

Trembling in every limb, and apprehending he knew not what, he hurried to the church and unlocked the vault.

The spectacle which there awaited him haunted the old man to his dying day. The remains of the stranger were before him, but so marred—so mutilated—so disfigured—that no feature could be recognized, even by the nearest relative.

Rats in myriads had assailed him, and, by his broken sword and the multitudes which lay dead around him, it was plain his resistance had been gallant and protracted. But it availed not. Little of him remained, and that little was in a state which it was painful for humanity to gaze upon.

Among the many who pressed forward to view the appalling spectacle was an elderly female, much beloved in the village for her kindly, and gentle, and compassionate heart;—her name was Dormer; to her the sexton handed a small memorandum book, which had, by some means, escaped destruction.

Upon the papers which it contained the old lady looked long and anxiously, and when she spoke, it was in a low and tremulous tone.

“These,” said she, “are the remains of Colonel Vincent Desborough. I have deep cause to remember him. May he meet with that mercy on High which on earth he refused to others!” The old lady paused and wept, and the villagers did homage to her grief by observing a respectful silence. They all knew and loved her. “This spectacle,” murmured she, as she wended her way homewards, “opens up fountains of grief which I thought were long since dry; but chiefly and mainly does it teach me that the measure we meet out to others is measured unto us again.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FOREIGN SORCERESS AND THE BRITISH
STATESMAN.

“For it is not the past alone that has its ghosts: each event to come has also its *spectrum*—its shade; when the hour arrives, life enters it, the shadow becomes corporeal, and walks the world. Thus, in the land beyond the grave, are ever two impalpable and spectral hosts, the things to be, the things that have been.”—GODOLPHIN.

At Paris, during the early part of the year 1827, and the autumn of 1828 and 1829, resided a lady whose pretensions and performances caused no slight sensation among the novelty-seeking coteries of that gay capital. Madame de Strzelecki was a woman advanced in years, plain in appearance, and grave in address. She spoke in the tone and diction of one who had been accustomed to move in the higher grades of society: but of her descent, connections, plans, and resources, no one seemed able to glean the slightest information. She professed to unveil the future: and though

her fee was gold, and though she saw those only who waited upon her with a formal introduction from a previous client, the equipages that were found loitering near her spacious dwelling in Rue de la Paix chez la Barrière du Roule contained half the beauty and *haut ton* of Paris.

And yet the information she gave was partial. It related to two epochs only in the life of those who consulted her—death and marriage. She would place before you the lively scene and gay appendages of the one; and the languor, gloom, and restlessness of the other. On neither spectacle was it her custom to offer one single syllable of remark. She left her visitant to draw his own moral from the scene.

Among the strangers in Paris at that period were two Englishmen of great though opposite talent—both ambitious men—each idolized by his respective party—each the sworn champion of a certain set of opinions—both high in the favour of the sovereign whom they served, and aspiring to the most enduring rewards which talent and energy could win. They heard from fifty gay voices the fame of Madame de Strzelecki; and as a mere whim

of the moment—an impromptu extravaganza—they resolved to visit the mystic in disguise, and to test her pretensions. They were described, in the note of introduction which they presented, as “two American gentlemen, whose stay in Paris must be, under any circumstances, short; whose errand there was some commercial speculation, the issue of which might recal them to Philadelphia at a few hours’ notice. They entreated, therefore, the favour of an immediate audience.”

It was granted at once. She received them, as was her wont, in silence. But upon the first who entered her apartment (the younger, and by far the more intellectual-looking of the two) she gazed long and earnestly.

“You are married, and have two sons and a daughter;” was the off-hand declaration with which she met his bow: “the scene of your nuptials, therefore, you cannot well have forgotten! That of your demise is the spectacle which I presume you wish to have brought before you?”

“You anticipate me, Madam,” was the reply; “but such is, undoubtedly, the object of my present visit.”

“And you, Sir,” said she, turning to his

companion, "are married, but childless. Do *you* wish to gaze upon the closing scene of your busy life? Perhaps," added she, with more of interest and feeling than she generally exhibited, "you will abandon your intention? Reconsider it."

"By no means: the ordeal which is gaily courted by my companion I would also brave."

"Have you firmness and resolution?" demanded the lady: "have you nerve to gaze upon a very harrowing spectacle?"

"*Without it, ought I to have come hither?*"

"I am answered. Follow me."

She led the way, as she spoke, out of the apartment, and the Englishmen followed her. They crossed a small, low passage; passed through a narrow portal; a second; a third; and then found themselves in a hall of very considerable extent. It was paved with black marble, and decorated at each end with four slender pillars of the same material. In the centre rose a very large jet-black basin, filled with dark water to a considerable depth. A cupola, or lantern, admitted a tempered light from above; and the deep basin was so placed, that whatever daylight the dome admitted fell full upon it. But, despite of the noble

proportions of the hall, and the lightness of the pillars, and the fairy tracery of the cupola, there was an air of gloom over the whole apartment. It seemed a fitting scene to communicate tidings of approaching sorrow, separation, sickness, silence, death.

“ Look on this dark water,” said their conductress: “ it shall speak to you of the future. If death be at a distance, it will sink some feet in every second that you gaze upon it. If your parting hour approaches, it will rise rapidly; and if the *very last* sands in life’s hour-glass be running, will mount till it be checked only by the margin. If it be fated that death shall approach you in the guise of violence, the water will instantly bubble up. If caused by accident, it will change colour once, twice, thrice,—fast as the hues of the rainbow melt into each other and vanish, even while you gaze on them. If death overtake you by gradual decay, and in the common course of nature, other than a gentle ripple over its surface, no change will the still water know or tell. You understand me ? ”

“ I do.”

“ Fully ? ”

“ I conceive so.”

“ Approach, then. Gaze steadfastly on that dark surface, and it shall mirror to thee, fully and faithfully, the future.”

The calmer, and graver, and sadder of the two advanced slowly to the margin with a look of mingled curiosity and incredulity which sat strangely on his heavy, massive, and somewhat passionless features. In an instant the water rose at least two feet; changed colour rapidly and evidently more than once; and then became dark and motionless as before.

“ Ah! not far distant—and by accident!”

The mystic made no reply; but merely motioned him by a gesture to gaze on. He did so; and as he looked he beheld a mimic representation of a scene of great confusion. Countless multitudes were assembled—there was running to and fro—horsemen were riding in all directions—the spectators were conversing eagerly with each other—and deep dismay sat on many a countenance. This faded from the surface, and there was presented to him a small room in what appeared to be a road-side inn. Three or more individuals it contained, to whose persons he was a perfect stranger. But there was one present whose features he instantly recognized—one who was ever dear to him—his wife. Her countenance was calm;

but there was stamped on it deep and indescribable distress. Propped up with pillows in the foreground was a figure which he instantly admitted to be his own. But how painfully was he pictured! The eye was wandering and restless. Every feature bore the impress of intense agony: and the face was overspread with that cold, grey tint which so surely foretels impending dissolution. He looked at it steadily for a few seconds. A sort of mist seemed to come over his vision. He withdrew his gaze for an instant from the fountain, and when he again resumed his observation, the painful scene had wholly disappeared!

His inquiring look of astonishment and emotion the mystic returned with apathy. The agitation manifested in his countenance was strangely contrasted by the fixed, rigid expression of hers. His appeared a painful struggle with conflicting feelings: her countenance wore its usual air of cold and impassive indifference.

“What! it’s past a joke?” said the younger of the two, advancing gaily towards the fountain:—“the answer of the oracle is not palatable, eh? Take your favourite poet’s advice henceforth:

Quid sit futurum cras, fuge querere!

But now *of me*, and *to me* what says the future?"

The water rose a few inches and then became stationary. On its surface next appeared a small chamber; limited in its dimensions—humble in its accommodations, antique and clumsy in its furniture, and altogether pretensionless in its comforts and appointments. Gardens seemed to stretch around it of considerable extent; and on the mantel-piece he remarked a small bronze clock of singular shape and construction.

His attention, at once, became intently and painfully fixed.

"Charles, as I live!" he exclaimed, as his eye rested on the lineaments of a youth, who was holding the hand of a sick person, in the full vigour of life, but evidently racked with bodily agony. "The other figure I conceive to be that—that"—continued he, speaking slowly and after a lengthened pause—"yes! that of Charles's dying father! 'Tis a painful spectacle," added he, turning from the fountain, "and I know not what benefit is to be derived from a lengthened contemplation of it. Come: the day wears. We will leave

this clever, disagreeable, and certainly most puzzling exhibition."

He took his friend's arm as he spoke, and advanced to pay his parting devoirs to the mystic, and with them her fee. The first she returned coldly: the latter she peremptorily rejected.

"I am already remunerated; amply remunerated!" was her unexpected and startling declaration.—"Sufficient honour for me if I have administered to the *amusement*; the passing *amusement*,"—the bitter emphasis placed on this last word conveyed a meaning which those whom she addressed seemed to feel and shrink from—"of two such distinguished state servants of his Britannic Majesty as Mr. Huskisson and Mr. Canning!"

Again, with exquisite mockery, she curtsied still deeper and more deferentially than before, and ere they could recover from their surprise, left them.

CHAPTER IX.

“NIDUS PASSERUM:” OR THE “SPARROWE’S”
NEST AT IPSWICH.

“In this church, St. Laurence, are interred the mortal remains of the ancient family of the Sparrowes. They appear to have been long and honourably connected with the town of Ipswich: one of them having served the office of Bailiff thirteen times. The inscription on the vault is quaint enough—“*Nidus Passerum.*” ’Tis a merry conceit on so gloomy a subject! It seems to say—‘here the Sparrowes—the old birds and the young—securely nestle!’”

RAMBLES THROUGH THE EASTERN COUNTIES.

It may be questioned whether there be a house in the kingdom, belonging to a private individual, which possesses greater interest for the antiquarian than that inhabited by Mr. Sparrowe, in the Old Butter Market, Ipswich. In truth, its attractions are manifold. There are curious dates and inscriptions for the genealogical student; valuable old paintings for the lovers of art; for those who hold the faith of former days, vestiges of a Roman

Catholic chapel adroitly hidden in the rude loft during troublous times; and for the romantic, a legend linked with the reverses of Royalty.

The exterior of this picturesque dwelling has been described and limned over and over again. By no Suffolk tourist or travelling artist have its claims to notice been overlooked. Engravings and etchings of it, of various merit, abound. But the interior is less known. And yet a long summer's morning could be agreeably consumed in an examination of the various relics of old time which it contains.

But before we enter the mansion, let me notice one curious fact—that no chimneys are visible from the street; that the four attic windows on the roof form so many gable-ends; and that above the row of windows on the second story is a considerable projection extending the whole length of the front, which forms, in fact, a promenade on the outside nearly round the house.

The entrance-hall is noble: and the ceiling in-admirable preservation.

The eating-room is closely panelled in dark oak, gloriously carved, and hung with

original pictures by Gainsborough, Sir Peter Lely, and Sir Godfrey Kneller. So profusely is this apartment ornamented, that even the beams of the room are as elaborately carved as the most prominent part of the wainscot. The figures 1567, conspicuous over the mantel-piece, form the date of the erection of the building.

Ascending to the first floor, you reach a room extending over the whole of the front part of the house;—a noble apartment—forty-eight feet in length by twenty-two in width. Its walls are lined with pictures, all more or less interesting: but none so striking as the portrait of James the First. It is a revolting picture; and yet it arrests and rivets your attention. You feel it to be a likeness. It is a faithful transcript—you are persuaded—of the features of the party whom it represents. And what a transcript! Avarice, cruelty, cowardice, meanness, treachery, sensuality, all are depicted there. The picture is a study, were it only for the various expression stamped on the canvas. One thinks of the monarch's victims—the gallant Raleigh and the guiltless Arabella Stuart; of the frightful disclosures threatened by Sir Thomas Over-

bury, and hushed only by his sudden and violent death in the Tower; of the infamous court favourite (Carr), and his paramour the Countess of Essex; of their admitted share in the Overbury murder, and of the mysterious and unexplained reason why the penalty of death was not inflicted on them; of the clue to the king's lenity hinted at by more than one historian—that Somerset was in possession of facts relative to his royal master, which, if revealed, would cover his name with infamy—a supposition which, with that speaking canvas before us, it is difficult to believe untrue. Another glance at this—excuse the paradox—attractive yet repugnant picture. A monster, not a man, stands before you. And he—a king!

Near this picture is one which tradition has handed down as the portrait of a Romish persecutor. One would hardly have guessed as much from the delicate, feminine features, and calm, soft eye.

"A persecutor!"

What character more hateful in the sight of "The Supreme," or more injurious to the interests of real religion!

And yet, though there be the furrows of

age and care in that way-worn countenance—though the light of gladness seems quenched in the fading eye, and the saddened expression unquestionably indicates one who has endured much in a weary and lengthened pilgrimage—we look in vain for the haughty scowl, the harsh and cruel eye, and the angry flush of one who is “handed down to us as a persecutor and injurious.”

Between this portrait and that of James hangs a Magdalen, by, it is said, Caracci:—a voluptuous picture—conveying any thing but the idea of one who loathed the remembrance of the past, and was preparing by prayer and penitence for the solemn future. The ceiling of this magnificent room is richly carved, and profusely ornamented with fruit and flowers; but its beauty is marred by thick and repeated coats of whitewash. How I longed to set to work and scrape it off! Beyond question the ceiling is of oak—dark, glorious, enduring oak! Woe betide the Vandal who first cased it with whitewash! He is past praying for!

In one corner of this saloon a keen eye will detect a small door. This opens upon a staircase leading to the roof of the house:

from which issues a door-way to the leads over the wide eaves of the building. These leads are sufficiently wide for two parties to walk abreast, and every part of the upper portion of the building can be reached by them.

Early in the present century a curious discovery was made in this upper story of the house—namely, that of a concealed loft, without doubt, forming the roof of a chapel, the body of which existed in a room immediately beneath. "The existence of this apartment was discovered by the merest accident, the connection between the loft and the sitting-room being cut off by a built-up wall. Time and damp, however, displacing a portion of the plaster, the light of day found its way through the opening, and the deserted sanctuary was discovered. The arched timbers of a slightly ornamented roof exist within it, and at the time of its being opened, the floor was strewed with wooden angels, and such figures as usually serve to decorate a Catholic oratory. It is supposed that the chapel existed in a perfect state at the date of the Reformation; but after that period the open assumption of the proscribed faith becoming

dangerous, the body of this place of worship was converted into a common sitting-room, and the roof concealed by a beamed ceiling.”

This discovery lends strength to the tradition, current in the Sparrowe family, that in this excellent old house Charles II. found a hiding-place after the fatal field of Worcester. “Where,” has often been a perplexing point to the various Sparrowes who did battle in defence of the grateful legend that their dwelling had sheltered fugitive royalty.

This chapel-chamber seems to clear up many a difficulty. Here, unquestionably, the monarch would be “closely tyed.” Those must have been prying eyes which could detect his “whereabouts.” Be this as it may, in the absence of all direct documentary evidence, affirmative or negative, on the point, it may be matter of interesting inquiry whether this traditionary refuge of the king does not explain the hint thrown out by more than one historical writer, that Charles had intended to have embarked at Harwich; that he had adherents to his cause there; but they found the port too closely watched to permit of his escape. Let it be remembered, that there is an interval in the prince’s wanderings, of which

no very minute account is given. Was Harwich—or *its neighbourhood*—visited during that interval? Was there, in point of time, space enough for so long a journey? Disappointed at Bristol, finding there no bark by which he could seek a foreign home, we find Charles, on the 16th of September, at Castle Cary, in Somersetshire, and on the 17th, at Trent—Colonel Wyndham's house. Here many days were lost in vain endeavours to procure a vessel at Charmouth or Lyme. How anxious Charles was to escape, and how unwearied were the efforts of his devoted adherents to procure him the means of flight, history over and over again abundantly attests. On the 6th of October we find him at Mrs. Hyde's, at Hele, near Amesbury. Was Suffolk visited during this interval? Was it at this period that an escape from Harwich was deemed feasible? And if so, did the wanderer find a temporary home at the mansion of the Sparrowes—a family as distinguished for its un-deviating loyalty as their descendant is for professional integrity—and was the chapel-chamber the king's resting-place?

Be this fact or be it conjecture, there was, unquestionably, a secret, stringent, and endur-

ing connection between the Sparrowe family and the reigning Stuart dynasty—a connection impossible to explain otherwise than upon grounds of some marked and definite obligation conferred by the subject and accepted by the monarch.

Traces of this connection one stumbles on at every step. Portraits of Charles II. are in possession of the Sparrowe family—presents, be it remembered, from the king himself. Portraits, too, they hold, of various other members of that branch of the Stuart dynasty, and by no ignoble hand. The arms of Charles are emblazoned prominently on the exterior of the old mansion; and of Mrs. Lane, who took so fearless and enviable a part in the preservation of her monarch, the Sparrowes hold a miniature sent them by the king himself. *Was this to remind them of the similar succour they themselves had rendered him?*

In the wainscoted dining-room, to which reference has been already made, there hangs a highly-finished and life-like portrait, in exquisite preservation, of John Sparrowe, who repeatedly served the office of bailiff of Ipswich. It is a glorious specimen of colouring, by Gainsborough.

Near him, by Sir Peter Lely—and exhibiting all the beauties and defects of that great master—is a likeness of Mr. John Sparrowe, father of the gentleman so admirably painted by Gainsborough. Then we have the stern features of Sir John Sparrowe, Knight of the Green Cloth in the reign of James II., handed down to us by the brush of Sir Godfrey Kneller.

There are two Vandykes. One, a likeness of Henrietta Maria, the ill-starred queen of the unfortunate Charles I.: the other is a portrait of Charles II.; and in colouring, execution, and expression, a master-piece. Good judges have held that Vandyke never painted a finer picture. It represents, and vividly, a worn-out debauchee—one whose manhood was steeped in licentiousness, and whom a life of pleasure, vulgarly so called, had early and thoroughly destroyed. There is nothing kingly, or dignified, or refined, or self-reliant, about it. Grossness is stamped on every lineament. All is of the earth, earthy. The animal predominates over the man. It is not the sovereign—the ruler of a people, the arbiter of the destinies of a kingdom, the supreme fount of justice—you are gazing on; but a slave of lust,

one whose motto is, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;” one whom unbridled appetite rules; who knows no master but his own passions; a callous, reckless profligate. Those who have read Miss Strickland’s “Lives of the Queens of England,” and bear in memory her elaborate sketch of Catherine of Braganza, in which a graphic account is given of the last illness of Charles II., and of his lawless life up to the moment in which disease laid him upon his death-bed, will be tempted to say, that her spirited narrative and this painful portrait illustrate each other.

One cannot quit the picture of Queen Henrietta Maria without trying to solve a riddle which the old house presents.

From the noble saloon on the first floor the spectator passes through a low, narrow door, near King James’s portrait, and finds himself in a bed-room, in which the embellishments of the ceiling are totally changed. Fruit, flowers, and family badges, the decorations of the other apartments, disappear, and are here profusely superseded by the *fleur-de-lys*. This alteration has a meaning. Can it be thus explained? Has, then, the faint, lingering legend any

foundation that the unhappy queen, in one of her many journeys to and from the continent, was here a passing but honoured guest? If so, was this her sleeping apartment? And was the *fleur-de-lys*—so identified with her native land—an emblem intended at once to compliment the princess and to commemorate the transient visit of so distinguished a personage?

But to pass from conjecture to certainty.

From the year 1573 this time-honoured dwelling has been inhabited by the Sparrowe family only. It is literally "*Nidus Passerum*." I may add, too, and I do it with honest pride, *that the present owner is a MASON*—an honoured member of the fraternity. His own high sense of honour, and unblemished worth go far to redeem from obloquy a profession against which caustic tongues clamour loudly: a profession thus recently characterized by high authority:—

"The power of which, for good or evil, as far as the worldly interests of the mass of mankind are concerned, can scarcely be too strongly stated—a profession, owning, I am happy to be able to say, so many who would

do honour to any calling, and who are well aware that sincerity and integrity are the surest guides to prosperity and distinction, and who are true and just from higher motives and less worldly considerations."*

* Vice-Chancellor Sir Knight Bruce, on a motion to remove the name of a solicitor from the Rolls Court.

CHAPTER X.

A MASON IN HIGH PLACES: BISHOP GRISWOLD.

“Reduce Freemasonry to the limits of any particular religious institution, and you, *de facto*, annihilate its usefulness as a common bond of humanity. Declare it to be, in its maxims, rites, and ceremonies, exclusive in its character, and you, *à priori*, debase it to that anti-social position wherein the most rancorous passions of the human heart have raged, to enkindle wrath, envy, hatred, and discord among mankind.”

REV. H. RAPER SLADE, D.D.

“NOTHING surprises me more,” was the remark of a young and intelligent American who had come on a visit to his father-land, “than the influence of the Church in the old country. It is marvellous. We know nothing of it in the States.”

“So I should imagine,” was my reply.

“Nothing at all,” continued he, musingly; “but on this side the Atlantic, ‘Hear the Church’ are words of import. Two of the ablest of your prelates—Bishops Phillpotts and Thirlwall—I had the rare opportunity of

hearing in the House of Lords on the same evening. The former reminds me a good deal, in his personal bearing, courage, fluency, determination, and decision, of a model churchman in our own country—Bishop Griswold.”

“He differs from him, though, in one respect, and that an important one,” remarked a bystander.

“Name it.”

“In his treatment of Freemasons: Bishop Griswold cherished them: Bishop Phillpotts discountenances them.”

“He but follows in that respect his right reverend brethren,” contended the first speaker.

“That can hardly be, seeing that the present Bishop of Lincoln is a Mason; and further, that the Primate, Dr. Howley, not only belonged to the craft, but was at one period of his life master of a working lodge at Bristol.”

“As to Dr. Griswold’s favourable feelings towards Freemasons,” said the young American, “those are easily explained when you are told that the bishop was himself a Mason.”

“That *does* surprise me!” remarked a very formal gentleman, in a most amusing tone of unequivocal amazement—“a bishop—a

Mason!! Oh dear! oh dear! These *are* the latter days. What sort of person was this dignitary—in practice, I mean, as well as intellect? The latter, I presume, was feeble.”

“Why!” returned the American, bluntly, “we form our opinion of an individual most safely when we judge him by his acts. Of the party *under dissection* I will give a trait or two, then say whether or no his opinions are entitled to respect. He was bishop of the Eastern diocese and senior bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States. As a matter of course, many were the odious representations to which he was obliged to listen; for in England, let me tell you that you have no idea of the minute, and jealous, and unceasing *surveillance* to which, in America, church clergy are hourly subjected. One morning—this was about a year and a half before his death—he was surprised in his study by a clergyman, who poured into his unwilling ear a series of remarks, inuendos, fears, doubts, and surmises respecting the conduct and character of a neighbouring church minister. The bishop, apparently, did not heed him; but wrote on, assiduously and in silence. When his visitor had completed his state-

ment, Dr. Griswold looked up from his paper, and said, gravely, 'I have committed to writing every syllable you have said to me: I will now read it over to you deliberately, paragraph by paragraph; sign the memorandum, and I will instantly act upon it.'—His visitor looked aghast.—'Oh dear, no! by no means!' cried he, pushing the long catalogue of misdemeanors away from him—'I contemplate nothing of the kind. I merely called, Right Reverend Sir, to put you in possession of certain rumours, remarks, and suspicions current, respecting my unhappy neighbour; it was a visit of information: nothing more.'—'Ah! very well! but I will teach you, Sir,' said the bishop, 'that to a party filling my office there can be no such thing as what you phrase a *'visit of information.'* Mine are functions far too solemn to be trifled with. There can be no gossiping visits to me. Sign this paper, taken down from your own lips—your own voluntary, unasked-for, and spontaneous statement, be it remembered—sign it, as a needful preliminary to its being laid before the next Clerical Convention, or—*I proceed against you.'* The visitor grew paler and paler—hemmed, coughed, explained, and hawed—still flinched from

substantiating his statement. The result was speedy. The bishop drove the eaves-dropper from his diocese !”

“Would that other official authorities were equally proof against the poison of eaves-droppers !” sighed the formal gentleman.

“An act of self-denial scarcely to be expected ; its results would be so horribly inconvenient,” suggested the American, slyly : “see you not how marvellously it would thin the ranks of great men’s toadies ?”

“Adjuncts which,” remarked I, “*your* bishop, clearly, could dispense with.”

“He did—and on principle,” observed my Transatlantic companion : “in public and in private he abhorred the *genus*. He never allowed it to fasten on him ; and to this may be ascribed the weight which attached to his opinions and the respect and reverence which waited on him to his last hour. During the persecution sustained by Masonry, some years since, in America, a wealthy layman accosted the bishop, and after sundry insinuations to the discredit of a clergyman whom for years he had been endeavouring to injure, wound up with the remark, ‘And now, bishop, you will be shocked—much shocked—at hearing what

I am quite prepared to prove : this man is—I have no doubt of it—A MASON !’—‘ A Mason, is he? I am one myself,’ returned Dr. Griswold.—The objector was flabberghasted.—‘ I wish,’ continued the bishop, ‘ ALL my clergy were Masons ; I wish they all belonged to the craft ; provided they would act up to its obligations and fulfil its engagements.’—‘ And in what may these consist?’ said the tale-bearer, hurriedly ; bent on bettering his position, or, at all events, regaining his composure.—‘ I will shew you practically,’ returned the bishop, after a short pause. ‘ You have sought me, Sir, with a long and laboured statement, and have given me a variety of details relative to Mr. —— ; you have said much that has a tendency to injure him, and that to his ecclesiastical superior ; his failings—and who is without them?—have not escaped you ; his merits—and he has many—have been barely adverted to. Such a conversation as we have had cannot but lead to some immediate and grave result. Now, in awarding to it the importance which it may deserve, I will believe that you have been actuated by no other than perfectly pure and disinterested feelings ; I will forget that between you and your minister

there has existed for years strong personal dislike; I will forget that he once remonstrated with you in private on the course of life you were then leading; and I will further believe that *you have yourself altogether lost all remembrance of that incident!* I will believe, too, that in seeking me this morning you had no wish whatever to crush him; that your sole aim was to benefit the church; that your distinct object was to preclude from doing further mischief one whom you considered to be a rash and an ill-advised minister; I will believe that no personal animosity; no impulse of private pique; no revengeful or malicious feeling, have in the most remote degree moved you: but that on public grounds, and from religious considerations, and those alone, you have sought me. *This conclusion you owe to MASONRY.* That, Sir, teaches me charity; don't mistake me; I don't allude to mere almsgiving; but to charity in its purest, largest, most comprehensive, and most effective form—*the charity which bids us invariably put THE BEST CONSTRUCTION upon the acts and motives of others.* This I learn from Masonry.' Would you believe it," concluded the American, with the most extraordinary and laughter-moving

twist of his droll mouth—"that the rich planter never cared to converse with Bishop Griswold afterwards!"

Ha! ha! ha! burst from the party, tickled as much by the anecdote as by the contortions of the speaker.

"But was he benevolent as a Mason?" asked the formal gentleman, in a querulous tone, from his distant corner.

"This I can say, that to my own knowledge one of the fraternity applied to him in a moment of great distress. The bishop coolly demanded a clear, correct, and candid *exposé* of his position and his perplexities. Now, bear in mind, the bishop was not opulent. We have no wealthy prelates amongst us. We have no deans who die worth fifty thousand pounds. We have no churchmen with large revenues at their disposal and few claims upon their exertions and leisure. These are found in the 'ould country.' Dr. Griswold's means were limited. The petitioner obeyed; and then named a sum. '*This*,' said he, 'will relieve me.' 'No! no!' cried the bishop, 'that won't do. Don't tell me what will *relieve* you; but what will *RELEASE* you.' A further and much heavier sum was then stated.

This the bishop raised, and gave him. But by far the largest donor on the list was himself."

Our formal friend in the corner with his lugubrious tones again struck in :—

" A bishop—a Mason ! I cannot understand it. I presume, however, that Dr. Griswold was not a man of mind ; or a scholar ; or a student ; or a man devoted to literary research ?"

" He was our greatest mathematician after Dr. Bowditch," replied the American firmly : " a man of indisputable attainments and strong natural mental endowments. His domicile was Boston, where he had to cope with no less an antagonist than Dr. Channing : and this eloquent and accomplished advocate of opposite (Unitarian) views always spoke of the churchman as an able and learned man. This, remember, was the testimony of an opponent."

" And his faults ?"

" It is hardly fair to dwell on them. They were lost amid the brilliancy of his many virtues. Those who love to expatiate on a great man's failings would say that he was somewhat too self-reliant ; unbending in his

judgments; and stern in his reproofs. But towards the decline of life, every harsh feeling mellowed under the controlling influence of Christian charity and Christian love. He was verging on seventy-eight when he died. In the last week of his life he said to a young friend, who watched by his sick couch,—‘ We are all of us apt to think too harshly of our fellow-men; to reprove too willingly, and to condemn too exultingly. But listen to me. *FORBEARANCE is the great lesson of life.*’ A sentiment to which his age and experience lent strength; and worthy, let me add, of a bishop and—a mason.”

CHAPTER XI.

A SOVEREIGN : A LADY IN WAITING : AND
A SECRET.

“Ambition thinks no face so beautiful as that which looks from under a Crown.”—SIR PHILIP SYDNEY.

THERE is truth as well as tenderness in the observation of Selden, that “it is only when the career of life is closed that the character is completely established, and can be fairly estimated.” It occurred to me forcibly, when I read the demise of the Hon. Mrs. Lisle.

Mrs. Lisle was no common-place character. Hers was no tranquil and ordinary career. She was one of the Ladies of Honour, at a most critical period of her history, to that unfortunate princess, the late Queen of England. I am not now about to rake up the ashes of the dead, for the purpose of kindling

new flames among the living. I purpose not to speak with bitterness of those who are now gathered together in the peace and shelter of the grave. I call her UNFORTUNATE, because I think few will deny her claim to that epithet;—still fewer assert that she was not, during the greater part of her life, and particularly the closing scenes of it, an object of the deepest pity.

It will, perhaps, be remembered, that, in the memorable investigation of 1805-6, the evidence of Mrs. Lisle was peremptorily required, and minutely criticized. Hers was the only deposition which militated materially against the princess. "*It is the only part of the case (thus ran her letter to her royal father-in-law) which I conceive to be in the least against me, or that rests upon a witness at all worthy of your Majesty's credit.*"

It was, as some have reason to know, the sole deposition which the princess felt or cared for. It was *the solitary testimony* which neither the ingenuity of Mr. Percival could ridicule, nor the arguments of Lord Eldon invalidate. It contained one particular pas-

sage, the effects of which they both "feared" would "in a certain quarter be fatal."

"Her Royal Highness behaved to him (Capt. Manby) only as any woman would who likes FLIRTING. *She* (Mrs. Lisle) *would not have thought any married woman would have behaved properly, who behaved as her Royal Highness did to Captain Manby.* She can't say whether the princess was attached to Captain Manby, only that it was FLIRTING CONDUCT."

They were right. It was "this sweeping sentence which went to prove so much," that the late King was heard more than once to declare, he "had tried, and tried in vain, to banish from his remembrance!" It was to this statement, short but full of meaning, another illustrious personage is known again and again to have referred:—"I abandon, to the infamy she merits, Lady Douglas; but—but, Sire, the evidence of Mrs. Lisle!"

The secret history of that evidence is known to very few, and is not uninteresting. It shews what trifling events often colour with sadness a whole train of important conse-

quences ; what inconceivable bitterness may be infused into an important and delicate proceeding, by an unguarded sentence, incautiously uttered—how truly

“ Many a word at random spoken
May wound or soothe a heart that’s broken.”

When Mrs. Lisle received the summons from the Chancellor (Erskine), acquainting her that her evidence was required before the commission then sitting, she had just perused the melancholy tidings of her daughter’s death. If ever mother and child were deeply and devotedly attached ;—if ever mother doated upon the external loveliness and mental endowments of an idolized daughter ;—if ever daughter revered a mother’s lofty and unimpeachable character, and remembered, with grateful and delightful accuracy, a mother’s ardent and unceasing love,—these were the sentiments reciprocally entertained by Mrs. Lisle and Mrs. Arbuthnot.*

There were, moreover, attendant circumstances which, in Mrs. Lisle’s mind, deepened the gloom occasioned by Mrs. Arbuthnot’s

* The first wife of the Right Hon. Charles Arbuthnot.

death. She had accompanied her husband in his embassy to Constantinople,—delighted at the opportunity of enriching her mind with associations acquired from personal observation of a country full of interest, and but little known. The last letters that flowed from her polished pen, and those who knew her best will be the first to do justice to the brilliancy of her style, the fidelity and variety of her descriptive powers, breathed the language of youth and hope, spoke of past pleasures, and anticipated future gratification :—the next account stated that she was no more. She died at Pera ; died when the sad event was utterly unexpected,—died when the physician to the embassy had, for some unexplained reason, quitted his post, and native talent was perforce resorted to ;—died, except as far as Mr. Arbuthnot was concerned, in the midst of strangers, and alone.

Mrs. Lisle's agony beggared description. She wept in unutterable anguish :—“ I cannot appear before the council ! Half frantic and distracted as I am, with my heart swollen almost to bursting by this bitter bereavement, and my thoughts all tending towards my

daughter's grave,—is it possible I can enter upon a subject which requires such caution, such——? For God's sake, write and entreat them to grant me delay."

The answer returned was brief and harsh. No delay could be afforded. It was scarcely probable it should. The peculiar circumstances of the case—the excitement prevalent throughout the country—the feelings of the parties interested—the anxiety of the reigning monarch—all precluded the possibility of protracted delay. But Lord ——'s answer stated nothing of this. It was couched briefly, peremptorily, urgently. Most austere was it written, most acutely was it felt.

"This I have not deserved," was Mrs. Lisle's observation to her tried and valued friend, Mrs. Forster. "Rare union of matchless qualities—empty head, unfeeling heart! I go—unfitted for the ordeal: I go—and the blame be on those who *dragged* me to their tribunal, if my evidence be tinged by my sorrows."

She went; and her evidence *did* take a tone from the grief that overwhelmed her. This her Royal Highness's advisers at once detected, and Mrs. Lisle never denied.

“Thank God ! this most painful portion of my life is over,” was Mrs. Lisle’s hurried exclamation, as she quitted the Council Chamber ; “and now,” said she, as she entered her carriage, “with courts I have done for ever ! This hour I resign my office.”

“To the princess ?”

“No. *From* the prince I received my appointment ; *to* the prince will I resign it.”

In a letter which bore the impress of wounded feelings, and contained touches of the truest pathos,—which detailed the painful struggle in her own mind,—and while it paid the deference due to her prince, kept steadily in view what was due to herself, she entreated permission to lay at his Royal Highness’s feet the appointment which he had formerly conferred upon her in his consort’s household. A copy of this affecting communication is yet in existence. He to whom it was addressed was far too generous not to own its justice—had much too high a sense of honour not to feel its truth.

“I am but too sensible of the difficulties of Mrs. Lisle’s situation. They are certainly here very strongly stated. Yet the letter is pre-

cisely what a high-spirited and high-principled woman like Mrs. Lisle might be supposed to have written; and I entertain for her undiminished respect."

It is very pleasing to think that the individuals who, for many years, were so closely connected, and at last were separated by discussions which neither had foreseen, and both lamented, thought of each other with kindly feelings and Christian forbearance.

One of the Queen's first inquiries on reaching England was, "Is Mrs. Lisle living, and well? Where does she now reside?" When told that she was living in retirement—that state which she loved and adorned—possessed an ample independence—uninterrupted health—

"And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,"—

the Queen listened with evident pleasure.

"I rejoice at it! Mrs. Lisle's evidence, at a former period, occasioned me much—; but it is past. She was a woman who abhorred falsehood and scorned dissimulation; and I retain for her *now* the same regard and respect that I *ever* felt."

“Do not, Sir, inveigh against the Queen—pray do not, at least, in my presence,” was Mrs. Lisle’s mild but firm rebuke to a young relative, who had taken the worst possible view of, *primâ facie*, the worst possible case. “There are passages in her life, and traits in her character, which I must always regard with admiration. There are instances of kindness conferred personally on myself which I can never forget. No! nothing shall ever make me think or speak harshly of Caroline of Brunswick!”

* * * * *

Connected, however, with this unhappy historical personage there is a rumour which has found credence with parties, from their position and general intelligence, not easily misled. It is this. When the Queen found herself in extremity, and was assured by her medical men that her recovery was an utter impossibility, she desired Dr. Lushington might be sent for; and with him had an earnest, lengthened, private, and confidential interview. Disclosures were then made and explanations given for which the grave doctor was unprepared; but which he solemnly bound himself never to

divulge. The late Lord Hood was heard to say that he had some grounds for suspecting they, in part, referred to the *REAL parentage of William Austin*. Be their nature what it might, the veil of secrecy and silence has never been lifted from the avowals then made. So that there are secrets even among courtiers as impenetrable as those among the **Masons** !

CHAPTER XII.

LISTON: OR THE MELANCHOLY OF MIRTH.

“Sickness and disease are, in many minds, the sources of melancholy; but that which is painful to the body may be profitable to the soul. Sickness, the mother of modesty, puts us in mind of our mortality, and while we drive on heedlessly, in the full career of worldly pomp and jollity, kindly pulls us by the ear, and brings us to a proper sense of our duty.”—BURTON'S *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

It is stated, in a merry treatise upon Hypochondriasis, by one who seems to bid defiance to “the blues,” that the following anecdote may be depended on relative to Carlini—the drollest buffoon that ever appeared on the Italian stage at Paris. A French physician having been consulted by a person subject to the most gloomy fits of melancholy, advised his patient to mix in scenes of gaiety and dissipation, and particularly to frequent the

Italian theatre; "and if Carlini does not dispel your gloomy complaint," says he, "your case must be desperate indeed!"—"Alas! Sir," returned the patient, sadly, and as he spoke he turned away from the leech with an air of indescribable disappointment—"I myself am Carlini, and while I divert all Paris with mirth, and make them almost die with laughter, I myself am perishing with melancholy and chagrin!"

I mused upon the moral of this anecdote when I met, some years ago, at the table of a celebrated Cheltenham physician, the popular mime, Mr. Liston.

"Don't fail us at six, precisely," was the frank invite of my hospitable host: "Liston and one or two other professionals dine with me: we shall have music in the evening: I rather hope *les Demoiselles de Lihu* will be with us: at all events, I think I can promise you an hour or two's amusement."

A few minutes after the appointed hour I was in the Crescent. A larger party than I expected was assembled; and in a corner, palpably shrinking from observation, and shunning, as well as he was able, all com-

munion with his kind, sat a sallow, grave, unhappy-looking man, whom I recognized, at a glance, to be Liston.

Observing his *distract* and saddened look, our host went up to him, and tried to rouse him with some jocular remark. The mime replied languidly and feebly: and if I was struck with the melancholy of his countenance when silent, much more did its gloom surprise me when he spoke. Dinner was announced. By some accident I became his *vis-à-vis*. So circumstanced, I watched him. No topic had power to arrest his attention. No artifice could draw him into conversation. He ate little; spoke less; sighed heavily and frequently; and a stranger, eyeing him for the first time, would have said, "There sits a thoroughly careworn, oppressed, and saddened man." A young and very pretty girl made repeated attempts to engage him in conversation, and, by the sunshine of her smiles, to banish his dejection. Her reward was a monosyllable. The look of vexation and chagrin with which, on a fifth failure, she regarded him, was diverting enough. Dessert was at length put upon the table; and the

ladies soon afterwards withdrew. The fair ones were perplexed. Chagrin was predominant. "Never more disappointed in my life!" whispered one.—"This Mr. Liston!" murmured another; "why, he looks like a man who has just returned from a funeral!"—"Having buried the dearest friend he had in the world!" slyly added a third. The actor was at a discount, undeniably, with Eve's daughters. The hostess—"Ah! what grace and loveliness are now shrouded in the grave!"—laughed heartily as she closed the procession. Was it that she enjoyed the perplexity of her guests?—The ladies withdrawn—politics, local topics, and Cheltenham gossip became matters of discussion; and among the latter the recent death, under peculiar circumstances, of Mr. and Mrs. Fotheringaye. The former filled the post of Master of the Ceremonies.

Mrs. Fotheringaye was a little, pliable, worldly, fluent person, with "an instinctive attachment"—to use her own phrase—"to people of title;" and an enviable facility in "turning rich folks to account." Stupidity never bored her: hauteur never abashed her. She held on her course; and looked to re-

sults. Her powers of endurance were first-rate. Night after night was she seen at the card-table—the very last to leave it—without ever betraying the slightest symptom of weariness, ruffled temper, or fatigue. Her game was loo; and she was understood to be a speculative but signally successful player. The husband was a pleasant, gentlemanly, well-bred man, who always said the right thing in the right place, and could relate a piquant anecdote, and flatter a fading dowager, with very considerable effect. His qualifications for his office were undeniable.

Time rolled on. The lady was missing one evening from her accustomed haunt. The loo-table was formed; but without Mrs. Fotheringaye. Inquiries were made. The answer given was, in substance, that the absentee had caught a slight, a very slight cold; was nursing herself with *ptisannes*; felt chilly, and was confined to her sofa; but would be visible on the morrow. The morrow came, and brought with it the astounding intelligence that Mrs. Fotheringaye was worse; was in danger; was given over; was dying. The disease proved uncontrollable! A few

hours—and she was a corpse! For some reason which I cannot now recal, an early day was fixed for the interment. When it arrived, the husband was found to be seriously unwell; so much so, that it was deemed necessary to postpone the wife's funeral, in order to secure the sick man from the risk of being disturbed by it. Vain precaution. His malady increased in virulence every hour. Another and more distant day was named. When it came, Mr. Fotheringaye was dying; and the result was, that one funeral procession and one ceremony sufficed for both.

The various features of the story were discussed in detail. None seemed to like the subject, yet none cared to change it.

“I was in Cambray-street when the procession moved,” chirruped a thin, reedy voice from the lower end of the table, “and saw the two hearses come up in succession, with poor Fotheringaye in one and his wife in the other. It was a frightful spectacle. On my honour, I felt unnerved.”

“You might well do so!” said, with a reproachful air, a very stern-looking gentle-

man; "it was a sad close to a life absorbed in gaiety and trifles."

"Don't attend to what *he* says," whispered a voice on my left; "he's one of Mr. Jervis's people!"

"I've never slept soundly since I learnt the particulars," exclaimed a pale, sickly young man, who sat near our host; "it's a horrid story—shall we dismiss it?"

To my surprise, Liston, who had listened with evident gusto to the narrative, now asked, in a low, quiet tone, a variety of questions, and shewed evident anxiety to be in possession of every particular.

"Pray say no more about it," said our host; "it is far too gloomy an exit to be converted into an after-dinner topic."

Liston looked up, and said emphatically, "*Is it not rather an enviable release from the burden of life?*"

It was the only complete and connected sentence he uttered the whole evening.

Some years after the Cheltenham party above referred to, three gentlemen were seated on one of the benches which are placed at

intervals upon the Denn at Teignmouth—tempting resting-places for the infirm, the aged, and the indolent. It was long past sunset. The heat of the day—even for July—had been oppressive; and the breeze from the sea was grateful and bracing. In the adjoining cathedral town the assize-week and the race-week had followed each other at a short interval: gaiety was the order of the day: London stars had, in succession, glittered at the theatre; and Exeter had been a scene of unwonted bustle and animation. These and other topics had been discussed, *ad libitum*, by the lazy trio; and they scarce heeded, in the twilight, that a fourth individual had joined their party, and was seated at the extreme end of the bench on which they were resting.

“Would that I had been in Exeter this evening,” sighed, rather than said, the youngest of the three. “I should like to have heard Miss Stephens as Rosetta.”

“What!” said another, “prefer the heat, and the crowd, and the bustle of a close, stifling theatre, to the freshness, and the beauty, and the calm of a scene like this! Out upon such taste.”

“ I like a theatre ! ” said the young man. “ I like the illusion, the excitement of the hour. ”

“ And the foolery and nonsense : the absurdity and the ribaldry ; ” added the other. “ Come : be candid. You are one of Liston’s men. Him you never miss at any sacrifice. ”

“ Last evening was the closing night of his engagement—his benefit, and I left Exeter at mid-day. ”

“ To-night you lament it ? ”

“ To be candid, I do : ah ! it must be a joyous life that of a first-rate actor : there are no triumphs, I am persuaded, like those of an established favourite. I allude, of course, to the career of no subordinate, but to a chief ; a leader. ”

“ And yet, ” cried the stranger, abruptly joining in our conversation, “ I have seen Mrs. Jordan sobbing behind the scenes as if her heart would break ; and this after she had been delighting a brilliant audience with her life-like gaiety and merriment : and I know she was a wretched woman, for I have seen her weep bitterly—weep as ‘ one that would not be comforted ’ by the half-hour together. ”

We knew not for the moment what to make of the speaker, of his information, of the deference due to his experience, of his opportunities for observation, and thus were silent. After a pause, the stage-smitten one remarked,

“There are peculiarities about Mrs. Jordan’s case which will apply to no other; and I repeat the theatre is a school of morals.”

“A place,” took up the stranger, “where lessons may be learnt in one hour, which if put in practice would colour with infamy a whole life. I might further say—but enough.”

He took a prodigious pinch of snuff, bowed, and walked off.

“A cool hand!” cried one.

“A very odd fellow that!” said another.

“A character!” exclaimed a third.

We were not far wrong. It was Liston.

“Years again intervened; and I had lost sight of this cautious and prudent man altogether; when calling on a friend, she said, on my rising to take leave—

“I think I have a treat in store for you: you are fond of the *remarkables*. Remain where you are ten minutes longer, and you

will see Liston. He will be here this morning."

"On no theatrical errand, I presume?"

"Oh dear, no!" said she, laughing; "he comes here to inquire the character of a servant. You remember Jacob? Now Jacob was very dirty; and kept neither his carriage nor his horse as he should have done: he was in truth a sloven; but Jacob has a most staid, grave, thoughtful, imposing air, and this has caught Mr. Liston. I rather think the wealthy actor intends to take him. If so, Jacob has fallen upon his feet. For Mr. Liston is a kind master."

"But how can you, possibly, recommend him?"

"Pardon me; I do nothing of the kind: I merely state the truth respecting him. He is entitled to an honest, candid statement: and that I give. But, hush! Mr. Liston is here." A door opened, and the retired comedian appeared.

I was struck with the ravages—many, deep, and distinct—left by the wear and tear of professional life; ill-health and hypochondriasis should perhaps be added. His com-

plexion was that of a man who had spent twenty years in Bengal. And as I scanned him it struck me he had the gait, feebleness, bent form, and lassitude of seventy. Further; he looked as he advanced towards us—I will not say dispirited and ill at ease, for those terms do not convey the expression of his features—he seemed distressed and woe-be-gone to the last degree.

My companion quietly murmured, as he came up:—"Did you ever meet with a more desponding visage? He looks as if he had not a friend in the world or a penny in his pocket."

With a most wretched air he took possession of the first chair that presented itself, and commenced his inquiries. Jacob's careless and untidy habits seemed venial. The point he was most desirous to ascertain was this—whether Jacob was a party likely to conform, cheerfully and willingly, to the religious observances of a somewhat strict household. The manner in which he expressed himself on this head was remarkable. There was nothing of pharisaical ostentation;—nothing of the

cant or shibboleth of a party;—but much of good sense: much of deep and earnest religious feeling. I listened to him carefully; and methought, at the close of the conversation, “In my hearing, at least, the remark must never in future pass without determined protest—that ‘it is impossible an actor can be other than an irreligious character!’”

Some six or eight months after this interview I was conversing with a London clergyman about the peculiar sphere of duty presented to active piety in the metropolis. He spoke of a fellow-labourer who had a large congregation, and in it many excellent and exemplary characters. “But,” said he, “there is one of his hearers of whom more than all the rest I envy him the adherence. He is a rigidly religious man: stern towards himself: but most lenient in his judgment of others. He is of all men I ever met the most thoroughly conscientious. I only wish his religion was of a more cheerful cast.”

“May I ask his name?”

“I don’t know that I ought to give it to

you. I think I should withhold it. It will call up associations of an absurd description."

"Nay: you have now irritated my curiosity; pray gratify it?"

He hesitated for a moment; and then said
—"LISTON."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE JURYMAN MASON.

“The melancholy, which comes over me with the recollection of past afflictions and disappointments, is not hurtful, but only tends to soften and tranquillize my mind, to detach me from the restlessness of human pursuits. The stronger I feel this detachment, the more I find myself drawn heavenward to the contemplation of spiritual objects. I love to keep old friendships alive and warm within me, because I expect a renewal of them in the WORLD OF SPIRITS. I am a wandering and unconnected thing on the earth. I have made no new friendships that can compensate me for the loss of the old—and the more I know mankind the more does it become necessary for me to supply their loss by little images, recollections, and circumstances of past pleasures.”

CHARLES LAMB (Elia).

It is the deep-seated conviction of our ablest Masonic writers that Masonry is best understood, and best exemplified where it constitutes a secret but electric bond of brotherhood; *perpetually existent*; prepared for every emergency; and prompt at all seasons and under all circumstances to display itself in

action. To constitute this bond there must be sympathy, courage, child-like confidence, *instant co-operation*, and unity.

Is this rare combination of qualities ever instanced in every-day life?

I think it is.

The little court at —— was crowded. A trial was on before Mr. Justice Gazelee which excited considerable attention. It involved a question of identity; and a question of character; and presented more than one debatable point for the gaping crowd to cudgel their brains about. The facts were these. Mrs. Harper, a lady whose purse was heavy and whose passion for dress was great, went into the shop of Messrs. Steele and Whittenbury, silk mercers, to inspect some foreign shawls. The lady's taste was somewhat difficult to hit; and a bale of shawls was turned over, and an entire morning spent before a shawl could be found of which the colour, size, and texture were such as, thoroughly, to satisfy Mrs. Harper's fastidious eye. At last, to Mr. Whittenbury's infinite relief, this doubtful result was attained; and the lady proceeded to pay for her purchase. She looked on her right hand

and on her left ; turned first crimson and then pale ; gazed around her with a most indignant air ; and finally said firmly to the wondering Mr. Whittenbury—

“ I will thank you to find my purse ; I laid it upon these gloves three minutes ago ; you and you only have served at this counter ; a bank-note for fifty pounds—I have the number—lay in a corner of that purse ; I beg it may be at once forthcoming.”

Mr. Whittenbury looked aghast at this imputation on his honesty, and blurted forth some incoherent disclaimer, when one of his assistants drawled out—

“ Who was that party that left the shop so suddenly without making any purchase ? Can he be the thief ? ”

“ He’s not out of sight ! I’ll follow him ! ” screamed, rather than said, the senior partner, Mr. Steele ; and, suiting the action to the word, started after the supposed delinquent with an alacrity and energy wholly irreconcilable with his portly form and wheezy breathing.

Pending the absence of his principal, Mr. Whittenbury indulged in a strain of the most

elaborate imagery, all levelled at the resolute Mrs. Harper.

“For the first time in my life have I had the finger of scorn pointed at me! I, who have so far played my part on the motley stage of existence without my fair name ever being sullied with the breath of slander. All my actions have been weighed in the scales of Justice. Equally would I loathe injuring my neighbour’s fame, or abstracting a penny from his purse.”

“I wish I saw mine again!” remarked the matter-of-fact Mrs. Harper.

Mr. Whittenbury rather winced at this last remark; then pitched his voice a note higher, and proceeded.

“Hitherto my career has been peaceful; but now the winds of adversity assail me from a quarter—from a quarter—from a quarter that——”

The speaker paused from sheer perplexity how to finish his sentence.

“Well! never mind the quarter!” cried the anti-sentimental Mrs. Harper—“attend to me. Somebody has raised the wind at my expense. That’s but too evident. I want to see my

fifty-pound note again, and I shall not leave this shop till I do."

"Madam!" rejoined the distracted draper, "*here* it cannot be. The accumulated experience of two-and-twenty years assures me of the unimpeachable integrity of those around me. We, Madam, in this establishment, rise superior to temptation; we are proof against it: for note——"

"Ay! where is it?" interrupted the undaunted claimant;—"I don't want words, but paper; once more, my note?"

"*Was it ever lost?*" demanded the desperate Whittenbury, with a very successful sneer.

"So!" cried the lady; "you're come to that, eh? A subterfuge! a juggle! Hah! I understand you! You insinuate that I had neither purse nor money when I entered your shop. No note! eh? I'll make you change yours, depend upon it. You shall sing to another tune; and that shortly. Neither purse nor money had I, eh? That's your meaning, is it?"

"No, no! Madam, we don't say that, yet!" interposed Mr. Steele, who now made his

appearance, panting from exertion and purple in face, from the unexpected demands made upon the activity of his lungs, and their utter inability to answer them. "We have a question—ugh! ugh! ugh! or two—oh dear, this cough! to put—ugh! ugh! to this party," and he pointed to a young, feeble, and timid-looking young man who followed him into the shop "with unwilling step and slow," and upon whom Mr. Steele seemed to exercise something rather more stringent than mere "moral compulsion." A policeman appeared in the doorway. A crowd surrounded the shop, and eagerly gazed in at the windows. "Now, Sir!" cried Mr. Steele, with emphasis, being in better wind—"we don't wish to be other than courteous; will you submit to be searched, without further struggle or ceremony?"

The latter word sounded oddly enough: with the policeman standing in the background, and two dark objects, which had a very awkward resemblance to handcuffs, lying on the counter;—and so the prisoner seemed to think, for he smiled painfully as he answered:—

"Come, come—no gaffing; say what I am brought here for, and by whose order? Out with it! What have I done amiss?"

"Much to this lady. Her purse is missing. That purse contained a fifty-pound note, and we believe you could tell us something about it."

"I cannot," returned the youth, in a calm, firm tone, and with an air of ingenuousness and honesty which prepossessed a few of the by-standers in his favour; "I know nothing of the lady; never saw her purse; never saw her note; know nothing at all about the matter."

"You stood by her side at least ten minutes," observed Mr. Whittenbury—speaking for once in his life without the aid of trope or figure—"you made no purchase; you bolted from the shop suddenly, and started off at a run; and within two minutes afterwards the purse was missing. This is highly suspicious, and I insist on your being searched."

"I left the shop," said the young man—still speaking in the same calm deliberate tone—"because I could not get served. I waited not ten, but full twenty minutes before any

one of your young men would ask what I wanted. I don't blame them. I don't blame you. Of course a rich customer must be waited on before a poor one. I ran because I knew I should be late for my mother's funeral, hurry as I would. The parson required us to be at the church-gate by three."

"And what might a person of your stamp need from *our* establishment?" said Mr. Steele, with an air of unfeeling pomposity, which contrasted strongly with the mild and deprecating tone in which the prisoner replied—

"A small piece of crape to put round my hat: it was all, and indeed the only mourning I could afford!"

"Gammon!" cried the policeman. "I take it upon myself to say that's gammon."

"Oh! you know him, do you?" inquired Mr. Steele, sarcastically.

"Perfectly! Perfectly well; and have for years," returned A, No. 175.

"Now are you not surprised, Madam?" cried Mr. Steele, delightedly, turning from the policeman to the lady—"are you not surprised at the wickedness of human nature?"

"No! nothing surprises me!" returned the fair one, bluntly: "nothing upon this earth ever can or will surprise me more, after the way in which my purse has vanished, while I was—as I may truly say—actually sitting by and looking at it."

"It shall be found, Madam; it shall be found," persisted Whittenbury.

"Set about it, then," said the lady, sharply: "act, and don't chatter. Oh!" cried she, yawning fearfully, "how hungry, weary, and worried I am!"

"I trust, Madam, that *you* do not believe that I am the guilty party—that I stole, or that I hold one farthing of your money?" said the accused, with an earnest and deferential air.

"Know nothing about you!" returned the lady, promptly; "nothing whatever; not even your name."

"Ralph Wortham," returned he, frankly; "a name that—let this policeman say what he may—has never yet had 'thief' added to it, and, I trust in God, never will."

"Search him," cried Mr. Steele, furiously advancing towards Wortham as he spoke,

with a menacing air, and beckoning on Mr. Whittenbury to his assistance.

“Have a care, Sir, how you handle me,” cried Wortham, firmly; “I will not be turned inside out by *you*: the policeman is the proper party——”

“Pooh! *I* stand on no ceremony!” ejaculated the rash Mr. Steele, most unadvisedly collaring the pliant form beside him.

“Nor *I!*” returned the assailed. And he then tipped Mr. Steele a rattler that could hardly have been expected from one so slight in form, and, apparently, so deficient in strength. Again did the senior partner aim at grasping his victim. Wortham closed with him; and, after a gentle shaking, sent Mr. Steele spinning across the floor into the arms of the amazed Whittenbury.

“Oh mercy!” cried Mrs. Harper, “here will be bloodshed!” and then recollecting a word which ladies can invariably command in the midst of the most desperate encounters, screamed with all her might—“Murder!”

At this word of ill omen the policeman, the junior partner, and “Mr. Whittenbury’s young men,” all rushed upon the unfortunate

Wortham, whom they speedily dragged, with united effort, to an inner room, where they summarily searched him. There was a strange clamour for a few seconds. Half a dozen parties seemed vociferating all together; and at a very high note in the gamut. On a sudden the uproar lulled. The policeman appeared in the doorway, and, addressing the weary Mrs. Harper, inquired whether she could "tell him the number of the note which she had lost."

"Unquestionably I can. I remember it perfectly: No. 3,746."

"Its amount?"

"Fifty pounds."

"Was it a provincial note or a Bank of England note?"

"A Bank of England note: I had no other."

"Had it any mark or signature that you can recollect on the back?"

"Yes: 'Philip Furze' was written in one corner; and I put my own initials, M. H., in another. I can swear to the note among a thousand."

"This is it, Madam, I believe!" said the

policeman, holding up, with a most complacent air, a soiled and crumpled piece of paper; "we have lighted on it, together with a purse, in the coat-pocket of that dutiful young vagabond."

"Mine! both mine!" cried the lady, delightedly. "Give me them. I claim them, and am too happy to recover them."

"Madam," said Mr. Whittenbury — his partner, Steele, being far too stiff and sore to indulge in oratory—"we are in fetters; we have no free-will; we are bond-slaves: we cannot hand over to you either note or purse, because we dare not. We must prosecute!"

"Fetters! Free-will! Bond-slaves! Fiddle-faddle!" responded the lady: "the note is mine, and the purse is mine; and both I must and will have."

"Alas! alas!" murmured the soft-voiced mercer—"your commands, on any other subject, we should have been but too proud to obey. The law of the land is now our master: we must proceed to the nearest magistrate; acquaint him with the details of this deplorable occurrence; take his instructions, and abide by them. Policeman!"—here he waved his

hand with an air that would have drawn a round from the gallery of any one of the Minors—"Policeman, you know your duty: perform it!"

"Hah!" cried the lady, starting to her feet and looking, beyond all question, remarkably red and wroth—"do you presume to lay down the law to me? Have you the assurance to maintain that it can be either legal or just to detain *my* note and *my* purse, when I have already identified the one, and can swear to the other?"

"The law, Madam, is omnipotent. To its requirements we must all submit. Pray acquiesce in what is unavoidable without further remonstrance."

The lady paused, then slowly took up her handkerchief and card-case, and prepared to depart. Ere she did so she turned to the shrinking Mr. Steele, and said distinctly—

"You have had many a profitable visit from me at this counter. No small sum has from time to time passed from my hands into yours; but if I ever again enter your shop, may I be strangled with the first shawl you shew me!"

"Now! heaven in its mercy avert such a

calamity from such a desirable ready-money customer!" promptly ejaculated the much perplexed Whittenbury.

Such were the circumstances—pardon the long digression, patient reader!—on which the trial then proceeding in the little court at — was founded. The general impression was against the prisoner. The fact of the money being found upon him, and the determined resistance which it was understood he had offered to being searched, appeared conclusive of his guilt. He, undauntedly, maintained his innocence. Much as appearances told against him, he declared that he had never taken Mrs. Harper's money; or dreamt of taking it; that he had never seen either her purse or fifty-pound note until the policeman drew them forth, to his (Wortham's) distress and surprise, from the side-pocket in his jacket. He stood in the dock, haggard, emaciated, and apparently friendless. Want of means had disabled him from retaining a counsel. A preconcerted and well-sustained line of defence was, therefore, out of the question. Nor, if counsel's aid had been his from the first, did it appear clear how the accused could have

successfully rebutted the strong presumptive evidence against him.

The clerk of the arraigns then read the indictment. Had it referred to the stealing of a tomtit, and the penalty been the fine of a farthing, payable some fifty years hence, greater unconcern could not well have been manifested. With a hideous nasal twang he wound up with the formal inquiry—

“How say you, prisoner, are you guilty of the offence charged against you in this indictment?”

“Not guilty!” said a firm, strong voice.

“You say you are ‘not guilty;’” and then some horrid mumbling, and a repetition of much nasal intonation ensued, of which the only intelligible accents were the closing ones “good deliverance.”

The counsel for the prosecution now took up his brief; and in very temperate language opened, with extreme fairness and moderation, the case against Wortham. At the close of his statement, the judge inquired “who was counsel for the prisoner.”

The answer was then given, “the prisoner was undefended.”

"Why?" asked his lordship, in a low tone.

Want of means," said Wortham, boldly: "I had but five shillings in the world; and those were taken from me."

Few as these words were, and uttered with no cringing and servile air, but with the spirit and freedom of one who was conscious of his innocence, and hopeful to establish it, they arrested the attention of that just man to whom they were addressed. He raised his eyes from his notes, and gazed steadily and fixedly at the prisoner. Apparently the impression left by this scrutiny was satisfactory. His lordship turned towards the barristers' table, and said, with feeling:—

"This is a serious case for the prisoner. He ought not to be undefended. Perhaps some gentleman at the bar will undertake to watch the case on the prisoner's behalf?"

There was a movement among the juniors; but—such are the bands of professional etiquette—no individual advocate put himself prominently forward or responded, promptly, to his lordship's appeal.

"Mr. Laconstone," continued his lordship, "you will perhaps kindly give the prisoner the

benefit of your competent knowledge of criminal law?"

The young pleader, so flatteringly addressed, instantly bowed his acquiescence in his lordship's request; made a snatch at his bag, gathered up his papers, ran across the table, and in a few seconds placed himself immediately below the felon's dock where he could communicate without difficulty with his client.

Now Mr. Laconstone, to Wortham's cost, laboured under the most decided impression that he was a speaker. "The Gods," he felt convinced, "had made him eloquent." He was not quite clear whether he did not surpass Lord Brougham in vigorous diction and apt and ready sarcasm. He approached Lord Lyndhurst very closely—of that he was quite sure—in the order and clearness of his statements: and the irresistible force of his argument. A little more practice was requisite, and he should beat Canning upon his own ground. He had no fears whatever on the subject. He would beat him not only in the wit, and point, and finish of his oral efforts, but in their exquisite flow and rhythm. In a word, Mr. Laconstone had the impression that

he was a promising and very remarkable and rising young man. His *forte*, however, was oratory. He was an advocate. Some wag,—as a joke,—assured him that he much resembled in manner, voice, and fluency the most accomplished advocate of modern times, Scarlett. He took the remark as serious; and subsequently spoke of Baron Abinger as his model. At some public dinner he sat next a grey-headed functionary who told him he had known intimately the celebrated pleader when a junior at the bar, and could say—having heard the statement from his own lips—that in criminal cases when engaged for the defence, he “invariably regarded and treated the accused party—be his asseverations of innocence ever so earnest and repeated—as really criminal. He found this idea serviceable. So perilous an impression roused his energies, and kept his attention perpetually on the *qui vive*.” Mr. Laconstone accepted this tradition as genuine, and relied upon it. It struck him as being remarkably fine. It was valuable. He should reduce it to practice. It was a legacy. It embodied a principle. It might be worth many important verdicts. Ah! What might

it not *eventually* insure him ? The ermine and a peerage ! What it did *immediately* insure him was this—the conviction on somewhat doubtful evidence of three unhappy men for whom he was concerned ! A straightforward jury was unable to understand his various quirks and quibbles. He treated his own client as guilty. The jury thought he surely ought to know best ; and they could not possibly err in agreeing with him ! They framed their verdict accordingly. Still Mr. Laconstone thought his principle sound, and abided by it.

Upon this conviction he persisted in acting ; and the case of the unfortunate Wortham came in most opportunely as a further exposition of the “Abinger” principle. Remonstrance was vain. The poor fellow in the dock, in an earnest whisper to his counsel, solemnly avowed his innocence. Mr. Laconstone listened ; gave a knowing shake of his head, equivalent to—“Of course you’re innocent : never knew a prisoner otherwise : up to all that : and shall take my own course.” So that while the accused, agonized at his position ; and conscious that he was not the thief, begged and implored

that "every witness might be well questioned," and the whole matter "opened up from beginning to end," his advocate thought "the less the affair was stirred the better. The case was bad; he should reserve himself" for his speech!

The first witness called was Mrs. Harper. She sailed majestically into court, accompanied by an elderly friend of most forbidding aspect. Both ladies, by the sheriff's order, had seats on the bench. Never had the owner of the stolen note felt greater self-complacency. She was very handsomely dressed. She had a part to play. She had a crowded audience for spectators. She sat in high places. She was within three of the judge. She was a person of importance. All eyes would be fixed on her. She was the leading witness in the case. Her testimony was most material. It would be reported in the county paper. Very possibly counsel would comment on it. And the honey-drop was—she should recover her property! The day was all sunshine. She was on the very eve of becoming celebrated. She was satisfied with herself and all the world!

"Grace Harper" was called. And Grace

Harper rose; and shewed a handsome face under a most becoming bonnet; curtsied gracefully to the judge; and told her story.

She was, in counsel's language, a capital evidence. Her statement was clear; calmly and resolutely given. It hung well together. There was no inconsistency: no contradictory point about it. She was neither fluttered nor abashed in dealing with the various questions put to her; spoke distinctly; and was accurate as to dates. The judge inquired if the prisoner's counsel had any questions to put to this lady. Mr. Laconstone declined to cross-examine. The prisoner, hurriedly and in a low voice, made a remark to him. Mr. Laconstone was still passive. His thoughts were busily employed upon his coming speech. Wortham looked wretchedly distressed. Some point not quite clear seemed to strike the judge. He mused a moment, and then asked the lady:—

“When did you see your purse again after the prisoner left the shop in the hurried way you have described?”

“Not until I saw it in the policeman's custody.”

“You mean to swear that the purse was lying before you on your handkerchief up to the time the prisoner quitted the shop?”

“I do.”

“And you never saw it afterwards: *even for a moment?*”

Mrs. Harper paused.

“I have no recollection of seeing it. I think I did not. To the best of my knowledge and belief I did not.”

The judge put this reply upon his notes: and the prosecuting counsel called the next witness.

Mr. Whittenbury rose in the box. His evidence, tendered in his usual figurative style, referred to the restless and uneasy deportment of the prisoner while waiting at the counter. He declared he had never watched the movements of a more mercurial individual. The airiness of his deportment reminded him of vacillations——”

The judge frowned.

“What are you, Sir?” said he.

“A mercer, my Lord.”

“Then express yourself in intelligible and

ordinary language, and not in such absurd and high-flown terms."

Mr. Whittenbury was nettled beyond concealment; sulked; affected deafness, and then said pettishly—

"Perhaps my evidence can be dispensed with altogether?"

The judge eyed him sternly for some moments, and then said with emphasis—

"If you misconduct yourself in this court, I shall commit you."

Mr. Whittenbury was cowed, and then, bursting with chagrin, condescended to speak plainly. His cross-examination was brief, and so managed by Mr. Laconstone as to strengthen the case against the prisoner.

Isham Dadd, a shop-assistant, was next called on. He deposed to seeing the purse on the counter before Mrs. Harper; to missing it immediately after Wortham's exit; to the abrupt manner in which the prisoner quitted the shop; and to the fact of his making no purchase.

There was something sinister in the mode in which this witness gave his evidence. He

hesitated repeatedly; looked pale and ill at ease; and studiously avoided meeting the prisoner's eye. His voice, too, was disagreeable. Some would have called it hypocritical. It was wiry and high-pitched. He spoke in the falsetto key. The expression of his eye was subtle and his attitude crouching. Altogether, a more sinister-looking personage has rarely appeared as witness in a court of justice.

Him also Mr. Laconstone declined to subject to cross-examination.

He had made a rapid and joyous descent from the witness-box, when the judge desired him to be recalled.

"How long have you been in the employment of Steele and Whittenbury?"

"Four years."

"During that period, has any occurrence of a similar nature taken place upon the premises?"

Dadd's pale complexion assumed a more ashy hue: apart from this he gave no indication that he had heard the question.

"You understand his lordship?" said the junior counsel for the prosecution, feeling somewhat puzzled by the silence of the witness.

Dadd's lips moved, but not a word was audible.

"I asked you," said the judge, "whether, during the period you have lived with your employers—four years you state—any similar loss has come to your knowledge?"

"One lady *said* she had lost some money," was the sulky answer, most unwillingly given.

"Was she a customer?"

"She was."

"Was the money ever traced?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Did the loss take place in the shop?"

"It did."

"And the missing money was never—that you heard of—recovered?"

"No."

"How many shop-assistants do Messrs. Steele and Whittenbury keep?"

"In the whole, nine."

The senior partner next presented himself. He deposed to pursuing the prisoner; overtaking him; requiring him to be searched; to the resistance which he made; and to the amount of personal suffering which he, the

fat and wheezy Mr. Steele, endured in the encounter.

He gave his evidence in a decided, business-like tone; and the point in it which told most against the prisoner was this—the minute detail embodied in Steele's testimony of Wortham's unwillingness to be searched.

The concluding witness was the policeman, who deposed to searching the prisoner: finding on him the missing purse and note; and to Mrs. Harper's at once describing and identifying both.

The prosecutor's case seemed complete.

The judge now called on the accused for his defence; and Mr. Laconstone began his address to the jury.

It would be injustice to withhold from it this praise—that it was a clever, off-hand, fluent speech. But it was altogether declamatory. It presupposed Wortham's guilt throughout. And it never allowed the listener a respite from the fact that the prisoner had the great good fortune to have Mr. Laconstone as his advocate. One point, by no means immaterial, he left altogether untouched—namely, that long

previous to Wortham's committal a purse had been missed by a lady-customer in this fashionable shop, and never recovered. With a happy compliment to the judge, and another to the jury, he drew towards a close; intimated that he should call witnesses as to character, and then leave the case to their merciful consideration.

The witnesses alluded to answered to their names, and gave highly favourable testimony in the prisoner's behalf. They confirmed, amply, every assertion which he had made when first taken into custody. They proved that his errand to the little town of —— was to attend his mother's funeral; and that her funeral had been fixed, as he had said, for "three o'clock precisely, by the officiating clergyman." They swore that he had left the house where he was staying for the purpose of buying a bit of crape to put round his hat, "which was all the mourning he could afford." In reply to a question from one of the jury, the witness under examination stated that the prisoner was "friendless; that he had neither father nor mother, nor any near relative in the wide world."

"What is he?" said the judge: "what is his calling?"

"He has been a sailor," was the answer, "and thrice shipwrecked, losing each time every rag of clothing he had. Now he's a clerk—a collecting clerk I think they call him—on board a river-steamer."

The greatest impression left on the auditory was made by the last witness—a superannuated pilot—a venerable looking old man with a profusion of glossy white hair, a keen bright eye, and an honest and contented smile. He said he had known the prisoner "for a matter of eighteen years," and had never heard any "harm of him, but much in his praise." Once to his knowledge he had saved a man, who had fallen overboard, by jumping after him and keeping a firm hold on him till help could be had. "Some gem'men made a subscription, and handed it to him. He wouldn't have it. No! Not he. He said he 'didn't want to pocket money for saving a fellow-creature!' A likely chap that!" concluded the old seaman, with a most contemptuous air, "to turn pickpocket! to go into one o' them cussed vanity shops and steal a lady's puss. Yah!"

There was a hearty cheer in court as the old man turned indignantly away.

The judge instantly repressed this burst of public feeling, and proceeded to sum up.

Calm, dignified, and impressive, he seemed by the impartiality of his statements, and the sustained suavity of his manner, the very impersonation of justice. His powers of analysis—and they were great—were instantly brought to bear upon the case: and in a very few sentences he presented to the jury the whole transaction, thoroughly divested of the false colouring which the exaggerated statements of counsel had thrown around it. He travelled quickly through the testimony of Mrs. Harper and Isham Dadd; and laid stress upon the circumstance of the purse and note being both found on the prisoner's person, and on the resistance made by him to the necessary search. On the other hand, he reminded the jury of the fact elicited from Dadd during his examination in chief, that money had been previously lost by a lady in that very shop and never recovered. The prisoner's defence was that he had not stolen the purse or the note. That he was not aware that they were upon him: and

that they must have been put in the side-pocket of his jacket by another person. He made no attempt to support this statement—somewhat improbable upon the very face of it—by any evidence. The jury's province was to judge to what degree of belief such a defence was entitled.

Then followed the question of character. The testimony given in Wortham's favour the judge read over slowly, deliberately, and emphatically. Then came his comment. "Character," he remarked, "could not avail but in cases where there was conflicting evidence—cases where there was absence of proof: character could never be allowed to outweigh facts."

The prisoner listened, anxiously, to this remark, and its purport seemed to cut him to the very soul. An expression of deep, unmitigated, indescribable anguish passed over his countenance. The muscles about the mouth worked convulsively for some seconds; and then—the nervous action suddenly ceasing—his face assumed the ghastliness and rigidity of a corpse. Despair, for the moment, had the mastery.

Suddenly a thought struck him. He stood up erect in the dock, and looked the jury down. Face after face he eagerly and rapidly scanned; and then came a slight gesture. Its nature I could not well define; nor can I, for obvious reasons, describe it now. But I fancied I saw it answered. Low down in the second row of the jury-box sat a diminutive, dark-visaged man, with a truly Spanish face and flashing eye, whom I had regarded earnestly, from time to time, for his singular resemblance to Kean. For distinction's sake I will term this Spanish-looking personage the eleventh juror. He had paid, from first to last, close attention to the case; and had more than once put a pertinent question to a witness. His eye—for I watched him narrowly—rested with a stern and inquiring gaze upon the prisoner; and then his whole countenance lit up with a kind and encouraging expression. Whatever was the nature of their communication, and whatever the medium through which information was conveyed, I was convinced that the prisoner and No. 11 understood each other; and with redoubled curiosity I awaited the result.

The judge still proceeded to charge the jury, but his observations were on the point of closing.

“ You have now the whole of the facts belonging to the case before you ; upon those facts it is your province to decide ; that decision, you must be well aware, is most important to the prisoner : if, after the declarations on oath of the various witnesses called before you, you entertain any reasonable doubt, it is your duty to give the prisoner the benefit of such doubt : your verdict in that case will be an acquittal.”

His lordship sunk back in his soft and well-cushioned easy chair, looking somewhat faint and exhausted ; and the clerk of arraigns instantly was ready with his nasal roar :—

“ Gentlemen of the jury, consider your verdict.”

The jury turned round in their box to consult and agree. And the while a species of running comment on the trial might be heard here and there buzzing about the hall.

“ Case too clear to admit of doubt ! ”—“ Ingenious defence, but flimsy ! ”—“ Transporta-

tion to a certainty!"—"Young to leave his country for fourteen or twenty years!"—"A first offence, doubtless, poor fellow!"—"Hasn't the look of a hardened thief!"

Time went on. Three,—five,—ten minutes elapsed. Still the jury seemed absorbed in an earnest and even angry debate. At length the foreman turned round and addressed the judge.

"My lord, one of the jury seems to think that Mrs. Harper hasn't identified the note—she hasn't sworn to it in court."

His lordship seemed for the moment struck by the objection. Perhaps the interruption might annoy him. He looked, for a judge, slightly flushed, and fidgeted. After a brief pause, during which he consulted his notes, the *dictum* came forth:—

"Mrs. Harper identified both note and purse in Steele and Whittenbury's shop; identified them immediately after their having been taken from the person of the prisoner: she has sworn to that effect in the witness-box."

"But, my lord, they were not shewn to her in court—she did not swear to them in court.

She did not identify them in the jury's presence and hearing, and in open court say they were hers."

So persisted the eleventh juror, who was spokesman.

"Mrs. Harper has identified her property with sufficient accuracy and decision for the purposes of public justice," returned his lordship, stiffly.

The jury again consulted. But in vain. After a short pause, the foreman said, piteously:—

"We cannot agree, my lord; we wish to retire."

The judge at once assented.

"Call a fresh jury; and give these gentlemen in charge of the proper officer. Let *them* be locked up; and *him* sworn to their legal and efficient custody."

With rueful glances the twelve, slowly, withdrew. An hour went by, and again they came into court. They required—using the foreman as their mouthpiece—"fresh instructions, and further information from his lordship."

"On what point?"

"The resistance made by the prisoner when

searched : some of the jury are of opinion that he did not resist."

Again the judge turned to his notes.

"Resistance he, unquestionably, offered. It is so stated on oath. The evidence of Mr. Steele is conclusive on the point."

And the judge here read, *seriatim*, from his notes what that worthy had undergone, in his love for justice, upon his own premises !

The eleventh juror here remarked with much deference of manner, that he had listened with extreme earnestness to the evidence, and his impression was that the prisoner had not objected to being searched, but to being searched by an interested and unauthorized person.

A glorious apple of discord proved this skilfully contrived observation. It brought three counsel on their legs at once ; and the judge to his notes once more. Mr. Laconstone rose and spouted for his client. The prosecuting counsel, senior and junior, had also their say ; and the judge, as a matter of course, had to act as umpire. After a sharp burst of wrangling, it was agreed that the prisoner had not objected to being searched, but to being searched by an

unauthorized person; that Mr. Steele put himself forward to perform this obnoxious duty; that the prisoner then resisted, and that to Mr. Steele's cost. The jury again retired. Three hours went by. Twilight gave way to darkness. The court sat late. There was a heavy cause before it, and the judge seemed resolute that no sacrifice of personal comfort on his part should be wanting to expedite public business. At seven a message was delivered by the proper officer to the court. An elderly gentleman was on the jury who was subject to fits; and as in Wortham's case there seemed to him no prospect of the jury's agreeing, and as, if they did not agree, they would have to sit up all night, he begged that he, for one, might be dismissed. He had not slept out of his own bed for a matter of three-and-forty years! (Some wicked creatures in court were hardened enough to laugh at this authentic and touching statement.) If he did not go to bed at his own hour in his own dwelling, he knew very well what would be the consequences. Might he therefore go?"

It was signified to this afflicted old gentle-

man that the judge, at present, had no power to release him.

Time sped on. Ten o'clock arrived. The court was on the point of breaking up, when it was intimated that the jury in Wortham's case were unanimous, and wished to deliver their verdict. In they came. Some very flushed, very angry, and very jaded faces were visible in the group; but in the dark, flashing eye of my Spanish-looking friend—his name I subsequently ascertained to be Zillett—there was undisguised triumph.

The clerk of the arraigns, taking up his customary snore, inquired:

“Gentlemen of the jury, are you agreed upon your verdict?”

The foreman bowed assent.

“How say you—is the prisoner, Ralph Wortham, guilty or not guilty of the felony with which he stands charged in the indictment?”

“NOT GUILTY!”

“You say he is not guilty: that is your verdict, and so you say all.”

For this result the spectators were evidently

unprepared. A low buzz of surprise was audible in court, intimating that a different issue had been expected. Apparently the judge shared this impression. He remarked—

“Prisoner, you have had a merciful jury. Let the past never be forgotten as a warning for the future !”

In a feeble and faint voice came the reply :

“I am innocent, my lord ; and so I shall one day be proved.”

* * * * *

Some sixteen or eighteen hours after this result, circumstances favoured my wish of having an introduction to Mr. Zillett. He was alone ; and the conversation was easily brought to bear upon the recent trial. It was solely with reference to it that I sought him.

“The verdict seemed to take the spectators by surprise,” said I, carelessly.

“It was a lenient verdict ; and the more I reflect upon the evidence, the more satisfied I feel with our conclusion,” was his reply.

“You had some difficulty in arriving at it ?”

“Yes ; we had some obstinate spirits to

persuade and bend; one or more such there will always be in every jury-box."

And he laughed, as if tickled by the recollection of some obdurate colleague—the old gentleman, for instance, subject to "occasional fits," and apprehensive of the most horrible consequences if he was a night absent from home.

"The prisoner must deeply feel his obligations to you."

"*I did my duty*, nothing more;" he rejoined, with marked but quiet emphasis: an emphasis so peculiar that I was satisfied his reply involved a double meaning.

"He was aware, I think, of your favourable disposition towards him."

My companion eyed me keenly, but was silent.

"I could almost fancy," I continued, "that you understood each other; that some telegraphic communication passed between you?"

"Oh! ah! indeed; that we talked with our fingers under the very eye of the judge!"

"No! no! That is not my meaning: such open communication could not well pass in court."

"To the point, then—be explicit—for I am really at a loss to guess your drift," observed Mr. Zillett, slowly, with an admirably feigned air of perplexity.

"This, I mean; that the prisoner knew by some medium of communication impenetrable by others, that in you he had a friend!"

The rejoinder was immediate. Mr. Zillett lifted up his eyebrows, and exclaimed—

"Never saw him before in my life; shall probably never see him again; know nothing about his friends, his connections, his intentions. When he entered the dock to me he was a prisoner, and nothing more."

"Did he remain *SUCH* to you *throughout the trial?*"

He laughed heartily at my query, and then parried it.

"You question closely, Sir; and, if in the law, do honour to the special pleader under whom you have commenced your career."

Another laugh, and he continued:—

"Do I fail in making you comprehend that I was merely a juror on this occasion: most unquestionably no personal friend or even acquaintance of this unfortunate party?"

“But on a sudden,” persisted I, “you took the most decided and extraordinary interest in the case?”

“I did so from the first. I had an impression—which deepened as the evidence was developed—that the real criminal was in court, but not in the dock. I recognized him, methought, in the witness-box. You cannot—will not expect me to be more explicit. It would be improper. But with such an impression, deeply and conscientiously entertained, nothing would have induced me to pronounce Wortham guilty.”

“And,” said I, “from the time he entered the court to the time he quitted it *his relation to you remained unchanged?* From the commencement to the close of the trial he was to you a stranger, an alien, nothing more?”

Again he laughed long and merrily.

“You are puzzled,” said he, “as wiser men have been before you. Come! come! I affirm nothing. I deny nothing. You are no Inquisitor; nor am I before the Holy Tribunal. I am, therefore, not compelled to make admissions. Owing no adherence to the Romish Church, I am, therefore, not enjoined

to confession! Now for a change of subject. How is our mutual friend, Illingworth? Have the Buxton Baths agreed with him?"

Other chit-chat followed. But the conversation closed with, on my part, the most decided impression that there was a mystery—powerless as I was to unravel it.

* * * *

Years—I forget how many—rolled away ere we again met in Warwickshire. Zillett needed, however, no remark on my part to freshen up his recollections of the past. He was, himself, the first to advert to them.

"Inquisitor!" said he, with a smile, "what are the latest tidings you bring from Mr. Justice Gazelee? You remember the last time we sat in the law chief's presence?"

"I do; and our subsequent interview."

"At which you were foiled! Ha! ha! ha! Come; forgive me! You will respect my opinions in future. My suspicions, you see, were well founded!"

"On what subject?"

"What! have you yet to learn the disclosures at Steele and Whittenbury's?"

“I had forgotten their names.”

“But not Wortham’s?” said he, somewhat reproachfully.

“No, no! whatever relates to him has interest for me.”

“So I thought: now listen. Eighteen months after that memorable trial, during which you would have it that the prisoner and myself privately communicated——”

“And which opinion,” I ejaculated, “I entertain to this hour!”

“Oh! Ah! Well! Eighteen months afterwards, Isham Dadd, whose bearing in the witness-box you cannot well have forgotten, was apprehended for embezzlement. Some dozen frauds were established against him; and at his employers’ instance the Government of the day compassionately sent this delicate-looking young man, for change of air, to Sydney! Before he sailed, it occurred to him that it would be somewhat awkward to land in a new colony penniless; and that his acknowledged reputation for raising the wind demanded that he should make a final attempt at duping the knowing ones. From mere force of habit he selected Mr. Whittenbury.

To that figurative personage he sent, through an unsuspected channel, a message, bearing this import—that he had information to give Mr. W. on a most interesting point; that this information none could impart but himself—Dadd; that it had reference to commercial matters; that, before he divulged it, he demanded ten pounds down, in gold; that his stay in England was ‘uncertain;’ and therefore that ‘an early application was desirable.’ The junior partner,” continued Mr. Zillett, “was sorely puzzled. Dadd he believed to be a consummate rogue; but still he might be in possession of valuable information. The firm might have been robbed to a greater extent than had as yet been ascertained. Dadd might have accomplices. Whittenbury shuddered at the idea, and sought counsel of his experienced principal. That worthy was furious. ‘What could his partner mean?’ he demanded. ‘Did he wish to fool away the entire means of the firm? Were they not sufficient losers by that villain Dadd already?’—Mr. W. shook his head in truly mournful acquiescence.—‘It’s all *Bam!*’ continued Mr. Steele, vociferously, as soon as his breath

would permit him to indulge in a hearty ejaculation. 'Ugh! ugh! ugh! This cough will kill me. It's imposition from beginning to end. Ugh! ugh! Ten pounds, forsooth! Give, if you will; but let the money be your own. The firm shall never advance it. That I'm resolved on. Ugh! ugh! ugh! Oh dear, these cough pills, at five shillings a box, do me no manner of good. I shall break a blood-vessel. And then, Whittenbury, you'll be, morally, my murderer. But, mark you; I've directed every farthing of my capital to be withdrawn from the firm.'—'Don't allude, pray don't, to any thing so dreadful,' cried Whittenbury, piteously. Whether this remark," said Zillett, slyly, "had reference to the demise of his partner, or to the diversion of his capital, does not clearly appear. 'But suppose,' persisted the junior, earnestly, 'that truth has not entirely deserted this wretched creature, Dadd; suppose that there is some important disclosure impending——' 'Fiddle-faddle with your long words,' shouted Steele (his face grew very purple)—'fiddle-faddle! there is nothing pending but doubtful debts to the tune of a thousand pounds, which I

wish you would get in.' 'There may be accomplices,' insinuated W., softly; 'there may be associates; there may be snakes in the firm; snakes which we are warming at our own fire, only hereafter to sting us. We steer, Mr. Steele, we steer, believe me, between Scylla and Charybdis——' His partner would hear no more. He roused himself up, looked his partner full in the face, and remarked, with upbraiding emphasis, 'I've heard you mention these people very often before; so often, indeed, have their names been upon your tongue, that I have searched the books carefully, to see when and for what they were customers. I can find no mention of 'em. None—none whatever! and therefore,' said Steele—looking daggers the while at his delinquent colleague—'my mind's made up! They're improper characters! Yes, yes! That has long been my impression. And now let me tell you, Sir, that, as a family man, you should have scorned to have soiled your lips with any mention of such people. Syllie and Chybdis, indeed! For shame of yourself! For shame, I say!'—'Good heavens, Steele!' began the junior; 'is it possible you can

labour under such a mistake as——’—‘ Not a word, Sir!’ said the senior, severely; ‘ not a word—or I make it my business, this very evening, to call on Mrs. Whittenbury!’

“ That was a potent name to conjure with, and the menaced man by no means relished even a passing reference to it; but, masking his chagrin under a smile, he observed, ‘ Well, Sir, we will waive that subject for the present: hereafter I will return to it.’—‘ Return to it!’ exclaimed Mr. Steele, with horror; ‘ what! you glory in your shame? Now I’ve done with you! No! not another word this awful night! Rummage the gaol for Isham Dadd when you will; say to him what you will; give him what you will: but mind—no message from me; no money of mine. Return to Syllee and Chybdis hereafter, eh? Infamy! Infamy! That unfortunate Mrs. Whittenbury! If there’s a wife upon this earth to be pitied, it’s that deceived, much enduring, and most unsuspecting woman!’ And waving his hands before him, in token of irrepressible horror, Mr. Steele went, or rather waddled, his way. His partner, meanwhile, sought the gaol, and obtained, with some difficulty, an interview

with Dadd. The turnkey, at the former's request, left them alone. For a moment the dishonest servant seemed abashed by the presence of his injured master. Recovering himself, he quickly asked, with great coolness, whether he 'came thither to reproach him with the past, or to comply with his conditions.'—'Reproaches, though deserved, would be useless,' said Whittenbury; 'and thus, though with strong misgivings, I am prepared to close with your proposal.'—'The money?' was the next inquiry, made with as much effrontery as if he was urging the payment of a just debt.—'It is here.'—'Hand it over.'—'No; not until you have given the information you profess to possess.'—Dadd eyed him, and remarked sullenly, 'Pay first: listen afterwards.' From this position no persuasion or remonstrance could induce him to depart. At length Mr. Whittenbury held out to him, in silence, the bribe agreed on. The convict keenly scrutinized the coin, to ascertain that it was genuine; satisfied on this head, he stowed it away carefully in various parts of his felon's garb. These precautions completed, he turned towards his late em-

ployer, and said, with something very like a sneer, 'Having paid down the purchase-money, let me wish you joy of your bargain!' The junior recollected his senior's repeated cautions, and felt that 'he was *done!*'—'What I have to say,' continued Dadd, 'will bring no money into your till, or take a single doubtful debt off your books. But it will startle your mind, and relieve mine. You remember Mrs. Harper's purse, and the trial of Ralph Wortham for taking it?'—'Yes; and the scandalous verdict of the jury in acquitting him.'—'It was a just verdict,' said the felon, gravely; 'he was not the thief.'—'Who was?'—'I!' returned the other, in a daring tone; '*I* took it. I wanted money. I had lost a whole year's salary at a low shilling hell. My debts were pressing, and I was desperate. *I* took the purse. Could I have kept it I should not have been here; but Steele's activity ruined all.'—'You took it!—how?—when?'—'The moment in which Wortham, tired of waiting, bolted from the counter. The silly, vain woman had paraded her bank-note and purse so frequently and ostentatiously that the temptation was more than I

could resist; my debts made me frantic, and fifty pounds would pay most. I seized it slyly, hoping that suspicion would light on Wortham; and so it did. As to getting the note quickly off my hands I had no fears. At one or other of my gaming haunts I knew I could pass it. I watched my opportunity and succeeded——’ ‘And then?’ ‘Oh! Steele brought him back; and with him a policeman; and then there was a hubbub, and a search, and a row, which you must well remember; my courage failed me; I began to fear that the search might become general; so availing myself of the confusion and uproar which prevailed when Wortham upset Steele, I helped, and *very gladly* helped, to drag the supposed thief into the inner shop to be searched; while so doing I securely placed note and purse in the side pocket of his jacket. The rest you know.’ ‘And is this *all* you have to tell me?’ cried the amazed and sickening Whittenbury after a pause. ‘Yes! *all*! No: stop—not all. I have a word or two more to add, and they are words of advice: Pay your assistants better, and you will have fewer thefts: treat

them not as brutes but as Christians, and you will have more chance of their regarding your interest as their own : don't let them see in so many of their masters the most wanton waste and extravagance, unlimited expenditure, and the most costly follies, and expect *them*, with such an example before their eyes, to be frugal, industrious, self-denying, and trustworthy. Farewell! You don't repent of your bargain, do you? You have surely had your money's worth?' And with a low, mocking laugh the villain turned away."

* * * *

"And now," inquired Zillett, as he closed his recital, "what is your opinion of Mr. Isham Dadd? and what your opinion of the refractory juryman?"

"That both suggest matter for thought. But tell me—where is Wortham?"

"On the bounding sea; a prosperous man; independent, and respected."

"Another inquiry: Since LIGHT has dawned upon myself, and I, like you, am bound by the 'mystic tie,' reply to me unreservedly."

"I will."

“Did you not discover him in court to be a Mason?”

“I did: and *in distress*. You know our creed. Was I to stand aloof from him because the world frowned on him: and the more when, from the first, I entertained deeply-rooted and irremoveable suspicions that he ought not to have been in the dock at all?”

“But he owed his deliverance mainly to the recognition of brotherhood?”

“And to the influence of previous character: both weighed strongly with me. Strongly do I say?” said Zillett, warmly and eagerly, correcting himself: “ungovernably, is the proper term. A brother—view him where you will—is a brother all the world over.”

CHAPTER XIV.

A MASON'S HOME: NEWSTEAD ABBEY AND
COLONEL WILDMAN.

“Methinks,” said the English merchant, “I should like to visit the ruins of yonder castle, situated by the waterfall. There is something of melancholy dignity in such a scene, which reconciles us to the misfortunes of our own time, by shewing that our ancestors, who were perhaps more intelligent or more powerful, have nevertheless, in their days, encountered cares and distresses similar to those which we now groan under.”—SIR WALTER SCOTT: *Anne of Geierstein*.

“His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex is expected here, to-day, on a visit to the colonel, and I fear I must refuse you admittance.”

Such was the unwelcome greeting we received from the porter the morning on which we presented ourselves at Newstead. The faces of many of our party lengthened visibly.

We had come some considerable distance. A good deal of inconvenience had been submitted to in order to reach the Abbey early. With some, moreover, it was their last day in Nottinghamshire—their final and only opportunity of seeing the early home of Byron. The porter was again applied to; and the usual sop to Cerberus proffered. The official was inexorable. He replied, bluntly,

“The colonel was not in the habit of making exceptions: as he did to one he did to all.”

“Take in my card, at any rate,” said our leader; “if shewn to Colonel Wildman, I flatter myself he will not close his gates upon the party.”

“One rule for all,” persisted the porter: “but your card, Sir, shall undoubtedly be sent up to the colonel forthwith.”

After a long and anxious pause, a groom came leisurely down to us, with the cheering tidings that “the prince was not expected to arrive till evening; and that, meanwhile, the house and grounds were open to us.”

It is a noble pile; and, as associated with the name of Byron, must, for ages to come,

be a house of renown. We went leisurely over it; and then adjourned to the grounds. Every object seems to recall the poet and his writings. There is the nobly proportioned ruined arch, magnificent even in decay, through which the wind sighs so wildly, and which the bard has vividly described in a fine stanza of one of the most objectionable of his poems. The lake too, in which he and "Boatswain" used to gambol, was before us—a broad sheet of water, and covered, when we saw it, under the influence of a fresh breeze, with mimic waves. Looking full upon this lake is the poet's bed-room. The furniture in it, as having been used by him, naturally arrests attention. Its value consists entirely in its association with Byron. It is old, ill-used, and shabby. We saw the monument raised by the poet to his favourite—"Boatswain"—and the tree where he had carved his own and his sister's name*—the sister to whom he was so deeply and deservedly attached—was specially pointed out to us. Near a path leading to the plantation are two trees, which

* Mrs. Leigh.

grow close together—so close as to suggest the idea that they spring from the same stem—brother and sister. On one of these may be read, carved by the poet—

BYRON, 1813.

AUGUSTA.

Frail memorials of fervent affection! The greatest possible care is taken of these trees; and no effort deemed superfluous to secure them from desecration and injury. In fact, one of the many excellent traits in the present owner of the Abbey is the jealous vigilance with which he keeps up all that Lord Byron valued; cherishes whatever is connected with his name or fame; attends to his old pensioners; provides for the comforts of former favourites; and, with a magnanimous self-denial which no other than a truly noble spirit could exercise, is content that the old and popular phrase should still pass current—“Newstead Abbey and Lord Byron;” instead of being superseded by “Newstead Abbey and Colonel Wildman.” No relative could be more tender of the poet’s fame, or more attached to his memory, than his true-hearted successor and former school-fellow!

The chapel and cloisters are very perfect and striking. The former dim, gloomy, and sepulchral; lit up invariably with lamps during the celebration of divine service. Here we were shewn the stone coffin whence Byron drew the skull which he mounted in silver, and used as a drinking goblet. Now of this far-famed drinking-cup one word. Despite the costly manner in which it has been mounted, and the elaboration of art bestowed upon it, and the lines written on it, and the penchant of the poet for it, it is a very disagreeable affair; and though ranked among the memorabilia of the Abbey, the sooner one is able to dismiss it from recollection the better. While passing through the cloisters, one of our party asked the grey-headed, grave-looking man who preceded us as our Cicerone, whether "the Abbey was quiet in the sma' hours?" The conductor was silent. He affected not to have heard the question. But I was persuaded he had; and had understood it. Of the same mind was the fair querist; for she quickly renewed her question, with the additional remark, that she had heard that Newstead had, occasionally, its unearthly visitants. Still the

guide preserved silence. But the lady, with true feminine perseverance, reiterated her inquiries, and those in so determined a tone that reply was indispensable.

“*It is troubled at times,*” said the old man, reluctantly, but firmly.

“By whom?”

The response was boldly and sturdily given this time.

“By those who cannot rest *in* their graves, and won’t let other honest people rest *out* of them. Folks *do* come again that shouldn’t! That’s the fact! and there’s no denying it. These cloisters are the place they’re particular partial to. The colonel won’t have it so. But they come for all that. An old monk ’specially. One of the duke’s people saw him. It nearly killed the man; he wasn’t himself for hours after! I’m not surprised—not I. Blessed saints!” (I inferred from this ejaculation that he was a Romanist.) “To hear of such things is bad enough: but to *see*—oh dear! oh dear!”

The amusement caused by this avowal to some of our party was marvellous. The lady, however, who had elicited the history was

much too absorbed in pursuing it to heed our indecent merriment: with the deepest gravity she resumed—

“Have you ever seen any thing strange?”

“No! thanks be praised, I never have; but I've heard enough. The sighs—the shrieks that I've listened to before now. My very marrow has been chilled within me.”

“And how do you account for it?”

“Why,” returned he, with earnest sincerity, “I lay it, in part, to the wickedness of the late lord—a sad one he undoubtedly was—and in part I lay it to the skull. So long as that skull is kept above ground, that old monk will walk about and claim it.”

“Oh! Ah!” cried the wag of the party; “I understand you now perfectly! you mean that the skull belongs to the old gentleman—the walking monk—and that he feels himself rather at a loss, and uncomfortable without it?”

The guide's indignation was extreme.

“Oh!” cried he, angrily; “If you make a jest of this, I've done: but at any rate you might, methinks, find a fitter place to talk in this fashion on such a subject.”

And out of the chapel and cloisters he very unceremoniously bundled us: nor would he open his lips again during the remainder of the walk!

We wandered over the mansion admiring, among other articles of taste and *vertu*, the many fine cabinets which it contains. One, exquisitely inlaid, riveted the gaze of our fair companions. They lingered wistfully before it with eager eyes. Some old divine—Fuller, if I mistake not—says: “Eschew, if thou aimest at a life of quiet, the uncharitable task of attempting to divine the motives of thy fellow.” Sound counsel, albeit quaintly expressed. Recalling it, methought—“the purport of those earnest glances who shall dare venture to translate?”

To those troubled with an autograph mania, the greatest temptation would be that of bolting with “the visitors’ book!” What an array of glorious names does it contain! The gifted and the intelligent from every land seem to have testified, by their pilgrimage to Newstead, their tribute to the magic of song and the fame of Byron. Artists, poets, politicians, nobles, all are there. And as I glanced over

the list, I remarked that scarcely any foreigner of note had visited this country who had not included in his arrangements a peep at Newstead. Apart, however, and wholly distinct from the high poetic interest which the Abbey must always retain, it possesses another attraction for Masons as the home of a deservedly popular member of the Order, and as the favourite retreat of a much-beloved G.M. The Duke of Sussex was a frequent guest at Newstead; its "tranquillity, repose, and freedom were," he said, "peculiarly grateful" to him. In the drawing-room is his full-length portrait; cleverly done; and like him.

Near this apartment is the duke's sleeping-room—lofty and handsome. Close to it on one side is a small private sitting-room, where he generally sat and wrote all the morning: and on the other, leading out of his bedroom, is a small sleeping apartment for his confidential valet—who was thus placed to be, in case of illness, within immediate reach of the duke's summons.

While standing before the prince's portrait, and scanning it attentively, a middle-aged, military-looking man, erect in his carriage,

and but for a slight limp in his gait, active and rapid in all his movements, came up and said :—

“ Ah ! Ha ! You are looking at that portrait closely, to make yourself master of its defects : it is a good picture, but not a good likeness.”

“ I deemed it both.”

“ Pardon me—you are wrong : it is much more like the duke’s daughter, Madame D’Este,* than like himself : I ought to be a judge, for I see him frequently : I dine with him in fact to-day. You are aware, I presume, that when the duke is at Newstead the colonel can invite no one to his table without previously mentioning the name to H.R.H., and receiving his permission. Such is court etiquette.”

“ When will the prince arrive ? ”

“ To-night at seven : he would have been here yesterday, but an engagement to the Princess Victoria intervened—an engagement to which he would sacrifice any other. The love he bears her resembles that of a doting

* Now Lady Wilde.

father towards an only child. To hear him speak of her, one would imagine that she stood to him in that relation: all the love he cherished for the Duke of Kent—his favourite brother—seems to have descended by inheritance to his orphan daughter. And report says the little princess is equally attached to her Whiggish uncle. But come—I see by the way in which you scan that portrait that you are a *Sussexite*; and if you will step into the library I will shew you one or two rarities not generally visible to the mob of strangers: and give you, in addition, one or two traits of the duke, from his own conversation; they may furnish matter for thought hereafter.”

These, on parting, I carefully noted down. Those which relate to parties still living, or to private individuals, I have suppressed; the others, as relating either to personages who may be deemed historical, or to parties on whom the grave has closed, I have deemed myself at full liberty to retain.

THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.

“The Prince Regent had little real affection for his daughter. The fact is, *he feared her!*”

The day after he learnt her demise, his comment on the event to one of his intimates was this:—‘ *The nation will lament her : but to me it is a relief!* ’ ”

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON AND LORD
CASTLEREAGH.

“The regard which the duke felt for Lord Castlereagh was great, undissembled, and enduring to the last. It puzzled most people. No one could well account for it, because no two men had less in common as to habits and character. The duke, all soldierly frankness. The foreign secretary steeped in *tracasserie*, finesse, and diplomatic manœuvres. The duke speaks, and you seize, at once, his meaning. Lord Castlereagh rounded sentence after sentence, and you knew as much of his real bent and object when he had finished as when he began! It shews, however, how deeply the duke had studied the diplomatist, since he was the first to notice Lord Castlereagh’s aberration of intellect. He mentioned it first to the king, and then to his colleagues. His impression was deemed ill-founded; so fixed, however, was it in the duke’s mind, that some

days before the event, he said to a dependent of the minister—one of his secretaries, if I mistake not—'Watch his lordship carefully: his mind is going.'

THE QUEEN.

"The princess* resembles her father in many points of character; in his stern and soldierly-looking for punctuality: in his love of order: aversion to being humbugged, and attention to pecuniary details. I have suspicions, too, that she will inherit the duke's penchant for building. Never was he so happy as when dabbling in bricks and mortar. Castlebar Hill could say something on this point. But independent of her paternal inheritance of sincerity and straightforwardness, she has a shrewdness of character quite her own. I remember some years ago, when she was a little girl, her coming up to me, and after some confidential chit-chat whispering with a sad and disappointed air—'Uncle!—is not near so wise as she looks! When I ask her to explain to me something puzzling, she always

* Victoria.

says—"Your Royal Highness will be pleased to consult your dictionary." No! No! she is not, I can assure you, near so wise as she looks.' Now," said the duke, laughing till the tears stood in his eyes, "nothing could be more comic or more true, for if there ever was a solemn and imposing-looking personage upon this earth, it was——! Ha! Ha! Ha! Should my little niece live—as I pray God she may—to be the constitutional sovereign of this great country, she will find many people about her in the self-same predicament,"—and again he laughed merrily,—“not near so wise as they look!”

THE LATE QUEEN CAROLINE.

“One, and not the least curious, feature in the affair was, that the Regent was kept fully informed, by some unsuspected agent, of the daily life of his unfortunate consort. He was in full possession of all her movements. She never had a party but he knew who composed it. She never took a journey without the route and the incidents of travel being reported to him in detail. Every escapade of hers was duly chronicled; and faithfully too; for when

proceedings were finally taken, the subordinate law people—those who had the getting up of the case—found the king more *au fait* of the whole business than they were themselves. ‘Amend that,’ said he on one occasion—‘you are wrong as to time. The date of that transaction is so and so’—naming the day accurately; ‘and the parties present were these;’ and he repeated their names one by one. Great pains were taken to ascertain the king’s informant; but in vain.”

THE LATE MR. WHITBREAD.

“Soon after he became mixed up with the affairs of Drury-lane Theatre, he received a letter from some religious fanatic, telling him that he had deserted, in a measure, his proper post in the House of Commons, and that the wrath of the Supreme would light upon him: that whoever endeavoured to keep theatres open, and make that species of property stable and prosperous, warred with the Most High, and was sure of signal punishment and defeat. It closed with the remarkable hint, that *worse calamities might befall a man than the loss of bodily health or reduction in worldly circum-*

stances. It was a long letter; in some parts cleverly, very cleverly written, but violent; and to my judgment, in two or three passages, somewhat profane. Whitbread was highly amused with it, and shewed it about, as a sample of the curious correspondence with which he was from time to time greeted. But it would have been well if the warning had been heeded. Beyond all question, the perplexities and harass arising out of the pecuniary embarrassments of Drury Lane hastened the sad catastrophe. As a public man—a thoroughly fearless speaker—and as the organ of that public opinion which keeps a prime minister somewhat to his duty, Whitbread's loss has never been made good."

THE DETHRONED KING OF FRANCE AND HIS
CONFESSOR.

"It is a popular impression, but a false one, that the downfall of Charles X. resulted from the pernicious counsels of Prince Polignac. An influence far mightier than his moulded the purposes of the monarch. The evil genius of Charles X. existed in the person of his confessor. The Abbé de Latil, a man of very

narrow views, who had been educated in a cloister, and never rose superior to its prejudices, ruled the king. He was with him during his first exile in this country, when he resided at Holyrood House, in '98, '99, and 1800; he was then his spiritual director; eventually he became Cardinal de Latil and Archbishop of Rheims. Talleyrand foresaw the peril of his counsels to Charles, and sought to avert it by adroitly suggesting to the king that 'there was a great work to be done in the Church; that none was so fitted for its execution as the cardinal, who, he hoped, with the monarch's permission, would, in future, confine his attention to ecclesiastical affairs.'—The king replied, in substance, that the presence and opinion of the cardinal were indispensable to him! A few months later a very distinguished man, one of his most attached friends in this country—*one who had the right, from previous services, to address him*—ventured to warn him of the danger of having a secret adviser—an adviser apart from his council of ministers—that adviser irresponsible, and necessarily ill-informed as to the true interests of society, and inexperienced

in the conduct of public affairs. The king's reply was—'The archbishop has been with me in all my misfortunes. I have no secrets apart from him. My opinion of his judgment, my recollections of his past fidelity, and the precepts of my religion, forbid reserve between us.'—The Duchesse d'Angoulême had a hint given her on the subject. Her reply was stern and sufficiently curt. 'The views and principles of the Cardinal Archbishop *are my own!*' Never was a reigning family so proof against warnings! Well! The end was at hand. The press had been rather free in its censures on the Church, and somewhat smart in its satire on the priesthood. The cardinal resolved it should be shackled, and persuaded his master to fetter it, in one of those three famous ordonnances which hurled him from the throne, and seated Louis Philippe upon it. Poor Duchesse d'Angoulême!—'the only man in the family!' as Buonaparte called her. Her reply about views and principles reminds me of the late king's retort, when Prince of Wales, to Lord Erskine—one of the happiest retorts he ever made. It was launched at a private dinner, where all parties, I presume,

were rather mellow. His lordship, nettled, not perhaps without reason, at the prince's neglect, made some very extravagant and preposterous assertion, and then defended it by saying, 'The view he had taken was part and parcel of his principles—principles which had seated his Royal Highness's family on the throne.'—'You mistake, my Lord,' replied the prince, 'they are principles which would unseat *any* family from *any* throne!'—The rejoinder," added the duke, "was never forgiven."

* * * *

Our unconscionably long morning was now drawing to a close, and we prepared to bid Newstead adieu. As we left the grounds, who should hobble within hail but our friend the ghost-fancier, and the paymaster of our group hurried towards him with a gratuity. He opened his palm with remarkable alacrity, but not his lips: not a syllable in the way of acknowledgment escaped him. His angry eye and flushed cheek alone spoke. These told us that he had not forgiven us; that the attempt to turn real, undoubted, *bonâ-fide* ghosts into jokes was fresh in his recollection; and to

our decided disadvantage. Still desirous of "amicable relations," I ventured to bid him good morning. His reply was something between a grunt and a growl; so expressive of displeasure, offended dignity, suspicion, and reproof, that it, involuntarily, raised a smile more or less broad on each of our impenitent faces.

We turned away; and the indignant official then relieved himself of a very long sentence, uttered with portentous earnestness. Its precise import none of us could catch, but the prominent word, duly emphasized, was—
"SCOFFERS!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE LATE REV. ROBERT LYNAM, AND THE
PRIZES IN THE CHURCH.

“ He was one of those who are well known only to intimate observers, and whom a friend could not know intimately without making daily discoveries of virtue, and wisdom, and sensibility. Under that calm and cautious exterior, and behind that modesty which was most apparent, there lay the utmost warmth of heart and anxiety of kindness, and an ardour for all good things fresh and sincere, so rarely felt but in youth. And the wonder of all was, that he had preserved this through all the habits of London life.”—“ Character of a Friend,” by the late FRANCIS HORNER, M.P.

THE frank and fearless Sydney Smith, in one of his quaint letters to Lord John Russell, alludes more than once to the prizes in the Church—few in number—which he maintains should be preserved *intact*, as a set-off to the blanks. He persuades himself that such livings as Stanhope, and Doddington, and

Bolton Percy, and Lambeth, are so many inducements to men of vigorous intellect and varied attainments to enter the Church, which would otherwise be deprived of their abilities and services. He maintains, moreover, that the existence of such benefices holds out the cordial of hope to many a struggling and wayworn labourer in the vineyard, who grapples cheerfully with penury, and toils on, year after year, unremittingly and willingly, under the impression that ease and independence may await him in the evening of life; and are beyond question attainable by perseverance and industry. With these arguments I presume not to meddle. On their aptness or irrelevancy I leave abler heads to decide. This only, and with all humility, is suggested, that if ever there was a body which, in the privation, self-denial, and penury inseparable from their profession, required the stimulus of hope, it is that body which is constituted by the curates of the Church of England. Never were men so weak who might—if they would unite—be so strong! Never were men so helpless and dependent in “the day of adversity,” who might—if they would co-operate—

be so fully and thoroughly prepared for it. No general super-annuitant fund! No asylum for the aged, decrepit, worn-out servant of the altar! No retiring pension for those whom disease, or accident, or loss of voice, or loss of sight, or mental alienation incapacitates for active service! So long as health, and spirits, and energies last, he toils: so long as he can work, he may reckon on a scanty maintenance; but let any of the ills incident to mortality surprise him, and then point out, if you can, a more dependent, helpless, sorrow-stricken, defenceless being than the invalided or incapacitated clergyman.

Masons! let the want of union exhibited by these contented but improvident men school you! Heed their miserable deficiency in forecast, and avoid it. Press on, with every energy you possess, the erection, establishment, and endowment of that noble institution projected by one of the most thoughtful and benevolent of your order—that institution which will attest the principles of your body far more favourably than the most laboured eulogy or the most aristocratic patronage—

THE ASYLUM FOR WORTHY AGED AND DECAYED

FREEMASONS. Let no petty objection suffice to weaken your conviction of its paramount necessity. Let no representations from the envious or the timid induce you to waver in your support of a scheme which holds out the promise of such a home for the lonely. Let no cavils tempt you to slacken in your representations of the importance, **GENERALLY**, to the order of such a charity; of its harmony and congruity with our principles—that it is the fruit of Masonic precept, ripened in the sunshine of Masonic beneficence. Let neither the torpor of one, nor the ridicule of another, nor the thinly-veiled hostility of a third, nor the official indifference of a fourth, release you from its determined advocacy, until you see **THE CHARITY** placed upon a permanent basis—until you see it built, officered, and endowed in a way that bids fair to secure to it—so far as aught can be secure in a scene so stamped with change and vicissitude—**PROSPERITY AND PERPETUITY.**

That the clergy need some haven of the kind is proved by daily instances of bitter sorrow and suffering. Take one case among many. It forms the subject of a printed

appeal, and thus there can be no indelicacy in alluding to it:—

“The Rev. Robert Lynam, M.A., died in October, 1845, leaving a widow and nine children, with no provision, except an annuity of 40*l.*, belonging to Mrs. Lynam herself. He was in his fiftieth year, and by educational and literary occupations, combined with his clerical labours, had supported his family with scrupulous integrity.

“He was known to the public as author of a Continuation of ‘Goldsmith’s History of England,’ and as editor of the works of several standard authors, especially Addison, Paley, Johnson, Robertson, Rollin, and Skelton, with biographical and critical introductions.

“He had been educated at Christ’s Hospital, and at Trinity College, Cambridge. *He was for seven years morning preacher at the Magdalen Hospital, and during the last twelve years of his life he had been curate of St. Giles’s Without Cripplegate, where he died.*

“Many of the inhabitants of that parish testified their esteem for his character by a liberal donation to him in his lingering illness; voluntarily attended in large numbers at his

funeral, the expenses of which they defrayed ; and they have since kindly formed a contribution amongst themselves for the relief of his widow and numerous family. Some of his personal friends, aided by the exertions of others to whom he was less known (amongst whom are the Bishop of London, Archdeacons Hale and Hollingworth, Rev. Dr. Gilly, of Durham ; Professor Scholefield, Rev. Dr. Shepherd, Rev. Dr. Major, Sir W. R. Farquhar, &c.), have joined in that contribution, and the proceeds, amounting to 300*l.* Three per Cent. Consols, have been invested in the names of Mrs. Lynam herself, Mr. J. Seeley, churchwarden, and the Rev. Edward Rice, D.D., as trustees.

“ Any additional donations, to be similarly applied, that benevolent persons may be disposed to give in aid of the bereft family of this deserving curate, will be thankfully received.”

But in this statement bare justice is done to the departed. Borne down by infirm health and adverse circumstances, Mr. Lynam had, nevertheless, supported his large family up to the period of his last illness, *without having incurred one single penny of debt!*

Here, then, was an amiable man—a scholar—an industrious man—a man who acted habitually on principle—who shunned incurring any obligation which he was not fully satisfied he could meet—left in his most trying hour to the mercy and benevolence of his fellows.

He died *at fifty* a curate! His people loved him. This is quite clear. They ministered, liberally, to his wants in his last illness; attended him reverently to his final resting-place; buried him at their own cost; took into immediate consideration the necessities of his widow and orphans; and shewed their attachment to their pastor's memory by acts of mercy to his bereaved ones. Eternal honour to such benevolent and considerate churchmen! But ought *he* to have been left thus to struggle single-handed with poverty and disease? The dispensers of ecclesiastical patronage, where were they? His diocesan for instance?

Had the Bishop of London no small benefice to bestow upon this learned, laborious, and exemplary man? His lordship is understood to be the special patron of the working clergy. Lynam, surely, was one! Had the

dean and chapter of St. Paul's no trifling benefice wherewith to acknowledge—not reward—the acceptable and unremitting labours of the curate on one of the most considerable of their own livings?

One item in the subscription list is singular enough. It must be a misprint. *On no other principle can it be explained.* The vicarage of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, is one of "the Prizes in the Church." Its *annual* value, according to Parliamentary returns, exceeds two THOUSAND POUNDS. On this living Mr. Lynam was curate for twelve years: the last twelve years of his life: in truth, exhausted and overburdened he died in serving it. In the subscription opened for the relief of his widow and orphans, opposite to the name of the incumbent, is placed a donation of *five* pounds! Now, the printer's devil who made such an abominable mistake deserves a flagellation—a flagellation such as is inflicted in the 7th Hussars, under the hands of farriers, rising on their toes at every other stroke. No milder punishment will expiate such intolerable carelessness. What opinion does the little inky imp dare to entertain of the clergy of the

Church of England, to suppose it probable that a gentleman who holds a living, the annual receipts of which exceed two thousand pounds, and a canonry of St. Paul's to boot, would dream of giving to the distressed family of an exemplary curate, after twelve years' faithful service, a paltry sum of five pounds ! It's impossible !—incredible ! A gross misprint, beyond all question. And the true reading should be—for “*five pounds understand FIFTY.*”

Did the clergy as a body co-operate, and have—as they easily might have—their own general super-annuitant fund, their own widows' purse, their own orphans' relief, or bounty board, the necessity for such painful appeals would be superseded.

The urgent need for these charities, each and all of them, is painfully felt : when will the policy of organizing them be admitted and acted upon ?

Turn from this to another curious case of ministerial vicissitude. It is extracted from the journal of a missionary in one of our Colonial dependencies ; and there is no ground for questioning its accuracy.

"We followed to the grave yesterday, Charles W. Thompson, aged 29 years, foremast hand of the *Panama*, Captain Crowell. He was the eldest son of Lieutenant-Colonel Thompson, late M.P. for Hull, who served under Wellington in the Peninsular war, and also at the battle of Waterloo.

"He received the name of Charles William Byron, his mother being a second cousin of the poet, Lord Byron; but he preferred to drop the name of Byron.

"*After graduating at Christ's College, Cambridge, he was ordained over a parish of the Church of England.* Not being pleased with his situation there, and having conscientious scruples about the connection of Church and State, his relation with his parish was dissolved. His father had then acquired land in the United States, and Charles, with his wife, was proceeding thither on business connected therewith, when the vessel, being driven by a strong current, and surrounded for many days with a thick fog, instead of reaching New York, was wrecked on the shore of Halifax.

"His wife, in consequence of exposure, was thrown upon a bed of sickness, and about

a month after expired. In consequence of loss from this wreck he was obliged, in order to prosecute his business, to return to England, and on his reaching America the second time was wrecked on Long Island. After forming acquaintances in the family of Mr. Vanfleet, of Hyde Park, in Dutchess County, New York, he was again married. His second wife died in childbed, leaving him a little son, whom he left at Hyde Park, with his grandparents; thence proceeding south, on business, the vessel was run aground on the Jersey shore, which was the third time that this unfortunate man had been wrecked, where he lost his remaining all. Becoming now discouraged, he found his way to Sag Harbour, where his name was enrolled as a foremast hand for a whaling voyage in the Pacific.

“Though he says he had not lifted a fifty pound weight before in his life, he was now ready at every call, and by his prompt obedience ingratiated himself into the favour of his master and officers, and by his meek and obliging conduct into the good-will of all his companions. Whenever a dispute arose among the hands, they invariably looked on

him to settle it. I found on getting acquainted with him, that by his extensive travels in Europe and America, his retentive memory, his excellent address, and a command of language, he was a man qualified to please and interest the most intelligent circles.

“January 28, at three o'clock, p. m., he entered our house apparently much fatigued, and requested the privilege of reclining. I shewed him a bed, where he soon sunk into a fit of apoplexy. Upon discovering his situation, Dr. White, of the *Majestic*, was called, who attended upon him assiduously; but notwithstanding what could be done, his spirit departed that evening about eleven o'clock.”

And then to crown the whole, one meets with an advertisement like this, running the round of the morning and evening papers :—

“The Rev. Thomas Harvey hereby acknowledges the kind sympathy of an ‘Anonymous’ friend, contained in a letter dated July 1, bearing the ‘Liverpool’ post-mark, addressed to Mr. Harvey, enclosing a FIVE-POUND BANK OF ENGLAND NOTE, No. 00262, date April 26, 1845, towards relieving the heavy expenses incurred in defending himself against the

ruinous and oppressive usage of the Bishop
of _____.

“Margaretting Vicarage, July 6, 1846.”

All which is to a plain man perfectly incom-
prehensible.

CHAPTER XVI.

A GRAND MASTER'S ANCESTRAL HALLS :
HASTINGS AND DONNINGTON.

“ In a speech replete with feeling, the Duke of Sussex proposed the health of ‘ The Earl of Moira, the friend of his prince, the friend of his country, and the friend of mankind.’ ”
—REED'S *Progress of Masonry*.

It was a spirit-stirring scene when this emphatic toast was given.

One of the most influential and unwearied supporters of Freemasonry in this country was about to bid the craft a reluctant adieu, and the body resolved to mark their sense of Lord Moira's past services by a public manifestation of attachment and regard. His lordship—then Marquis of Hastings, and on the eve of his departure as viceroy of India—was invited to a banquet at which no less

than five hundred brethren were present, which men of all parties struggled to witness, and which included among the guests no less than five princes of the blood. Animated by one and the same object, the Dukes of York, Clarence, Cumberland, Kent, and Sussex, met to do honour to acknowledged worth.

The gallery was crowded with the noble, the gentle-hearted, and the fair. A costly jewel, of matchless workmanship, was presented to the marquis, as a *souvenir* from his brethren; and amidst acclamations, long and loud, the Duke of Sussex gave the toast so well remembered and, in after-times, so frequently referred to. It was a proud day for the marquis; and yet tinged in no inconsiderable degree with melancholy. After all, India to him was exile, gorgeous though it might prove. His might be the trappings of power—and the sweets of patronage—and the exercise of authority—but could these compensate for absence from the land he left behind him, and severance from the friends he saw around him?

But the 27th of January, 1813, is memorable in Masonic annals, not merely as a day of festivity, or as a day in which the fraternity

took leave—a grateful and appropriate leave—of a most accomplished brother—but as a day in which a brief but able exposition of Masonic principles was given by one well skilled in Masonic practice.

Lord Moira thus spoke:—

“They* share with us in the glowing confidence that the beneficence of a superintending Father perpetually shields us. They participate with us in that sure hope of the future which makes our present existence appear but a speck in the immensity of our immortal heritage. They are assimilated to us in all the generous affections of that charity which tells us that *kindness to all must be the oblation most acceptable to HIM, who, in creating all, could have no motive but their happiness.*”

And again:—

“The prodigious extent of this society in England is little imagined by those who are not called upon to look to its numbers. Its perfect tranquillity attracts no attention. That so vast a body should exist in such silence, and move with such invariable regularity, while

* The royal and illustrious personages present.

it would appear to the casual observer that no eye watches, or hand directs its procedure, is the best proof of its rigid adherence to principles in their nature unalterably advantageous to society."

Those whom these records of past triumphs interest, will not be averse to wile away a summer's noon by a saunter around Donnington—Lord Moira's ancestral home.

The house is imposing. A park of some extent surrounds it; and the carriage-drive to the hall is fringed on either side with noble pollard oaks. Behind the mansion rolls the Trent, which here makes a very beautiful bend. Its ripple on a still day is discernible, and delightfully soothing. The gardens, the library, the pictures had charms for the more restless spirits of our party: but to me the most pleasing object, on that glorious summer's eve, was the spectacle of the deer which were browsing, in groups, under the trees in the park close to the house—graceful, fearless, and confiding.

Oh! there is no teacher so mighty and magnificent as nature! For what is the whole creation, earth, air, water,—the winds,—the

waves,—the stars,—mankind,—the universe,—but an infinite being complete, premeditated, varied into inscrutable details, and breathing, and palpitating under the omnipresent hand of God? To this feeling one of the most gifted of her race* did homage in one of the most exquisite sentiments ever traced by her versatile pen—“When at eve at the boundary of the landscape, the heavens appear to recline so closely on the earth, imagination pictures beyond the horizon an asylum of hope, a native land of love; and *nature seems silently to repeat that man is immortal!*”

A tolerably bold digression this from Donnington! Thither, courteous reader, let us return!

The pictures are few in number: and as a collection not remarkable. But there are one or two among them which merit lengthened observation. In the dining-room hangs a portrait of “Oliver Cromwell.” Before this successful effort of the limner the lover of art will pause delightedly. The expression of the countenance, and particularly of the eye, en-

* Madame de Staël.

chains attention. The longer the portrait is gazed on the more apparent is its excellence. What immovable determination about the mouth! And what a sinister yet hard expression has the painter transferred to that leaden eye! Fixedness of purpose—cruelty—hatred—a spirit reckless of consequences—a heart insensible to the pleadings of mercy—all live upon the canvass! Regicide and usurper! He is limned to the life! The murderer of his king! The hypocrite towards his God! Scan his features once more! So stern, so resolute, so inhuman. Admirable deceiver! We can now conceive somewhat of that measureless ambition which the government of a realm could not satisfy; and of that ferocity of character—that quenchless hatred—which not even the life-blood of his royal master could appease!

The other portrait—it hangs in the small drawing-room—is a picture of Nell Gwynne.

The soft sleepy look of the eye—the beauty and delicacy of the hand—the expression of refined licentiousness—all this is finely given. It is a beautiful picture. But after all it is the picture of a courtesan. And it is a profa-

nation of art—whether statuary or painting—when its glorious mission is made subservient to the brutal purposes of lust.

How different is Raphael's Madonna!* It is the beauty of a lowly being—the beauty of innocent thoughts—of hallowed lips—of modesty that grows in the still hamlet—of a heart pure, holy, truthful, and confiding.

The library is a noble room; and crammed with books: some of them of rare and curious editions. And here, be it observed, there is a picture of some mark. It is that of Comte d'Artois, afterwards Charles X. It hangs above the fire-place; and we were told was a gift from the royal personage it represents.

Now it is no want of charity to assert of this elaborate, but laughter-moving picture, that it is essentially French. The idea is French. The colouring is French. The attitude is French. The bow is French. The self-complacent grin which the painter has contrived to fix on the features of this unfortunate prince is French. *Vive la bagatelle!* What a diverting picture to look at on a gloomy day! The Comte

* In the Bridgewater Gallery.

d'Artois is supposed to be receiving the salutations of the National Guard. He is evidently full of *esprit*: in other words, uncommonly frisky. He is dressed in a light pea-green coat, and has a shred of white ribbon,—the Bourbon emblem,—dangling from his button-hole. His “chapeau” is in his hand, and he is perpetrating a bow. But what a bow! A little girl in the party best described it. She laughed aloud, and cried “Oh! how funny! What a *hoppy-kicky* bow!” “Hoppy-kicky” or not, the attitude certainly is nondescript. It is something between the grimace of a finished *petit-maitre*, and the flourish of a French dancing-master. The drollery of the whole affair is irresistible. Ha! Ha! Ha!

But we still linger in the library. Books of varied merit, and in various tongues, are heaped around; but in glancing at some dozen volumes, I was struck with the predominance of presentation copies. Seven out of the thirteen were “from the author.” Most of these were accompanied with some courteous and grateful expression. It spoke much, methought, for the kindly and generous character of the receiver.

Among these, one wretchedly-bound and well-worn volume, from adventitious circumstances, possessed a degree of interest not intrinsically its own. It was a collection of speeches and pamphlets which had been called forth by the Union. Within its limits were to be found the passionate effusions of Flood and Barré. It had once belonged to Fox, and bore his autograph; and had besides several marginal annotations in his own careless but peculiar scrawl. From his possession it appeared to have passed into the library of Marquis Wellesley, and was by him presented with a few graceful expressions of admiration and regard to Lord Moira.

Methought it was rarely that upon the same fly-leaf three such autographs were to be read as those of "Charles James Fox," "Wellesley," and "Moira."

But I must hasten on.

That generous and confiding benevolence of character which had rallied around him so many firm adherents during life, was touchingly exhibited after death. In the necessary examination of his papers, letter after letter presented itself from parties whom his bounty

had cheered; his influence assisted; or his prompt intervention raised from despair. The extent of his ready sympathy with sorrow was known only when the grave had closed upon him. In his good deeds he had observed the Masonic virtue of SILENCE.

And yet after all his devotion to his prince—his prolonged and frank hospitality to the exiled Bourbons—his unhesitating and undeviating loyalty in times of no common difficulty—his many and costly sacrifices to maintain the Prince of Wales's honour—he surrendered his last breath in what may be termed honourable exile. Did he in after-years ever recall this pithy passage in his parting address?

“The illustrious chairman has praised me as the friend of the prince. Can I assume merit for my attachment when all the honour of such a connection through a length of years must have been bestowed upon me? If I had the happiness of being distinguished by such partiality, *adherence was but a slender return, though the only one I could make.*”

Or was his sad but inevitable conclusion that so well expressed by Burton: “The attachments of *mere mirth* are but *the shadows of*

that true friendship, of which the sincere affections of the heart are the substance."

Failings he, probably, had : but who would wish to recall them ?

Rather apply to him the acute remark of a popular writer : "The last triumph of disinterestedness is to forget our own superiority in our sympathy, solicitude, tenderness, respect, and self-denying zeal for those who are below us."

CHAPTER XVII.

HALF A DOZEN WORDS ABOUT THE POOR.

“Virtue and intelligence are the great interests of a community, including all others, and worth all others; and the noblest agency is that by which they are advanced.”

DR. CHANNING.

IN some book or pamphlet, which I am ashamed to say I have forgotten, a passage occurs mainly to this effect:—

“Hope and imagination, the wings of the soul, carrying it forward and upward, languish in the poor; for the future is uninviting. The darkness of the present broods over future years. The idea of a better lot almost fades from a poor man’s mind. He ceases to hope for his children as well as for himself. Even parental love stagnates through despair. Thus poverty starves the mind.”

The remark is just. Under the pressure of poverty both mind and body become degraded. No one can judge so accurately of what is actually endured by the poor man,—of the many weights and hindrances laid on him which keep him poor,—as those who live near him year after year, watch him closely; stand by his sick-bed; are privy to his manifold trials; and witness how bravely he battles with that saddest union of all—poverty and disease.

No one in a RURAL district—*pays so dearly for every article he consumes as the poor man!*

No one has such scant measure dealt out to him—no one suffers so systematically from “false weights and deceitful balances” as the poor man.

From no one is exacted a higher rate of interest than from the poor man.

Let me fortify these assertions by proof.

The poor man buys the common necessaries of life in driblets.

Half an ounce of tea : a quarter of a pound of cheese : half a quarter of a pound of butter : such are the petty quantities which scanty means compel the poor man to purchase. He

can give no large order. It is beyond him. Now mark the result. He pays for his wretched tea—*sloe leaves the chief ingredient*—four-pence halfpenny an ounce, or at the rate of *six* shillings a pound. The rich man purchase drinkable tea for *FIVE*. Again.—For his scanty morsel of cheese—some quarter of a pound—the *serf* pays three-pence; and for the like quantity of rancid butter four-pence. The rich man buys his cheese at nine-pence per pound, and his salt butter at a shilling. But the poor man is not merely amerced—I still limit my remarks to rural districts, and rural “general dealers”—in point of price: he is fleeced, and that abominably, in point of weight.

I once entered, to confirm or dissipate my suspicions, a shop of this description in a very poor district. I had heard it repeatedly described as “a very money-getting concern;” and knew that within ten years two parties had retired from it in easy circumstances. It was a dark, gloomy den; well and variously stocked; and was scented with any thing but the fragrance of “Araby the blest.” I was examining some coarse, thick garden-gloves

which were lying in a side window, when an aged, emaciated creature entered—a widow by her dress—and with a lowly curtsy and submissive voice, asked to be served with “half an ounce of *good* tea.” The master was himself at the counter.

“Oh! ah! we know what *you* want; *three-pence the half-ounce!!*” and as he spoke he seized a large grimy canister. Before, however, he weighed the article wanted, he put a square piece of thick, coarse, brown paper in one scale, and a half-ounce weight in the other, and then *poured the tea upon the coarse, heavy paper*. THAT TOLD ITS OWN TALE; and the miserable driblet which the widow was tendered for her three-pence may be imagined.

At this stage of the proceedings I ventured to interfere.

“You can never call that just weight. It is not half an ounce of tea: you must re-weigh it; and before you do so take out the paper.”

“I have weighed that tea as I weigh goods in general, and for every body,” said he doggedly and angrily; “and I shall make no alteration.”

“But see you not the injustice of the practice? This poor woman loses the weight of that thick, brown paper in her half-ounce of tea. There ought not to be any paper at all in the scale. If there be, you wrong the purchaser.”

Further reply to me the general dealer vouchsafed not. But turning with a furious glance to his customer, he exclaimed—“Come! no bother! Take it or leave it.”

“It must be as *the gentleman* pleases,” said the poor creature, submissively; and grasping her tea tottered feebly away.

While I was apparently examining the gloves, but in reality pondering over in my mind what was the next advisable step to take, a young woman with an infant in her arms entered the shop. She wanted “a little flour, and half a pound of currants to make a plum bun for a sick child.”

The next move was bolder.

Near the “general dealer” stood a loaf of white sugar just unpacked. Than the blue paper which had formed a casing for it none could well be thicker, coarser, or heavier. The latter quality was a valuable recommendation in that dark den of robbery and fraud. Twist-

ing off a huge strip from the blue mass beside him, the knavish owner quickly placed it in the bottom of one scale, poured the currants upon it, and then weighed them to a nicety.

Once more I ventured to expostulate.

“Mr. Gregory”—I speak of him *under that name*—“you are not giving this poor creature weight; and you know it.”

“How so, Sir? I never knew a customer of mine that had not weight; and good weight too!”

“Can you maintain that assertion in this instance? Look at the paper in which those currants were weighed.”

“Would you have me weigh them without paper?” said he, pertly; “I’m no gentleman; I don’t profess to be one; but I should call that a very dirty way of doing business.”

“It is the just, legal, and fair mode; the other is fraudulent.”

“My customers, Sir, who are, for the most part, particular, wouldn’t stand it.”

“We will put it to this one. Would you prefer”—and I turned to the trembling being at the counter, who had listened eagerly to all that passed—“having your goods weighed

out to you in the bare scale, or having them"—

"Oh!" cried the knave, preventing and anticipating her reply—"I allow none to pick and choose here. The rule of my shop is *to weigh every thing in paper*; and I will depart from it for no one. Now, mistress, yours or mine? Be quick: I'm busy!"

"Refuse his goods," said I, earnestly: "refuse them and go elsewhere."

"I cannot, Sir," said she, despondingly; "I cannot; *I'm a booker!*"

I understood afterwards, though not then, the bondage which those words implied. Gregory grinned maliciously when his victim uttered them; and again, when hanging her head she slunk silently and stealthily away.

I paid for my leathern mittens—not, I confess, with the best possible grace or in the best possible humour,—and as I walked home-wards resolved on shewing up this system elsewhere.

Within the week I made my way to the inspector of weights and measures; told him what I had witnessed; and requested his interference. The man in office looked starch

and prim; then hemmed and hawed a good deal; and at last observed:—"Mr. Gregory is a thriving, nay, a wealthy man; I have examined more than once his weights and measures; he produces them readily; and I have always found them correct!"

"But you cannot sanction his present mode of carrying on business: you must feel that he deserves exposure and the poor redress."

He paused for a moment, then looked up quickly, and remarked—

"Pray, Sir, did you buy any article of him in which either measure or weight was concerned?"

"I did not."

"Did any purchaser in your hearing complain?"

"No."

"Then I cannot interfere."

"Indeed!"

"I have no grounds to go upon!"

"And you think wholesale robbery like Gregory's should receive no check?"

"Quite the contrary: it is barefaced—shocking—base, and should unquestionably be put down."

“By whom? Name the party able or empowered so to do, and no difficulty—no distance shall deter me from seeking him.”

“I should say,” said the inspector, in a tone of pique, evidently vexed at my pertinacity; “I should say it is a case for the neighbouring magistrate, Mr. Pape.”

“Enough. I will see him to-morrow !”

Mr. Pape—the *nearest* magistrate !—lived about seven miles off. To reach his domicile you had to ford a morass almost impassable in winter; or to flounder through the sands of a badly-constructed road, in the ruts of which a full-grown man might safely take up his last resting-place any day in summer. He was a country gentleman who farmed his own estate; and had his peculiar likings and distastes. He liked an easy chair, old port, leisure, cigars, fly-fishing in May; the moors in August; pheasant-shooting in October; and a sharp burst with the hounds any morning in November. These were his likings. His distastes were as decided. He detested business; abhorred writing; eschewed reading; hated being obliged to play the listener to any statement, however brief; or to consult “The

Magistrate's Vade Mecum," or "Every Man his own Lawyer," for any purpose, however urgent. His constant inquiry ran—"Why upon earth can't people live in peace?"

Mr. Pape had just despatched an early breakfast when I rode up to his door, sent in my card, and begged to "see him on magisterial business." No interruption could have been less opportune. The month was October: the morning bright and cheering. The dogs were at the door, and the keeper in attendance. Mr. Pape had donned his sporting costume, and was on the very eve of starting in tip-top spirits for a distant and most promising covert. I won't attempt to define where at that moment he wished me, and her Majesty's commission, and his magisterial qualifications!

He entered the study with "unwilling step and slow," and in a most glorious fume.

"Business? of a magisterial nature, I understood?—aye, exactly! Why, in the devil's name, cannot people live in peace? What demon induces them to be eternally at war? Squabble, squabble, squabble!—folks grow, methinks, more tetchy, perverse, and wayward every day! My watchword is peace. All I

covet is peace. All I sought in burying myself in this obscure and retired corner of the county was peace. The only boon I crave on earth is peace. Yet strife and uproar rage around me; and as surely as aught disagreeable occurs in this district, so surely am I compelled to deal with it. You'll require a summons probably? Havn't one left! Rattle"—this was the pointer—"tore up the last this morning. And now, Sir, what annoyance, trespass, discomfort, loss, or injury brings you hither?"

I briefly explained the nature of my errand. Long before I closed, he gazed wistfully out of the window, and then burst forth impatiently:—

"Good Heavens, Sir, you can't be serious! You surely don't expect *me* to interfere in a matter of this nature? This is purely a question for the inspector of weights and measures. By all means apply to him."

I watched my opportunity, and struck in:—

"I have. He declared himself powerless, and advised my seeking redress from you."

"There it is! That's the very word! The term which I have daily dinned into my ears till it threatens to drive me into a madhouse.

‘Redress!’ ‘Redress!’ Why can’t people live in peace, and then they would need no redress? *I can’t help you: go to the inspector.*”

“He bade me come to you.”

“Oh, he did—did he? I’ll make a memorandum of his officiousness; in the hope that in one shape or other I shall be able to return his civility. And now, Sir, pray be satisfied with my reply.—*I cannot aid you.*”

“Who can?”

“I should say the inspector. Weights and measures are his province: repeat that to him from me.”

“I fear it will be unavailing.”

“*Then be at peace.*”

I stared at him somewhat wildly. He took my look for dissent and disapprobation; and without giving me an opportunity for comment, continued:—

“Oh, yes! I’m quite aware of it. No advice more unpalatable! There never was such a contentious, ill-conditioned, quarrelsome, litigious crew as that which inhabits this district. Why harass me?” Again he gazed wistfully from the window, and his face grew

darker. "Such a glorious morning!" he murmured, "and the dogs in such condition!" Then, in a louder key, "I repeat why harass me? You have the remedy in your own hands."

"May I ask how?"

"If Gregory, as you affirm—and I doubt it not—cheats as to weight and measure, tell the poor to cut his shop and seek another."

"It is the only general shop within four miles."

"Then start an opposition."

"That has been tried; and unsuccessfully."

"In what way?"

"In two instances parties have come forward, stocked a small shop, and commenced business, avowedly to oppose this unjust and unscrupulous man. Instantly he has lowered his prices, and undersold them; has, in fact, beaten them off the field, and ruined them. He exults in this. He declares that in this district he will have no competitor. You do not suffer from this policy, Mr. Pape, nor do I; but the poor do, and most severely."

"Then let them submit, and be at peace. You will do this neighbourhood great service if you will constantly preach peace to the poor."

I will send you a little American work on this subject. It is written by the Reverend Noah Worcester. He lived to a great age—seventy-five, I believe. He wrote three or four books every year of his life. But every one of them upon the self-same subject—peace!”

Again I stared.

“It is true, I assure you. I wish we had had him in this neighbourhood. What a glorious morning! Do you shoot?”

“Never.”

“Dear me! you must find the country deplorably dull: my keeper and dogs—”

“But as to this man Gregory?” said I, interrupting him.

“Oh! I can say no more about him: *I* cannot act; and the inspector, it seems, will not.”

“What, then, Sir, do you advise?”

“Oh, think no more about it, and live in peace!”

Further conference was useless. The justice grew, momentarily, more fidgety, the dogs more impatient, and the birds more shy. I made my bow, and retired. To battle with constituted authorities is an unequal and

thankless warfare. I could not, however, "forget the subject," or Mr. Pape's mode of dealing with it. But Gregory was secure; he battened, unmolested, upon his gains; and for aught I know to the contrary, wrings, to this hour, an enormous and infamous profit from the bowels of the poor.

And now as to the "*booker*."

Determined to master the system in all its villany, I succeeded, by dint of inquiry, in ascertaining the exaction and extortion by means of which such men as Gregory, even in the poorest neighbourhoods, and from the most wretched population, rapidly attain independence. I found "*booker*" to be, as I suspected, equivalent to debtor; and that whenever a peasant from his master's forgetfulness or inability to pay his labourers their weekly wages on the Saturday night, or from the visitation of sickness in the labourer's family, or from disease or accident disabling himself from toil, or from severe weather suspending farming operations, or from the operation of all or any one of these contingencies, he is obliged to procure from the shop his weekly supply of necessaries on *credit* and not for

cash, he instantly becomes a “*booker!*” Thenceforth, poor wretch! he has to battle with usury as well as penury! The general dealer affects to call booking a privilege—to his wretched dupes the indulgence is ruin. The charge ranges from 12 to 15 per cent. : and is rarely under 10. Two accounts, from the circumstance of a sudden death, I had an opportunity of analyzing. The amount of one was *nineteen shillings* and eight-pence. In this document three shillings and eleven-pence were modestly charged for booking! The sum total of the other was £2. 3s. In this seven shillings and two-pence were demanded for booking. The “privilege” was set down week after week as a regular item. It appeared as systematically and formally as the charge for tea, or soap, or candles, or coffee. It was assumed to be a fair and recognised demand, though inserted, I thought, somewhat *ad libitum*. “Booking” two-pence; “booking” five-pence; “booking” three-pence; “booking” seven-pence; and so on to the close of the account.

Once “a booker,” the poor man must submit to whatever *scant measure*, or *short weight*,

or *barefaced trickery* the general dealer chooses to inflict on him. He is no longer a free man. He is in bondage: and to the sternest, most unscrupulous, and most exacting of masters.

Retreat is impossible: rescue all but hopeless.

And then thoughtless and inconsiderate men talk of the improvidence, and waste, and want of economy in the poor: and wonder how it comes to pass that Gregorys grow rich; and how the English peasant closes a long and laborious life, crippled with rheumatism, amid the comforts (!) of a union workhouse!

That the exactions complained of are not confined to any particular locality may be gathered from the following incident. An invalid baronet, now deceased, took up, some three or four years since, his temporary sojourn in a village in one of the eastern counties. There, as elsewhere, he was a considerate and generous friend to the labourer; made himself master of his circumstances; entered into all his little difficulties; and though a confirmed invalid himself, disproved by his practice the adage that "sickness makes us selfish:" he

forgot, in fact, his own ailments in ministering to the sorrows and privations of those around him. Careful investigation convinced him that several families in the village—and those maintaining the best character—were engaged in a hopeless struggle to pay off a debt due to a neighbouring huckster; a debt which paralyzed every effort which their industry could make, and was slowly but surely bringing them down to pauperism and the workhouse. Discerning as well as compassionate, he did not think it judicious at once to discharge the obligations of these parties, from an apprehension of being beset by applications from others labouring under similar difficulties, but who could not boast of the same good character. For a period, then, the generous baronet was passive. But after he had left the parish, and after all connection between him and it had apparently ceased, he remitted a sum—fifty pounds, I think—to the curate, with directions to expend it as far as it would go, in releasing certain parties from their difficulties.

The curate, judicious and thoughtful on his part, imagined that this welcome largess opened out to him a prospect of great useful-

ness; that the sum might be spread over a vast surface; and release from thralldom many an aching and anxious heart among his flock. He made out a list of debts and debtors: he found several of the items—to use the mildest phrase—equivocal; and he boldly offered to the principal creditors—two neighbouring shopkeepers—immediate payment of their claims on John Brown, and Thomas Jones, and Philip Creed, and Job Stubbs, and a dozen other equally euphonious and unfortunate debtors, provided they—the said general dealers—*would accept ten shillings in the pound!* The outcry they raised was wonderful! They actually talked of “conscience;” and vowed they “had lost money every year that they had been in business.” They declared their “annual profits would not keep them in shoe-leather.” How, amidst all this, they managed to buy fields, and build houses, and bet at races, and run splash dog-carts, were points they did not stop to explain. They professed themselves “surprised and shocked that such a proposal had been made to them.” How were they, they inquired, “to meet *their* engagements if their debtors paid

them ten shillings in the pound? They considered the offer—"an insult"—a "direct and positive insult!" It was "an attack upon their character:" and as such they "resented" it.

The curate observed, very quietly, that the offer was not made in the light of an insult but of a benefit: was sorry his object had been misconstrued; and that there was an end of the matter.

Before the week ended the parties came to the clergyman, and told him that "purely out of respect for him,—purely to show their good opinion of him,"—they would accept his proposal.

The money was paid, and receipts given. As they left one of them observed to the other—"No bad job: even as it is, a ten per cent. stroke of business I take it!"

How much "*booking*" was included in these notable accounts I could never learn. The parish was not mine; nor had I access to the relieved parties.

The evil, then, being admitted, whence is to arise the remedy?

Is the suggestion rash or inopportune, that there should be in every poor-law union an

officer entitled "the Poor Man's Protector," having as his care the poor man's interests; and for his special mission this result—that just measure and full weight be meted out to the poor man in those petty shops—particularly in rural districts—where the poor man deals?

It may be answered that "the local magistracy is the poor man's protector; he needs no other."

That the local magistrates are, in the main, a most valuable body—that the services they render their country are continuous and important—that their decisions are, with rare exceptions, merciful—few will deny.

But they are compelled to administer the law as they find it. They are tied to an equitable discharge of their responsible functions without respect of persons. Statutes fetter them. Precedents bind them.

Something more than this is required for the poor man. He needs an advocate. He requires a protector.

If it be objected that the evil is petty; affects only a class; is not worthy the attention of government; must be left to provide

its own remedy—I reply that of government the great end is to secure freedom: but its proper and highest function is to watch over the interests of EACH AND ALL, and to open to a community the widest field for the happiness of all.

If the *class* I am contending for constitute the objection, then I must call in another authority.

“Kindness to the poor,” writes the learned and excellent Isaac Barrow, “doth in good part constitute a man pious, and signally declareth him such; is a necessary ingredient of his piety, and a conspicuous mark thereof.”

Woe to that nation which regards poverty as criminal, and treats it accordingly; which does not mitigate its pains, but strives, impiously, to “put it down” altogether!

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TRUE POLICY OF THE ORDER.

“Live a life of faith and hope. Believe in God’s great purposes towards the human race. Believe in the mighty power of truth and love. Believe in the capacities and greatness of human nature. Carry to your work a trustful spirit. Do not waste your breath in wailing over the times. Strive to make them better. Do not be disheartened by evils. Feel through your whole soul that evil is not the mightiest power in the universe, that it is permitted only to call forth the energy of love, wisdom, persuasion, and prayer for its removal. Understand that this is the greatest power which God gives to man—the power of acting generously on the soul of his brother; of communicating to others a divine spirit, of awakening in others a heavenly light, which is to outlive the stars.”—*Essay on Catholicism.*

It is a remark frequently hazarded about Masonry—sometimes in a friendly and at others in a hostile spirit—that the body, *as a body*, effects nothing; that its influence is un-

felt—unseen ; that in a social, civil, and commercial sense it is *a non-entity* !

Is the accusation true or false ?

Of the numerical strength of the Society of Freemasons in this country they only can form a just idea who have access to its records.

In fact, the tranquillity of the order, the regularity of all its movements, the ease and quietude with which it is regulated, veil from the many its hidden strength.

But may not inaction be carried too far ? May not quiescence pass into indifference ? And the accusation of being a slothful servant, who “buried his talent in a napkin,” apply collectively as well as singly ?—to Bodies and Associations as well as to distinct and isolated individuals ?

Was man ever designed by the great Architect of the Universe to be a passive being ? Was he not formed to be progressive—always pressing forward in the pursuit of knowledge, and earnest in the discovery and dissemination of good ? Have we not studied the principles of our craft well and gained some little insight into its beneficent tendency

when we are incited by it to a more grateful, cheerful love of God, and a serener, gentler, nobler love of our fellow-creatures ?

Am I approaching perilous ground ? Then it behoves me to fortify my position by the researches of others.

In that honest, fearless, and faithful organ of our Body—*The Freemason's Quarterly Review*—I read :—

“ We know amongst the guides which have led on the human race from the semi-barbarism of the middle ages to the refinements of the present time architecture has a place : and it has been so much the more a trustworthy guide, because all its noblest aspirations have been devoted to the service of Him who is the GREAT ARCHITECT of the universe. In his works we read his wisdom, his power, and his benevolence ; in His temples made by men's hands, we read the piety and devotion of souls which HE has warmed with his love, and enlightened with HIS fire to do HIM honour. These men were our founders. On us has fallen the task, however faintly and inadequately we perform it, to shadow out their past history, and never let us forget the

duty which we owe to their fame and their memory.”

THE END OF MASONRY IS NOT FESTIVITY. It has far higher and nobler aims. Its legitimate object is to benefit and bless mankind.

May not, then, the quiet but wide-spread influence of the body be justifiably exerted in *doing away with some grand social evil, or conferring some definite social benefit?*

Any result bordering on, or connected with, political or party views, the Mason cheerfully foregoes.

Any victory which involves religious controversy, or the conflict of antagonistic principles, the Mason deems too dearly purchased. But nothing does he consider alien to him which teaches his fellow-man to have a quenchless faith in a higher presence than meets the eye, to cherish a feeling of God's existence, not only around us, but in the very depths of the soul—to aim at and struggle after faithfulness to principle, fearlessness in duty, and delight in the GOOD and the TRUE.

The line of policy humbly suggested is, that

a general and individual effort should be made to procure—

I. *The abolition of the legacy-duty on charitable bequests.*

Nothing but the exigencies entailed by an exhausting war could have justified the enactment of an imposition so arbitrary and unjust as the legacy-tax. "It is beneath the dignity of a great state," was Burke's indignant exclamation, "to stand by the dying and watch, like a vulture, the expiring breath." Now, if this be true of the impost generally, it applies with tenfold force when its operation affects charitable bequests.

It matters not to the argument that legacies for pious and benevolent uses occasionally originate in questionable motives.

"Who art thou that judgest another? To his own master he standeth or falleth!"

The clergy could say something on this head. Their experience by the bed of the sick and the dying would warrant their drawing some conclusion. But they wisely abstain. **THE INFINITE** alone can rightly estimate motives! But these why seek to impugn? Why attribute to a dark and troubled source that

stream of bounty which, in its after-current, will be so beneficial to others? A rich man, who has been all his life grasping and hard-hearted, is laid on the bed of sickness, which threatens ere long to become the bed of death. He has leisure to think. His situation is new to him. His bodily sufferings tell upon his long-cherished prejudices and previous conclusions. They shake the first, and modify the last. He begins to understand how sad their case must be, where poverty and disease are united. As a proof that his impressions are altered—not from a persuasion that his alms can uncloset for him the gates of Heaven—he adds a codicil to his will, and bequeaths five hundred pounds towards “building a new wing to an over-crowded hospital.”

That is the testator's avowed aim and object.

The State steps in.

The State says: “We don't care whether or no a rapidly increasing population renders an increase of accommodation in Hasketon Infirmary indispensable; we are indifferent as to whether a new wing be built or not; to us it is perfectly immaterial what the testator's intentions were; we suspect, indeed, that you

will require the whole of the sum bequeathed you if his project is to be carried out—and that you will be obliged to forego it if any deduction be made, but that is your affair, not ours; the State, *as a State*, knows nothing about philanthropy—so hand us over at once £50 (*i. e.* ten per cent. on the bequest), and then do as you will with the remainder—build or let it alone !”

Now, unquestionably, government is a great good, and essential to human happiness; but, may it not also be contended, that that alone is government which *represses injustice and crime, secures property from invasion, and respects the intentions of the dead?* Burke's remark is bold and apposite: “In doing good we are generally cold, and languid, and sluggish; and of all things afraid of being too much in the right. But the works of malice and injustice are quite in another style. They are finished with a bold masterly hand; touched as they are with the spirit of those vehement passions that call forth all our energies whenever we oppress and persecute.”

Take another case.

A man has lived for years the slave of

passion: His desires have been the governing impulses of his existence. In gratifying them the pleadings of youth, innocence, helplessness, dependence, never obtained a hearing. The demon of lust ruled. The brute propensities of the animal were dominant. The self-restraint which should characterize **THE MAN**, and the conviction of future responsibility which should impress and awe the Christian, slept. Life ebbs away. The wild tumult of lawless passion is about being hushed in the grave. Remorse-stricken at the past; conscious of the wretched purposes to which existence has been devoted; and sensible of the misery and wretchedness which he has caused in various relations of life; he resolves, as the *only* atonement he can make to society—not a sufficient or availing one—to leave the wreck of his property, some two hundred pounds, to a neighbouring penitentiary. He has ascertained it to be in difficulties, and he wishes to free it *wholly* from embarrassment.

The testator dies, and the will is proved. In steps the legacy comptroller.

“I must trouble you for twenty pounds

legacy duty," cries that functionary, "on the bequest to Langport Penitentiary."

"But the benefaction," it is urged, "is for charitable uses."

"Immaterial! The duty due to the crown is £20. Pay it, or abide the consequences."

"If we pay it, the intentions of the deceased will be frustrated."

"We have nothing to do *here* with *intentions*," remarks the comptroller, "we have only to do with *acts*."

"But listen," persist the executors; "the deceased party left to our penitentiary £200 to release it from existing difficulties; that sum will do so effectually: but the balance, £180,—supposing the legacy to be paid,—will not."

"Then the testator," remarks the comptroller, drily, "should have remembered his duty to the crown, and have *left his legacy duty free*."

"But he left the institution *all he had*," exclaim the executors, in a breath.

"Then he should have been thrifty, and amassed more," is the comptroller's quiet rejoinder; "however, my business is to re-

ceive money, not to exhaust the morning in argument. Do you pay, or do you not pay?"

Take another case.

A destitute orphan boy receives his education in one of our national charities—charities which are speaking monuments of the piety, beneficence, and disinterestedness of our forefathers. His orderly conduct attracts attention; and at a proper age he is bound apprentice by the governors. The habits of industry and activity which had distinguished his early life cleave to him in manhood, and bear, with God's blessing, abundant fruit. The GREAT SUPREME smiles upon his honesty and assiduity; and in the evening of life, leisure and independence await him. In making a final disposition of his property, the recollection of his early struggles and early obligations recurs.

"I will not leave this world"—thus he reasons—"without testifying, in a tangible form, my gratitude to that noble institution which nurtured me when I was a poor boy—educated me, and started me in life. Others equally necessitous will rise up after me. The charity shall have the residue of my property.

It will amount to some £250, and thus enable the governors to repeat towards some other poor orphan the merciful and considerate part they displayed towards me."

Thus the thoughtful man ruminates; and thus the grateful man acts. Life's fitful scene ere long closes. The necessary forms are gone through. On investigation, the residuary bequest falls short of what was anticipated; and the executors' chagrin at the result is not lessened by a prompt demand from the legacy-office people:

"Ten per cent., gentlemen, ten per cent., without delay, on the residuary estate!"

It is submitted, somewhat hopelessly, that this bequest "originated in the deceased's gratitude to the charity which had rescued him from ignorance and want; and was intended to benefit some other being similarly situated."

"That we have nothing to do with: ten per cent. is our claim and *right* upon the residue, which you have sworn to be under £120."

"True: but gratitude"—

"Fiddlestick's end about gratitude! We've

nothing to do with that here : pay your percentage upon the residue, and bid us good morning as soon as you please.”

“ But this bequest is to benefit a charitable institution of admitted excellence ”——

“ All moonshine ! Language fit for a minor theatre : not for the legacy department of Somerset House : pay at once, or our solicitor shall receive instructions.”

A cheque is given, and the executors withdraw.

But it is a wretched system ! The enactment itself is unjust : its operation most injurious.

1. Its obvious tendency is to defeat the intentions of the testator.

2. It injures those—the widow, the orphan, the afflicted, and the sorrow-stricken—beings whom a government is bound specially to protect.

3. It inflicts injury upon a class which cannot complain—the helpless and dependent.

4. It obstructs the flow of Christian benevolence.

5. It contravenes, in its operation, the solemn warning of THE MOST HIGH:—“*He*

that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker."

Masons! against such a rampart of robbery and injustice fling the first stone. In your *individual* capacity declare against it. A mighty energy is yours. In the sacred cause of CHARITY be not slow to exert it!

II. The cause of morality might be materially advanced if the influence of the order were brought to bear upon the reform of the law with reference to adultery. Society suffers under no greater calamity than the toleration of this monster evil, and the reparation which the law at present awards. The wealthy Roué triumphs! What to him is a verdict amercing him in damages to the extent of five hundred or a thousand guineas? He tenders, with a sneer, a cheque on his banker.

He has gained his object. He has gratified his passions. He has ruined the peace of an entire family. He has dishonoured a hitherto spotless line. He has rendered some youthful and innocent beings motherless. The sons can never hear again their mother's name without the flush of shame. The daughters

must shun her as a tainted and polluted being. He has degraded the one and blasted the fair prospects of the other. And the penalty is paid by the wrong-doer in—MONEY!!

He returns in triumph to his fellows. He has gained an enviable notoriety. He is a man of *bonnes fortunes*. His name is up in the annals of *crim. con.* His associates pronounce him “a fine, daring, dashing, fellow: only rather *wild!*”

But his *victim—where is she? What epithet is applied to her?*

Now, let money be no longer omnipotent in wrongs of this description. It can do a great deal. *But let it cease to gild infamy.* Let the adulterer pay the penalty of his crime IN PERSON. Let his punishment be *imprisonment and hard labour!* In a flagrant and aggravated case, where no common arts have been used, and no common stratagems exerted, let a visit to a penal settlement for some five or seven years reward the scheming of the lawless voluptuary. Let this be done, and our public records would be less frequently crowded with details of infamy. The experiment may seem severe; but its results would

be salutary. It would soon be proved that the wealthy seducer, if he had no regard for the peace and comfort of others, had a most tender care for his own !

But, at present, money is to atone for crime ! It is tendered as an equivalent for infamy !

Such a system is an insult to the right-thinking and the virtuous. The time for its fall, I trust, is coming. It cannot fall too soon. It has long enough warred with the behests of the Most High and the plainest dictates of reason. It has long enough mocked the holiest feelings of our nature. It has long enough caused the pure-minded and the gentle-hearted to sigh. It has long enough shielded the selfish voluptuary and wrung with agony the heart of the deserted and the betrayed. Let its end come. It cannot come too soon.

III. Another point on which the influence of the order might be safely exerted is—the health of the working classes.

The rage for adding field to field and house to house has miserably curtailed the personal freedom of the poor. Where are the open spaces in which, aforetime, the saucy school-

boy used to fly his kite; and the rollicking apprentice to urge on his resounding game of football; and the town bachelors to pitch their wickets for a cricket-match; and the wearied artisan to pace slowly round in the glorious twilight of a summer's eve, and forget the while the hard words, and cares, and strife, of the closing day?

Bought; parcelled out; built upon; gone!

The village green; and the bit of breezy common; and the three-cornered town meadow; and the 'prentice-boy's pasture—have disappeared.

Speculators have made advantageous bids for them. Trustees and feoffees have most disinterestedly conveyed them. To the working man they exist no longer. Who is the sufferer? *He.*

To the open spaces, which were always few and far between, the poor after their day's toil, cannot *now* resort. *None are to be found.* In cities where wealth is in the ascendant the project is to banish poverty from view. When affluence usurps the surface, penury is compelled to burrow in the earth. Space is too

costly a luxury. Square feet are sold for guineas. In alleys, or cellars, or squalid holes, where miserable wretches breed and cling together like bats in unfrequented vaults, there the leaven of sickness and contagion never ceases to work. From such places the artisan turns out for better air. *Where* is he permitted to seek it?

Is it alien then to the Mason's creed, or is it out of keeping with that benevolence which should mark his practice, that he use every legitimate means, through his representative, to obtain this boon from government for the poorer classes—that in every town where the population amounts to 10,000 and upwards, a proportionate space shall be set apart and preserved, where, after the toil of the day is over, the artisan may stretch his cramped and aching limbs; breathe the fresh air of heaven; enjoy unrestrained exercise; and brace himself in that atmosphere which GOD has so lavishly provided,—which is the first and last food of man,—and which it is the bounden duty of every constitutional government to preserve, free and uncontaminated, for the labourer and the toil-worn?

It is the true policy of the order—

IV. *To procure some recognition of the claims of the industrious and deserving poor.*

In the poor-law as at present administered—a law, be it observed, *which is a disgrace to us as men and a reproach to us as Christians*—no distinction is made between the vicious and the deserving. Previous good character is of no avail within the walls of a union work-house. The man who has been brought there by his own misconduct, by dissolute courses, by intemperance, or by idleness, is put side by side with the man whom sickness, or an unforeseen accident, or unavoidable misfortune has reduced to penury. They fare alike: are coerced alike: are imprisoned alike. With the female inmate the same wretched regulation obtains. The beldame who, soured by want of her daily stimulus, gin—stung by recollections of the past—and without hope to gild the future, sits and curses by the half-hour together, has for her companion, and most unwilling auditor, an aged, desolate, faded being—one who has known better days; been decently brought up; who remembers the lessons of her childhood and

can recall the promises of her God; and who in the very depths and degradation of her poverty looks hopefully to the future, and is aiming at a better and brighter world. Does she deserve such an associate?

The Book of Life tells us that the poor are left to us as especial charges by a wise and bounteous Providence—that to forget the poor is to disobey the command of The Most High, and to forfeit all hope of his mercy.

The Great Supreme says:—

“For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I do command thee, saying, thou shalt *open thine hand* WIDE unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land.”

But man says, “Poverty is criminal, and is to be treated accordingly.”

The fact cannot be denied. Look at the institutions we have raised, not so much to mitigate its pains as “to put it down” altogether. Look at the buildings in which it is housed. Look at the food with which it is kept alive. Look at the officials by whom it is surrounded. Observe the sternness with which its pleadings are silenced; and the

frightful disclosures which—as in the Andover case—are from time to time made, of its discipline and severities. Woe to us as a nation if we be content to rest our claims to godliness upon the fact of our tenderness to poverty!

Observe, too, how parties in authority deal with destitution and suffering.

I select the following from a collection of about five hundred similar scenes.

Arranged consecutively and published they would form a sad but very startling record.

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE.

“A poor young woman, a widow, dressed in deep mourning, appeared before the court, when Mr. M'Manus stated that she had taken a quantity of opium, and had also given some to one of her children, of whom she had four, the eldest being but seven years old. It seems that a Mr. M. had taken out an execution against the poor woman's goods, for a debt of between £3 and £4 owing by her late husband, and that the circumstance preyed so upon her spirits, that she was induced to attempt self-destruction in consequence. Mr. Moxon said

that the governors and guardians of the workhouse had offered to redeem her things, but as they had been removed to Mr. Waites's, by a Mr. Groves, who had possession of them, time had not been allowed for their restoration.—Sir William Lowthorp *lectured! the poor creature on the enormity of the crime she had attempted, and advised her being taken for some time into the workhouse, UNTIL HER MIND SHOULD BE MORE COMPOSED !!*”

The editor's comment on the scene is apt, judicious, and humane. He says, “The best way to administer to such a ‘mind diseased’ would be for Sir William Lowthorp, and other rich men, to raise a subscription for a poor, distracted creature like the above, and assist her *at home*. Putting her and her four children into the workhouse is far more likely to confirm incipient madness than to cure it.”—Police Report, *Hull Packet*, August 27, 1841.

What remedy, then, is suggested?

What is really meant by a national recognition of the claims of the industrious and deserving poor?

Let an experiment be tried. In the first

instance on a very limited scale. *Let reward and relief go together.* Let alms-houses be built in some half-dozen counties for the reception of the disabled and meritorious poor. Let them be occupied by those who have borne good characters; by those whom poverty has overtaken in consequence of unavoidable calamity; by those who have struggled to the very last with adversity, and have been overborne in the unequal warfare. Let the state erect and maintain these buildings. Let the nominations to them be vested in the neighbouring clergy, and the neighbouring magistracy; and let the pecuniary allowance connected with them be *no starving pittance*, but a sum on which life can reasonably be supported. Let it at least be at the rate of four shillings per week.

“A pretty expense!” cries some political economist, who cherishes as much affection for the poor as Lord Ripon does for Mrs. Newton. “What! burden the country after this fashion! A likely matter truly! A tolerably heavy item you will add to the national expenditure!”

I reply “No: a very humble affair—as

humble as the donkey-cart which the noble Earl tendered for the use of the curate's wife, Mrs. Crowther. But *my* proposition would be closed with, while his lordship's was waived !”

Admitting, however, that the scheme must necessarily add to the burdens of the state, who shall say that it is a sacrifice which the country, if called upon, would not cheerfully make ?

The country which can vote five thousand pounds for the purchase of a single picture for the National Gallery ; the country which can vote twenty thousand pounds for the repair of an ugly and inconvenient palace, placed on a swampy and insalubrious site—would that her Majesty were, as her attached and affectionate people wish her to be, more agreeably and more suitably lodged—that country will never grudge, year by year, a grant of some sixteen or eighteen thousand pounds as the commencement of an experiment for maintaining and *encouraging* its aged, suffering, and meritorious poor.

Call the scheme Utopian if you will ;—characterize it, if you choose, as extravagant ;—say that it can never be carried out ;—affirm

that the country will never endure it; and that the class for which it was intended do not require it,—something must be done. The present system can never stand. The existing poor-law is doomed. *After the Andover revelations, men's minds were made up.* Public opinion, months ago, has pronounced against it. It has been “weighed in the balance” and “found wanting.”

But let me call in another ally. Let a poet's voice be heard. Let the pleadings of the Bard of Morwenstow,* in his “Echoes from Old Cornwall,” gain a ready and a willing ear. If, as I suspect, he be the son of the loved and venerated Dr. Hawker, once vicar of Charles, his sympathy for the poor, and attachment to their cause are *hereditary*. With no text in the Sacred Volume was his munificent father better acquainted—none did he carry out into more beneficial exercise than this: “Give alms of thy goods, and never turn thy face from any poor man, and then the face of the LORD shall not be turned away from thee!”

* “Echoes from Old Cornwall,” by the Rev. R. T. Hawker, M.A., Vicar of Morwenstow.

He is now before the throne! He views face to face the Great Father! the unceasing and unwearied benefactor of the whole human race—the helper of the fatherless, and God of the widow! “These new relations of the ascended spirit to the Universal Father, how near! how tender! how strong! how exalting! Oh! shall our worldliness, and *hard-heartedness*, and unforsaken sins separate us, by a gulf which cannot be passed, from the society and felicity of Heaven?”

I.

The poor have hands, and feet, and eyes,
Flesh, and a feeling mind;
They breathe the breath of mortal sighs,
They are of human kind!
They weep such tears as others shed,
And now and then they smile,
For sweet to them is that poor bread
They win with honest toil.

II.

The poor men have their wedding-day,
And children climb their knee,
They have not many friends, for they
Are in such misery.

They sell their youth, their skill, their pains,
 For hire, in hill and glen ;
 The very blood within their veins
 It flows for other men !

III.

*They should have roofs to call their own
 When they grow old and bent,
 Meek houses built of dark, grey stone,
 Worn labour's monument !
 There should they dwell beneath the thatch
 With threshold calm and free ;
 No stranger's hand should lift the latch
 To mark their poverty.*

IV.

Fast by the church those walls should stand ;
 Her aisles in youth they trod,
 They have no home in all the land,
 Like that old house of God !
 There, there the sacrament was shed,
 That gave them heavenly birth,
 And lifted up the poor man's head
 With princes of the earth !

V.

I know not why—but when they tell
 Of houses fair and wide,
 Where troops of poor men go to dwell
 In chambers side by side—

And when they vaunt, that in those walls
 They have their worship-day,
 Where the stern signal coldly calls
 The imprison'd poor to pray ;—

I think——

VI.

“ O ! for the poor man's church again,
 With one roof over all,
 Where the true hearts of free-born men
 Might beat beside the wall !
 The altars, where in holier days
 Our fathers were forgiven,
 Who went with meek and faithful ways
 Through the old aisles to heaven ! ”

And now, gentle, reader, I have done !
 And thus do I take my leave of thee.
 —“ Wherefore, believing soul, abound in
 love ! Love fervently ; love constantly ; love
 eminently. Love HIM whose essence is love,
 and in Him love his creatures. Love your
 kindred ; love your enemies ; love saints ; love
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