

Twin Cities Campus



TIGER-LILIES.

A NOVEL.

BY

SIDNEY LANIER.

For mine is but an humble muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And give to earthly Love his dues.
Tennyson



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PREFACE.

PITTIABLE case, when one's book, in the hour of birth, must wear steel on dimpled shoulders and grasp sword-hilt with chubby fingers ; must be laid into a battle as into a cradle, like Hercules among the serpents ; must be its own *accoucheur*, nurse, and defender !

If each child, immediately after finding itself sprawling on this earth, were required to stand up in swaddling-clothes and pronounce some *raison d'être* satisfactory to the world at large,— what a bore were life to the living, what a dread to the unborn, what a regret to most of the dead ! A man has seventy years in which to explain his life : but a book must accomplish its birth and its excuse for birth in the same instant ; it must renounce all fair prerogatives of babyhood ; it must scorn the power of weakness ; it must enter life as a certain emperor enters his carriage,— at once smiling to the smiling people, and sternly frowning into the set eyes of assassins in the crowd.

And so, protesting against an exaction in which humanity has outrageously discriminated in favor of itself— this book declares itself an unpretending one,

whose interest, if it have any, is not a thrill of many murders nor a titillation of dainty crimes. That it has dared to waive this interest, must be attributed neither to youthful temerity nor to the seduction that lies singing in the grass of all rarely-trodden paths, but wholly to a love, strong as it is humble, for what is beautiful in God's Nature and in Man's Art.

This love, with love's vehemence, swears that it is not well to multiply those horrible piquancies of quaint crimes and of white-handed criminals, with which so many books have recently stimulated the pruriency of men ; and begs that the following pages may be judged only as registering a faint cry, sent from a region where there are few artists to happier lands that own many ; calling on these last for more sunshine and less night in their art, more virtuous women and fewer Lydia Gwilts, more household sweetness and less Bohemian despair, clearer chords and fewer suspensions, broader quiet skies and shorter grotesque storms ; since there are those, even here in the South, who still love beautiful things with sincere passion, and who fear that if the artists give us more fascinating female-devils, we too will fall in love with them as school-girls do with Milton's Satan and Bailey's Festus ; whereupon the old sweet order of things will be reversed, and, instead of fair marriages between the sons of Heaven and the daughters of Earth, we shall have free-love alliances

between the sons of Earth and the daughters of Hell, — the hybrid consequences of which sad event one has neither heart nor breath to pursue.

This book's chief difficulty has been to avoid enriching reality at the expense of truth; a difficulty well known by those who have been astonished to find how the descriptions of eye-witnesses may contain nothing but facts and yet express nothing but falsehood.

S. L.

MACON, GEORGIA, *September*, 1867.

TIGER-LILIES.



BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

"I'll tell it your Honor," quoth the Corporal, directly.

"Provided," said my uncle Toby, "it is not a merry one."

"It is not a merry one," replied the Corporal.

"Nor would I have it altogether a grave one," added my uncle Toby.

"It is neither the one nor the other," replied the Corporal.

"Then I will thank thee for it with all my heart," cried my uncle Toby : "so .
prithes begin it, Trim." *Sterns.*

"*HIMMEL ! Cospetto ! Cielo !* May our nests be built on the strongest and leafiest bough of the great tree Ygdrasil ! May they be lined with love, soft and warm, and may the storms be kind to them : Amen, and Amen !" said Paul Rübetsahl.

Now, a murrain on all villainous lodging-houses, say I ! Here one's soul has but now taken a body to shelter in, a year or two, from the rains of time ; and, *diable !* the poor tenant must straightway fall to and arrange for repairing his house three times a day, or else the whole building will give way, break down and rot in a week, and the unhappy soul must crawl out from the ruins, full of bruises and bad odors, a regret to old neighbors and a laughing-butt to angels !

Old Adam, thou shouldst be tried for a swindling landlord, in that thou hast erected this long rotten row

of tumble-down houses for thy tenants, who were also, more shame on thee, thy children !

Now, gentle reader, strange to say, the ability of an author to rise above the mere drudgery of these tri-daily repairs and plunge into his beloved music,—into his beloved music which must now forego fine melody by reason of the din and vile clatter of work about the house of the body,—this ability, I say, depends upon nothing but thy name.

Thy name, most sweet reader, should be Legion : and it is done.

Poets' logic, forever ! and so, O twenty-five thousand gentle readers, there is probably among you but one individual who is totally unaffected by some ghost of a shadow of an inkling of a curiosity to know the causes precedent of those ejaculations which commence this chapter.

That one individual ?

You all know him.

He is a grocer.

His sign extends across the sidewalk, obtrusively and triumphantly : as who should say, "*Pass sub jugum, conquered customers !*"

His sign beareth device

G. PERCYMMON,

and there is a certain complacent truculency in the whole of it. For the G is a round sound G ; and the P is as if a man should stick thumb in his vest arm-hole after a good dinner, and the E extends his arms to see the mad R lifting his right foot and kicking poor C over against Y with his hands thrown up protesting,

while the two M M's scramble away on all fours, to the round amazement of O, who would fain see the N of it all !

Mr. Percymmon is a match-maker. He says to himself, "Love and Liquor, Friendship and Fools, Fiddles and Fol-de-rol !" — that is the way he pairs them off.

Mr. Percymmon is a philosopher. He accounts for the aggregation of men into societies, in this way : — "Once upon a time," says he, "there arose in the breasts of men a simultaneous desire for the formation of stock-companies, and for the protection of their charters and vested rights : hence villages, towns, cities, municipal governments, state governments, United States !"

Mr. Percymmon is a satirical iconoclast. Once he was decoyed into a theatre. In the critical and supremely pathetic moment when Romeo was declaring the pain of his passion, Mr. P. said, in a voice audible to the whole assembly, "Try J. Bovee Dod's Stomach Bitters !"

Mr. Percymmon is a punster. He believes that marital bonds are flat i' the market, and that the ties of humanity are railroad ties.

Well, one saved makes more rejoicing than twenty-four thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine that were not lost. And I *will* have a word with thee, O Percymmon !

When thou higglest over mackerel prices, occurreth ever to thee that, as mackerel swim in the sea, so swim men in the diaphanous waves of time ? And when thou hearest the noise of thy busy trucks, dreamest thou ever it is the never-ending melancholy monotone of the time-sea beating upon the desolate sands of death ?

And that this monotone is the devil's dainty hush-song and lullaby wherewith he lulleth himself to rest? And when thy new customer drinketh his whiskey with thee, anticipatest thou that some day soon the vast thirsty Cyclops-shadow of eternity shall stoop and drink down the sea of time at a swallow? Hast thou studied the intimate inter-balance of the prices of cheese and of salvation? And thinkest thou there is any wide difference betwixt cutting down the salary of John Simpson, thy pale book-keeper, and cutting up the coat of him for whose garments they cast lots?

And knowest thou the tie betwixt mess-pork and poetry?

Gentle Twenty-four-thousand-nine-hundred-and-ninety-nine, who have waited so long, it were but just you should forthwith see Paul Rübetsahl, who has as yet been nothing more than the voice of the fisherman's Genie, and who has lain like a cloud confined in the sealed brazen vessel of

CHAPTER II.

Theseus. — "And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go!
We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top."

Midsummer Night's Dream.

Not far above the junction of the Little Tennessee and Holston rivers, immediately upon the banks of the former stream, occurs a level plat, or "cove," as it is there called, of most romantic beauty. Here the river suddenly ceases its wild leaping down the mountains, and, like a maiden about to be married, pauses to dream upon the alliance it is speedily to form with a mightier stream. On each side the wide expanse of this still river-lake, broad level meadows stretch away some miles down the stream, until the hoydenish river wakes from its dream and again dashes down its narrow channel between the mountains.

The meadows are inclosed by precipitous ridges, behind which succeed higher ridges, and still higher, until the lofty mountains wall in and overshadow them all.

The hills sit here like old dethroned kings, met for consultation: they would be very garrulous, surely, but the exquisite peace of the pastoral scene below them has stilled their life; they have forgotten the ancient

anarchy which brought them forth; they dream and dream away, without discussion or endeavor.

On the last day of September 1860, huntsman Dawn leapt out of the east, quickly ran to earth that old fox, Night, and sat down on the top of Smoky Mountain to draw breath a minute. The shine of his silver hunting-gear lit the whole mountain, faintly. Enough, at any rate, to disclose two men who with active steps were pursuing a road which ascends the mountain half way, and which at a distance of two miles from the cove just described diverges from a direct course to the summit, passing on to the Carolina line. The younger of the two, equipped with a light sporting-rifle and accoutrements, walked ahead of his companion, a tall, raw-boned, muscular mountaineer, who with his right hand carried a long slim-barrelled gun, while with his left he endeavored to control the frantic gambols of a brace of deer-hounds whose leash was wrapped round his bony fingers.

"Waal I reckon!" exclaimed the mountaineer, whom the 24,999 may hereafter recognize as Cain Smallin; "and how many bullets, mought ye think, was fired afore he fotch the big un to the yeth?"

"O! Gordon Cumming was a hunter, you know, and all hunters exaggerate a little, perhaps unconsciously. He *says* he fired two hundred balls into the elephant before he fell."

"A maaster heap o' lead, now, certin, to kill one varmint! But I suppose he got a mortal sight o' ven'zon, an' hide an' truck o' one sort an' another off'n him. I recommember Jim Razor flung fifteen bullet into a ole b'ar over on Smoky Mount'n, two

year ago come Chris'mas ; but hit ai'nt nothin' to your tale. Would 'n' I like to see one o' them — what was 't you called 'em ? I'm forgetful."

"Elephants."

"One o' them elephants a-waddlin' up yan mount'n of a hot summer's day !"

As this idea gained upon the soul of Cain Smallin, he opened his mouth, which was like a pass in the mountains, and a torrent of laughter brawled uproariously through it.

"I hardly think he would make as good time as that deer yonder, that you've frightened half to death with your monstrous cackle. Look, Cain ! In with the dogs, man ! I'm for the top of the mountain to see the sun rise ; but I'll come down directly and follow along, as you drive, to catch any stragglers that may double on you."

With a ringing yell the mountaineer loosed his dogs, and followed after with rapid strides.

"Take my hat," muttered he, "*an'* boots ! The boy said he had 'n' seen a deer sence he left here four year ago fur college, an' I raally thought he'd be master keen fur a drive. An' he a runnin' away f'om the deer, an' hit in full sight, an' the dogs a'ter it ! But them blasted colleges 'll ruin any man's son, *I* don't care *who* he is !"

Meanwhile, Philip Sterling, the unconscious object of the mountaineer's commiseration, by dint of much climbing and leaping over and across obstacles which he seemed to despise in the wantonness of youthful activity, at length reached the mountain-top, and stood still upon the highest point of an immense rock, which lay like an

altar upon the very summit. A morning mist met him, and hung itself in loose blank folds before him, like the vast stage-curtain of some immeasurable theatre. But the sun shot a straight ray through the top of the curtain and, as if hung to this horizontal beam with rings of mist, it drew itself aside and disclosed the wonderful-scened stage of the world — a stage (thought Philip Sterling) whose tricky harlequins are Death and Chance, and whose trap-doors are graves — a stage before which sits an orchestra half composed of angels, whose music would be ravishing did not the other half, who are devils, continually bray all manner of discords by playing galops for our tragedies, and dirges for our farces — a stage whose most thrilling performances are sad pantomimes, in which a single individual's soul silently plays all the parts — a queer "Varieties" of the Universe, where rows nightly occur, in which the combatants are Heaven and Hell.

Airy 24,999 who hover with me round this mountain-top, ye might almost see these thoughts passing in review in Philip Sterling's eyes, as he stands dreamily regarding the far scene below him. Ye do not notice, I am certain, the slender figure, nor the forehead, nor the mouth, nose, and chin; but the eyes — Men and Women! — the large, gray, poet's eyes, with a dream in each and a sparkle behind it — the eager, hungry eyes, widening their circles to take in more of the morning-beauties and the morning-purities that sail invisibly about — these ye will notice!

"From the eyes a path doth lie
To the heart, and is not long;
And thereon travel of thoughts a throng!"

—quoth Hugo von Trimberg. And these eyes of Philip Sterling's go on to say, as plainly as eyes can say: "Thou incomprehensible World, since it is not possible to know thee perfectly, our only refuge is to love thee earnestly, that, so, the blind heart, by numberless caresses, may learn the truth of thy vast features by the touch, and may recognize thy true voice in the many-toned sounds that perplex a soul, and may run to meet thee at hearing thy step only."

"Yet I know not, O World, whether thou art a wrestler whom I must throw heavily, or a maiden whom I must woo lightly. I will see, I will see!" cried Philip Sterling to himself.

(Bless my life, 24,999! How long our arms are when we are young! Nothing but the whole world will satisfy their clasp; later in life we learn to give many thanks for one single, faithful, slender waist!)

"And so," continued our young eager-soul, "I choose to woo thee; thou shalt be my maiden-love. I swear that thy voice shall be my Fame, thy red lips my Pleasure, thine eyes my Diamonds; and I will be true knight to thee, and I will love thee and serve thee with faithful heart and stainless sword till death do us part!"

"But what a fool I am," said Philip Sterling aloud, "to be vowing marriage vows before I'm even accepted, nay, before I've fairly declared my passion! Hasty, mi-boy! But I wish I were down in the cities; I'm ready for work, and it's all a dream and a play up here in the mountains."

One may doubt if Pygmalion, being so utterly in love, was at all surprised when his statue warmed into life and embraced him. Philip Sterling, at any rate, making love to this sweet statue of the world, did not

start when he heard a step behind him. He turned, and beheld a tall figure, in whose face, albeit mossed like a swamp-oak with beard, beamed a cheerful earnestness that was as like Philip's enthusiasm as a star is like a comet.

" 'Life is too short,' " quoted the stranger, advancing with open hand extended, " 'to be long about the forms of it.' My name's Paul Rübetsahl!"

" And mine is Philip Sterling! "

The two hands met and clasped. Philip had always a *penchant* for the love-at-sight theory, and I know not if Paul Rübetsahl was any more sensible. The two young transcendentalists looked in each other's faces. The frank eyes searched each other a moment, and then turned away, gazing over the valley, along the river dividing the mountains, on, to the far horizon. In this gaze was a sort of triumphal expression; as who should say, "Two friends that have met on a mountain may always claim that as their level, and their souls may always sail out over hills that are hard to climb, over valleys that are tilled with sweat and reaped with Trouble's sickle, over cities whose commerce perplexes religion, over societies whose laws and forms oppress a free spirit; from such a height we may look down and understand, at least not despise, these things."

And with that high egotism of youth whereby we view the world in its relations to us, and not also in our relations to it, and stretch out our eager hands to grasp it, as if it were made for us and not we also for it; in this happy exaltation, each of these two youths cried out in his heart, "Behold! O world, and sun, and stars — behold, at last, two Friends!"

CHAPTER III.

First Keeper.—"Under this thick-grown brake we'll shroud ourselves :
For through this laund anon the deer will come."

—"And, for the time shall not seem tedious,

I'll tell thee what befell me on a day

In this self-place where now we mean to stand."

King Henry VI.

Cain Smallin's deer-drive was now in the full tide of success. The ridge, or bench, along whose "backbone" ran the road which has been referred to, was admirably adapted for the style of hunting now in progress. On one side of it yawned the deep ravine down whose fern-bedded declivity the mountaineer was conducting the drive; whilst, on the other side, at the foot of a continuous steep precipice, the river foamed and brawled and dashed madly down the rocky descent, as if it fled from some horror in the mountains. As the bench gradually descended the mountain-side, however, approaching the valley, its perpendicular escarpments became less savage, and began to slope more gently, until near the foot of the mountain, they changed into cool beautiful glades running by almost imperceptible descent into the water. It was along that part of the road which passed through these glades, just commencing the ascent of the mountain, that the standers had been posted; in the expectation that the deer, naturally seeking the lower parts of the ridge by which to cross over to the water, would come in gun-range of some of the party.

Nor was this anticipation disappointed. It was not long before the mountaineer, who seeing his dogs well on trail had now begun to pick his way with more deliberation amongst the huge fallen logs and boulders which strewed the side of the ravine, was gratified by the sharp crack of a rifle, quickly followed up with the shout which announces the success of the lucky stander.

"Jim Razor's rifle," muttered he, "Jim Razor's holder; thar's ven'zon, certin. And yan crazy Phil. Ster-in' away off up yan mount'n, a-watchin' the sun rise an' not a-carin' whether the dogs is come in or not! Ef he'd 'a' seen the sun rise as many times as I have, I carselie think he'd be leavin' a fresh trail an' climbin' the steepest bench this side o' old Smoky, for nothin' but that! But them blasted colleges 'll ru— what is old Ring a-doin' *now*?" said he, stopping short and listening.

Ring was the swifter of the two hounds: if both dogs had been on trail of the same deer, Ring should have arrived at the stand first; — he was still in full cry far down the ravine.

"Lem me look for sign," muttered the curious river, and bent himself close to the ground, attentively canning the clear spots in various directions.

His suspicions were soon verified. "Each dog's got is deer, an' I 'll be dad-blasted ef old Ring aint a'ter the biggest buck in Smoky range! Whoop!"

With his customary yell the mountaineer turned and began rapidly ascending the side of the ravine in order to regain the road and make better time. Down this unobstructed path he struck out with huge strides. He hoped that, as sometimes happened when hard pressed,

the stag had turned aside from the water with its deadly line of standers, and had run in among the farms of the cove, where the chase would be prolonged and would become intensely exciting. As he arrived at the foot of the ridge where the road turns off among the open meadows, away from the water, an animated scene met his eye. The standers, attracted by the continued and excited trailing of old Ring had all gathered here and were loading, firing, and talking as rapidly and as ineffectually as possible. Not a hundred and fifty yards distant, the stag, a noble, eight-pronged fellow, was swimming rapidly towards the opposite bank of the river, and was now more than half way to freedom.

The mountaineer joined his forces to the main army immediately and commenced to fire "at will."

"Whar 'd he cross the line?" inquired he, as he rammed down his bullet.

"At Mr. Sterlin's stand!" replied some fiend in human shape.

"Why did n't you kill him, Mr. Sterlin'?" shouted Smallin in the ear of a well-dressed gentleman of forty-five or fifty, whose countenance wore that half-foolish, half-defiant expression that distinguishes the derelict stander; and who was loading and firing his double barrel energetically, although the deer was far out of his range, in the apparent sweet hope of drowning in noise and good intentions the memory of his unpardonable sin.

"Well, Smallin, the — the fact is," wiping the powder-grime and perspiration from his eyes, "I, — I was reading, and upon my word" — hastily pouring down a handful of buck-shot — "I had no idea he was so near.

Did *you* never lose a deer Mr. Smallin?" concluded John Sterling, defiantly carrying the war over the border, and at the same time discharging both barrels, with a roar like a salvo of artillery among the thin-cracking rifles. The victorious goddess reclined in the smoke of John Sterling's double-barrel. Cain Smallin was too indignant to reply.

"Whar's the canoe?" asked he, turning to the crowd that had gathered from the field at the unwonted firing.

"Jeems is gone up the creek a-fishin' in it!" replied one of those disagreeable-information-furnishers, of which every crowd boasts at least one.

"By Jove, what a pity to lose him!" said John Cranston, a tall, black-mustached, wicked-eyed man, guest of the Sterlings, and honored with this deer-drive.

"Hit's a maaster buck!" observed a native.

"The biggest I've seed sense I was in the Smoky!" echoed a second.

"How come he to git thru'?" inquired a late arrival, drawing upon his devoted head a bodeful look of undying revenge from John Sterling.

Amid all this confusion of questions and exclamations, which were uttered far more quickly than they have been read, the stag was gallantly breasting his way through the water unheeding the shots, which fell far wide of him. But who could have foretold Blücher? Suddenly the fortunes of the day changed. The dripping deer had emerged from the water and was in the act of taking his first leap toward his hills and liberty, when a puff of smoke floated from behind a bush a few yards from him, the crack of a rifle smote upon the ears of the disappointed hunters on the other side, and the

poor buck, with a mighty bound, fell back upon his antlers and lay still.

"Good!" shouted he of the wicked eyes: "Blücher with his thirty thousand! And the day is ours!"

"Told you so, Smallin! Told you so, gentlemen!" said John Sterling. "If I had n't let the buck pass, we would n't have had half as much sport!" and the guilty stander held up his head and waved his hand triumphantly, like one conscious of being a great public benefactor.

"Them blasted Injuns!" said Smallin, whose indignation, not yet subsided, seized upon the first vent-worthy object; "always a-sneakin' about an' a-eatin' of some other person's meat! Well, a fool for luck, they say!" with which comforting reflection the mountaineer wheeled away, and winded his horn with vigorous too-toos to fetch in the dogs.

Meanwhile the fortunate hunter on the other side, whose dress — of an old slouch hat, homespun shirt and trousers, and yellow moccasins — betokened his Indian blood, had glided from his place of concealment, and having "bled" the game stood quietly watching the red stream flow, when Philip Sterling and Rübetsahl joined the unsuccessful party. These two young gentlemen, having descended to the untranscendental common-level of humanity, suddenly became aware of the usual "forms" of life.

"My father, — Mr. Rübetsahl!"

Hand-shaking, and so on.

"My friend, Mr. Cranston, — Mr. Rübetsahl!"

Philip noticed that at the first mention of Rubetsahl's name John Cranston's face turned white, and his hand

trembled a moment; but he quickly recovered himself, and expressed his high sense, as in duty bound, of the happiness which had fallen upon him in knowing Mr. Rübetsahl.

“And now, gentlemen,” cried John Sterling to his son and his two guests, “it’s high breakfast-time; wherefore I move that we adjourn to my house and discuss a rib of the buck there, broiled as only old Ned can broil it.”

The hearty old gentleman led the way towards Thalberg; whither you, O 24,999, and I, albeit none of us are invited, may follow, for even if I failed to make you invisible, and John Sterling saw the whole crowd, he would welcome you every one, — so big, so big was his heart!

Now, I promise to quit apostrophizing when I get fairly into my tale; but while we’re walking up this slope behind old John, indulge me, I pray ye, in a little of it done on mine own account. For how can I forget that jocund party of friends with whom, in the early fall of ’60, I penetrated these mountains, on a camp-hunt?

Can I forget the mighty hunter of the black eye and beard whom in solemn convention we did dub (it was the time of the Japanese invasion!) the Grand Tycoon; or the six-footer uncle whom, being unfamiliar with the Japanese gradations, we assigned him as Deputy Tycoon; or old Ned, the French cook, whom the Deputy touched off; or Cricket, the dog, who climbed on old Ring’s shoulders and stole the meat one night, as Ned averred? Can I forget how, one divine morning, when we had just returned to camp from the killing of a

buck, and were taking our several ease (as Lorrie said), *recubans sub tegmine* of certainly the most *patulæ fagi* any of us ever saw, the Grand Tycoon, in his lordly way, suddenly exclaimed, "Get out of the way, old Ned, with your French fripperies; hand me the side of that buck, there!" and how the Grand Tycoon did then purvey him a long beechen wand with a fork on the end thereof, did insert the same in the ribbed side of the deer, and did rest the whole upon a twig deftly driven in juxtaposition with a bed of glowing coals of the wood of hickory; and how the Grand Tycoon did stand thereover with his muscular right arm outstretched, like Hercules over the Lernean Hydra, save that our Hercules held in his right hand a bottle of diabolical hue wherefrom he ever and anon did drip upon the crisping ribs a curious and potent admixture of butter, hot water, lemon-juice, mustard, pepper, salt, and wine; and how, presently, the Grand Tycoon came to me and said, "Try that rib, ——!" and how I took hold of the rib with both hands, it being long as my arm, and near as large, and did forthwith, after the hyena fashion, bite into the same; and how as the meat, with its anointments and juices, did fare slowly down the passage appointed for such, the titillation thereof upon the uvula or palate was so exquisite that the world grew brighter upon a sudden, and methought even the brook that ran hard by did murmur a stave or two from the Drinking Song of Lucrezia?

Alas, and alas! O jocund hunters of the fall of '60, how hath the "rude imperious surge" of the big wars tossed us apart, hither and thither! The Grand Ty-

coon is sunken ; he hath gone into a wood contract with railroads, and old Ned languisheth. The Deputy beareth scar of Gettysburg, and yet deeper scars beareth he ; I scribble ; and poor Lorrie, the ever-genial, went, I hear, at Shiloh, to the happy hunting-grounds !

Abit ad phures ; whither, I forget not, we also, O Tycoon and jocund hunters, go soon to join him !

CHAPTER IV.

King Henry. — "Let me embrace these sour adversities,
For wise men say it is the wisest course."

King Henry VI.

IT is a full mile, and up hill too! to John Sterling's house, from where we started; and I have yet time, before we enter the doors of our host-in-spite-of-himself, to button-hole these 24,999 people and tell them how it came about that John Sterling found this soft valley far off there among the hills and, as it had been a violet, plucked it for his own long delight.

John Sterling's essays, at college, were broad and open and genial, like a breeze that blows with equal beneficence upon the hot foreheads of the virtuous and the sinful; and his speeches, hung with sparkling fancies and mellow with calm sunlight, made his hearers feel as if they were a-field early, in one of those charming old sedge-fields that one finds in quiet corners of the plantations, where the silver dew-drops and the golden broom-sedge strive together to see whether the early sunlight shall be mellow or sparkling. Now, because all healthy men love sunlight and fresh breezes and dew, all the college loved John Sterling, and he them. Of course, John Sterling studied law — what young man in our part of the country did not? — and one day came to John Sterling, senior, with

news that he had been admitted to the bar, with credit. The old gentleman, in his bluff way, drew a check and pushed it to John's side of the table, remarking, "Well, my boy, I have foreseen it and prepared for it. Here's a thousand or two that 'll open your office for you, and so forth. Go to work and make your fortune. When I tell you that your success depends entirely upon yourself, I do not say anything that ought to frighten a Sterling!"

John Sterling junior went forth and committed what may be most properly called a chronological error. He took a wife before he took any fees; surely a grand mistake in point of time, where the fees are essentially necessary to get bread for the wife! Nor was it long before this mistake made itself apparent. Two extra mouths, of little Philip and Felix Sterling, with that horrid propensity to be filled which mouths will exhibit spite of education and the spiritual in man, appeared in his household; outgo began to exceed income; clouds came to obscure the financial sky.

Even to those of us who are born to labor and know it, it is yet a pathetic sight to see a man like John Sterling going to his office every morning to sit there all day face to face with the "horny-eyed phantom" of unceasing drudgery, that has no visible end; to know that every hour this man will have some fine yearning beat back in his face by the Heenan-fists in this big prize-ring we call the world, wherein it would seem that toughness of nose-muscle, and active dodging do most frequently come out with the purse and the glory.

And how shall I speak of that first bill that John

Sterling could not pay? The poor men in this crowd will believe that when, a few minutes afterward, John met his creditor on the street and did not look him in the eye as they passed, he stopped suddenly short, gazed for one hesitating moment at the pistols in the gunsmith's shop-window there, then thought of wife, and little Phil, and Felie at home yonder, and so walked on to his business, with a final glance of piteous appeal up towards the blue skies which smiled and smiled away in infinite unconcern and did *not* send down the sun to see about it!

Happy is he who, like John Sterling, has courage under such circumstances to say broadly and without subterfuge, "I cannot pay you, sir!" and so saves his manhood's truth, wherewith to draw to himself a little solace in the bitter hours.

But, one summer, the weather in the city grew diabolically warm. Wife looked pale and the children languished. John Sterling swore his great oath.

"Wife," said he, "let the world end in the fall! but we'll go and spend this summer in the mountains!"

The world did not end in the fall; and John Sterling brought back with him a new idea that helped to stave off many a bitterness. In his explorations among the mountains, of whose scenery he was passionately fond, he had discovered the little valley, or cove, which has been described. Many a night he would sit round the fire in midst of wife and children and amuse himself by building ideal houses on sites he had selected there, by planning grounds and gardens and fountains, and the like; into all of which wife entered, heart and soul, and when the interest in the topic waned, would draw him

back to it in her sweet artful way, by all manner of cunning devices, because she saw that it served to chase away the wintry look that in these days was beginning to dwell in his face. "If we only had about three hundred thousand, wife!" he would say, and a genial smile as of old would overspread his face.

24,999, you will be glad to hear, in a general way, that troubles and stories have their end; and, in a special way, that one day when John Sterling came home to dinner, his wife met him at the door, and with that extremely reasonable procedure which women adopt when they have important information to communicate, fell asobbing, with her arms round his neck, insomuch that she could not speak for a little while.

But it came out presently that one uncle Ralph of hers had been sick years ago, and that she had tended him and laid cool girlish hands upon his hot forehead and so on, and that whereas he was rich, now he was dead, and she was legatee!

Therefore, John Sterling built his house in Valley Beautiful.

And there it stands!

The Arabs say, the best description is that by which the ear is converted into an eye: for saying which I am infinitely obliged to the Arabs, because it gives me color of title to beg these 24,999 that they shut their eyes and listen; since I am bent on having a word or so on John Sterling's house.

To-wit: Nature surely intended that a house should be built here! For the mountain, half-way up whose side the house lies, sends out a "bench," or level shelf, which then begins to slope and so gradually falls away

down to the river's edge. Yonder, to the eastward, the hills and ridges lean kindly to right and left, opening so a vista through which one can see old Smoky and the Bald and the other kingly peaks, each with his group of smaller peaks and mountainlets around him, like chieftains standing in midst of their clansmen when Montrose caused the pibroch sound war through Scotland. And here, below, lies the valley with its lake-like river: shut in, far away yonder to the westward, by ridges upon whose heads, every sunset, the sun lays his last wavering beams of light, that are like the tremulous thin fingers of an old man, dying and blessing his children.

This house acknowledges the majesty of the mountains, and, feeling itself in the presence, scorns to display any architectural flippancies or fripperies. Standing severe in simple dignity, it somehow makes me think of old Samuel Johnson, who took a chair and sat when the king bade him, although the king stood up, and who, when afterwards questioned about it, replied, "Yes, sir, it was not my place to bandy civilities with my king!" This house does not bandy civilities with the mountains, but presents to them a simple reverential front, while on the other side it turns to the valley a broad façade, smiling with many windows and long Doric-pillared colonnade. Small unadorned balconies present themselves everywhere: whether one wish to admire the chieftains over yonder marshalling their clans, or to pity the foolish frightened river fleeing through the upper end of the valley, or to amen the sun's blessing upon the hills at the lower end, or to get a plenteous smile from the rich meadows just beneath there, one

will always find some balustraded niche or stand-point, from which to look and be filled. One battlemented tower rises up, as if the architect just wished to record that he remembered the feudal castles among the mountains. Parks are here in which are no tame deer, but many a wild one; and over the hill, on the south slope, the vineyards cling. Somehow the stables and outer offices, though well-built, are cunningly hid; and rightly, for here in the high presence of the primary intrinsically-beautiful, no mere secondary economically-beautiful should obtrude itself. In the rear rises up the mountain, a benignant, overshadowing *genius loci*.

Inside?

I am done with description; but I wish ye were all in the music-room, for in this house Music is a household-god. I think ye would say with me that even the dumb walls were eloquent with the harmonies of fair colors; and with John Keats, —

“ Heard notes are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter: therefore ye soft pipes, play on,
Not to the sensual ear, but more endear’d,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone! ”

As John Sterling, his son and his two guests, walked up the steps of his house, they turned and stood still a moment, and saw the river below lying in the arms of the brawny mountains and smiling up like a blue-eyed child to those from whose loins it sprung. It was a sight John Sterling could never brook without saying some pretty thing.

“ Look, gentlemen ! ” cried he, “ It is like a Raphael’s Madonna in a gallery of dark Salvator Rosas ! ”

“ It is like sweet Joan of Arc smiling in midst of the grim knights of France ! ” said Cranston.

"It is as if Liszt, in the rush of that storm-galop on the piano, should suddenly glide away into a peaceful *Lied* of Mendelssohn!" said Rübetsahl.

"Or like a sudden lull in a battle, during which one hears a Sister of Mercy praying over a man just killed!" said Philip.

"Aye, it is like a sunshiny Sabbath coming between twelve stormy week-days. It is my Valley Beautiful. Come, enter, Mr. Cranston. Mr. Rübetsahl, I had a fancy to call my house Thalberg, because it belongs equally to the mountain and the valley; and I bid you welcome to it very heartily," said princely John Sterling.

CHAPTER V.

Hotspur. — “ And ’t is no marvel he is so humorous.
By ’r Lady, he is a good musician.”

Lady P. — “ Then should you be nothing but musical,
For you are altogether governed by humors.”

King Henry VI.

IN youth, when each moment brings before us some new soul with whom ours is to clasp hands or cross swords, perhaps both, there is an inexpressible charm in meetings that occur first under beautiful and uncommon circumstances. To him who has not loved some man with the ardor of a friendship-at-first-sight, one can only say, Nature has dealt hardly with you, sir!

For I am quite confident that Love is the only rope thrown out by Heaven to us who have fallen overboard into life.

Love for man, love for woman, love for God, — these three chime like bells in a steeple and call us to worship, which is, to work. Three notes to a full chord, say the musicians; and this is the three-toned harmony our world should make, in this immense musical festival of the stars.

Inasmuch as we love, in so much do we conquer death and flesh; by as much as we love, by so much are we gods. For God is love; and could we love as He does, we could be as He is. So thought Philip Sterling, and loved his friend Paul Rübetsahl.

And somehow it did not seem strange to anybody at Thalberg that Philip should have found this man wandering among the mountains at sunrise, in that lonely country. For Rübetsahl talked of mountains as he would talk of absent friends ; he seemed to have peered into their ravines and nooks as if he were studying a friend's character, and to have slept upon them as on a friend's bosom.

An hour after supper on the night of that first day at Thalberg, John Sterling laid down his pipe, and, as he had been lost in that cloud of smoke he had puffed forth, sung out at the top of his voice,

“ ‘ And where be ye, my merry, merry men ? ’ ”

“ Here,” chorused voices in the music-room.

As he entered, Philip was turning over some music on a stand ; Cranston was stretching a new E upon his violin, frowning savagely and breathing hard the while, as if he were strangling the poor instrument by the neck ; and Rübetsahl and Felix Sterling were conversing composedly at the piano.

It was about this moment when Rübetsahl began to discover that he had mistaken the tall, gray-eyed girl with whom he was talking ; that her coldness was rather a transparent purity like that of star-beams which seem cold to the hand but warm to the soul, and that her apparent unimpressibility was rather the veiled impressibility of an enthusiasm which was so strong that it feared itself. He had yet to find that music was the Moses-wand that could smite this crystalline rock into a soft refresher of the thirsty. For indeed the soul of Felix Sterling was like a sea, concealing in its immense translucency myriads of unknown things ; but, when

music was toward, it was as if a spirit plenipotentiary sailed down the wind and stood over the centre of this sea, and uttered some tremendous word at which all the sea-shapes, terrible and beautiful together, rose in strange shoals to the surface.

That day, at dinner, Rübetsahl had remarked that Frankfort-on-the-Maine was his birthplace; and Felix added that Mr. Cranston had passed some time at that place when he was in Germany; whereupon quick flashing glances were exchanged between Cranston and Rübetsahl; all of which Philip had detected, and he was puzzling over it, as he idly turned the leaves of his music.

“Come, Phil; your flute, man! I always begin my musicale with the flute, Mr. Rübetsahl: it is like walking in the woods, amongst wild flowers, just before you go into some vast cathedral. For the flute seems to me to be peculiarly the woods-instrument; it speaks the gloss of green leaves or the pathos of bare branches; it calls up the strange mosses that are under dead leaves; it breathes of wild plants that hide and oak-fragrances that vanish; it expresses to me the natural magic in music. Have you ever walked on long afternoons in warm sunny spots of the woods, and felt a sudden thrill strike you with the half-fear that a ghost would rise up out of the sedge or dart from behind the next tree and confront you, there in the broad daylight? That is the sensation Phil’s solos — he won’t have an accompaniment — always produce upon me.” Old John stopped: he was out of breath.

“Father, give me half a chance!” said Philip, already toot-tooting low flourishes and runs.

“‘How sharper than a serpent’s tooth’ and so forth!”

rejoined the father, holding up his hands in mock horror. "O filial impiety! But you will believe, Mr. Rübetsahl, that I love to hear it as much as I do to talk about it. Go on, Phil — *age!*"

A series of irregular modulations comes purl — purling along, like a rivulet shooting down smooth moss, then eddying over rough pebbles, and shooting and eddying again; straight lines and circles of notes, as it were. But he manages that through all the modulations a certain note is dimly but repeatedly presented to us. Presently he stops on this note, lingers there a moment, and then glides into a simple liquid adagio of sixteen notes. Comes suddenly a warbling movement in which the lower notes are fingered so rapidly that they make harmony instead of melody, and we quickly discover the adagio displaying itself in short upper notes struck between the lower ones, as the sky displays itself in patches, each with a faint star in it, through the crevices of an arabesque ruin. Then comes a thin clear romance, as if stealing from afar, in which the notes rise and fall, and complain and rejoice, and echo and answer, till one voice pours out a stream of tender appealings, which seem to prevail, and the piece ends with a long sigh of satisfied relief.

"Well, and what do you mean by it?" impatiently broke in Felix, "for your 'descriptive music' is all humbug unless you give us the idea!"

"Well, I'll tell you. One day, at college, I had just read this magnificent line:

— "Or Lady of the Lake
Lone sitting by the shores of old Romance!"

when a messmate broke into the room, and swore our

ham was out and the mess fund was dry, and begged my assistance in an expedition then organizing in my mess to steal the President's turkeys, that night! I didn't go with 'em, but played that piece, in defense of my poor, lonely Lady of the Lake!"

Even the ridiculous could not cloud the sparkle that was now shining in the eyes of Felix Sterling.

"O," cried she, "I see, I see. Romance, —

‘Fresh as a spouting spring amongst the hills,’

seeks to clear itself of the vile commonplace ‘cares that have rilled into it,’ and asserts itself and exhibits its beauty, and pleads and prevails and becomes pure again! It was too beautiful, brother Phil, and I’ll kiss you this night, and there’s my hand on it!"

"Good!" cried old John, and laughed, and bravoed uproariously at the girl's sally.

"Himmel!" said Rübetsahl. "Friend Philip, you are a poet: Miss Sterling, you are a poem!"

Whereat "Bravissimo!" from old John again, while Cranston sat still, with wicked eye, and lip just curling into the semblance of a sneer.

"Well," said John Sterling when he had subsided, "My time now, eh, Phil? And I do protest, Mr. Rübetsahl" ("Bless my life, what a listener that German Rübetsahl was!" old John used to say after Paul had gone to the wars), "I wonder how it is that many good American people even now consider music a romantic amusement, rather than a common necessity, of life! When surely, of all the commonplaces, none is more broadly common or more inseparable from daily life. Music! It is as common as — as — as — Phil, I’ll thank you for a simile! — as —"

“Bricks, father !”

“So — common as bricks, common as anvils (I only wanted a start, d’ye see !), common as water, common as fire-places ! For every brick-mason sings to his trowel-strokes, and blacksmiths strike true rhythmical time, even to triplets—I’ve heard ’em—and sailors whistle in calm or windy weather, and households jangle and thrum and strain on all manner of stringed and wind instruments. Music is in common life what heat is in chemistry, an all-pervading, ever-present, mysterious genius. The carpenter whistles to cheer his work, the loafer whistles to cheer his idleness. The church for life, and the bar-room for death ; the theatre for tears, and the circus for smiles ; the parlor for wealth, and the street for poverty — each of these, now-a-days, has its inevitable peculiar orchestra. And so every emotion continually calls, like the clown i’ the play, ‘Music without there !’ Victory chants ; defeat wails ; joy has galops ; sorrow has dirges ; patriotism shouts its Marseillaise ; and love lives on music, for food, says old Will !

“Moreover, the Chinese beats his gong and the African his jaw-bone ; the Greek blew Dorian flutes ; the Oriental charms serpents with his flageolet ; German Mendelssohn sends up saintly thanks, Polish Chopin pleads for a man’s broken heart, and American Gottschalk fills the room full of great sad-eyed ghosts — all with the piano ! Aye, —

‘There ’s not a star that thou beholdest there
But in his motion like an angel *sings*,
Still choiring to the young-eyed cherubim !’

“And so from ‘street-mud’ up to ‘star-fire,’ through all grades, runs the multitudinous song of time. From

a christening to a funeral is seventy years : one choir sings at the christening, another choir sings at the funeral ; all the life between, the dead man sang, in some sort, what tunes his heart could make.

“Late explorers say they have found some nations that had no God ; but I have not read of any that had no music ! Wherefore, since in all holy worship ; in all unholy sarcasm ; in all conditions of life ; in all domestic, social, religious, political, and lonely individual doings ; in all passions ; in all countries, earthly or heavenly ; in all stages of civilization, of time, or of eternity ; since, I say, in all these music is always present to utter the shallowest or the deepest thought of man or spirit — let us cease to call music a fine art ; to class it with delicate pastry-cookery and confectionery ; and to fear to take too much of it lest it should make us sick ! Fine Art, indeed ! It is no more a fine art than — than — than — help me, Philip, or I sink ! — than — ”

“What do you think of bacon and greens, for instance, now, Pa ? ”

“Good : no more than bacon and greens to a Southerner ; or beans (I’m off, children !) to a Northerner ; or rats to a Chinaman ; or lager-beer to Mr. Rübetsahl there ! ”

“And that’s a good place to say,” cried Philip, “that it’s a burning shame that here in the South so many of those Germans who teach their divine music are continually found haunting the lager-beer saloon when they are not giving a lesson. I wish that in all the colleges the Professor of Music were considered, as he should be, one of the Professors of Metaphysics, and that he ranked of equal dignity with them ; and that

he stood as much chance of being elected President of the college as the Professor of Chemistry or the Languages ! It will be so, it must be so ; and I hope, not long hence ! ”

“ Ah,” exclaimed Felix, “ we spin out the subject. Why not sum all up, and say : Music means harmony, harmony means love, and love means — God ! ”

“ ‘ A judgment, a judgment,’ ” said Cranston. “ Proven by irrefragable poet’s logic. It reminds me of the old schoolboy’s brocard : An eel-pie is a pie of fish, a fish-pie is a Jack-pie, a Jack-pie is a John-pie, a John-pie is a pie-John, a pie-John is a pigeon ; ergo, an eel-pie is a pigeon-pie ; and damned be he who doubts logic ! ”

“ Cranston, an’ you will scoff,” said John Sterling. “ I’d rather hear you scoff on your violin, than a-talking. Rübetsahl, he’s the most musical of skeptics ; listen to him ; he fiddles Pyrrhonisms and wickedness ! ” Scrape away, man ! ”

Cranston seized his violin and played ; and although his black eyes gave no sign of feeling, and a half-smile, sometimes shading to a half-sowl, dwelt upon his lips, yet it somehow seemed as if the violin had fastened its serpent-fangs in the throat of the man, and he had grasped it, as Laocoon grasped the serpent, to thrust off the horrible snaky hold ; you could almost see the violin writhe and shudder through its length.

And the music ? It was an improvisation ; Cranston never played anything else. The only way to give any idea of it is to say that it made one think of some soul that had put out its own eyes in a fury, and gone blindly dashing about the world in spring, wounding itself against fair trees, falling upon sweet flowers and

crushing odors out of them, rising and cursing and falling again, too busy in imprecating to perceive the fragrance it created even by its fall. I always knew that in the glittering brocade of music there ran (as is the case in all earthy weaving) a dark thread, but, until I heard Cranston, I never saw this dark thread grow so large and overshadowing, nor assume such fantastic and diabolical patterns. Presently, while the man and his violin still struggled, —

“Quit, Cranston; quit, man!” shouted John Sterling. “The devil’s in the fiddle, and the lights are burning blue, and we’ll all be dancing a diabolical saraband in five minutes more, as if a tarantula from the lower regions had crawled up and bitten us! Phe-ew! I smell brimstone!” concluded he, sniffing the air and awrying his nose.

All were glad to laugh, like children when they’ve just heard a ghost-story before bed-time. Cranston ha-haed louder than any; but it was too uproarious to be natural. Evidently, the man was getting excited by his own *diablerie*.

“Mr. Cranston,” commenced Felix curiously, as if she were inquiring the habits of some strange wild beast of his keeper, and were half afraid he’d jump out of his cage, “you do not show any sign of that strange pain which good music always produces — at least, produces in me, and in every other musician I ever saw. Why? Don’t you feel it?”

“I may confess to a twinge or two sometimes, very much like the gout, I imagine; but I always crush it as a mere sentimental weakness.”

“Humph! a lucky man, you!” said Rübetsahl; “now I never could crush it, nor wanted to, even!”

"Jean Paul," said Philip, "once exclaimed to music, 'Away, away! For thou remindest me of what in all my endless life I have not seen, and shall not see!' And Emerson speaks of the strong painful yearning created by the beautiful either in sound or sight. Even old rugged Tom Carlyle cries out, 'Who shall say what music means in his soul? It leads us to the verge of eternity and lets us gaze on that.'"

"Yes," said Felix, "if, by 'the verge of eternity,' he means a sort of boundary-line between pleasure and pain; a wavering boundary, too! There must be a wild debatable-land between joy and sorrow; borders are predatory, you know, and this border-land is one while devastated by forayers from the dark side, another while cultivated by peaceful villagers from the bright side; and it's fine that music should carry us to such a place! I do not think it is exactly the fascination of a flame for the moth; for we walk deliberately into our flame, and our wings don't scorch!"

"Too much flame, Felie, and 'fuliginous glare,' about that! But you are young, yet; and I remember I used to like to go to a big fire in town, and see the huge smoke-billows foaming with flame, and did n't think much of the poor weeping families in the street! But we've talked enough. Felix, exorcise Cranston's devil, there! Sing us a prayer with Rübetsahl's accompaniment!"

Felix chose one of the *Lieder ohne Wörter*, merely articulating the tones; and Rübetsahl's accompaniment did not follow, but went with the voice, waving and floating and wreathing round the voice like an airy robe around a sweet flying form above us. The homage

which the Thalberg household paid to this holy music of Felix Sterling's and Rübetsahl's and Mendelssohn's, was perfect stillness, which reigned for some minutes, until Philip repeated in a low voice,

“ ‘ The notes kept falling silverly,
Till it was almost like a pain
Until the next should come again. ’ ”

Was John Cranston drunk? He had only taken a glass or two of the sherry. Was he intoxicated with the music, or with Felix Sterling's eyes and queenlimbs, or with his mysterious hate of Rübetsahl? Who knows? As the party met in the centre of the room, all saying good-night and wishing pleasant dreams, suddenly Cranston looked fiercely into Rübetsahl's face, held his head aloft, and said, in German, in a harsh husky voice, —

“ I am the man ! ”

“ Then,” answered Rübetsahl, quick as lightning, speaking also in German, “ for her sake, not for mine, receive that ! ”

Whereupon, with open palm, he struck Cranston a mighty blow upon the cheek, that felled him to the floor.

“ Sir,” said John Sterling, “ you came here unknown, but supposed to be a gentleman. Must you be brawling in my parlor the very first time you enter it? Leave my house instantly.”

“ O, Rübetsahl — ! ” exclaimed Felix, and checked herself and blushed, as Rübetsahl, who had stood with folded arms listening to John Sterling, silently turned towards the door.

This sweet interest made Paul Rübetsahl turn again.

"Sir," said he, "you are just; but I was just too. I am loth to leave your kind house unjustified; but if to ask for time before I justify myself be to ask too much, then I must go; I cannot do it now."

The calm dignity of the man appealed to all manhood.

"Father," said Philip, "I believe him. I know —!" and he pointed to Cranston, still prostrate. "Make Rübetsahl stay."

An appealing glance from Felix supported Philip's attack. John Sterling's genial face was full of pain. That a night so full of music should have so pitiful end as this! Yet he could not resist Rübetsahl's noble look of honest self-assertion, and honest regret that self-assertion was necessary.

"Have your own way, my children!" said he, and walked hastily to his den, and fell to smoking vigorously.

Meantime, servants had come, and Cranston, still stupefied with the reaction of his unnatural excitement and the stunning surprise of the blow, was conveyed to his apartment.

Presently, he opened his eyes, and sternly commanded his attendants to leave him.

In the morning, his room was empty. No one knew whither he had gone.

CHAPTER VI.

"But Reynard, having heard his voice, said, 'Well, to be sure! and I should have been frightened, too, if I had not heard you bray!'"

The Ass in the Lion's Skin.

Bottom. — "Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves; to bring in — God shield us! — a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to it."

Snout. — "Therefore, another prologue must tell he is not a lion."

Bottom. — "Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect, — 'Ladies,' — or 'Fair ladies, — I would wish you' — or 'I would request you,' — or 'I would entreat you — not to fear, not to tremble; my life for yours. If you think I am come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are;' and then, indeed, let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug, the joiner."

Midsummer Night's Dream.

SOCIETY (bless her heart!) loves a lion.

Any prudent gentleman, however, who decides upon earning his "sixpence a day in Pyramus," by performing the lion rôle, will surely heed the admonitions of sweet bully Bottom. He must be none of your horrid man-eaters out of the wild desert; but a decent, well-curried and well-behaved lion, who will roar an' 'twere any nightingale, at the command of his keeper, and who can be uncaged without fear of personal detriment. Nay, however much she may laugh with Theseus, Society would yet, rather than not, see half a

human face through the neck, or hear the familiar ass-voice. These conditions being answered, with what a pretty boldness does Mrs. Society trip near to the pseudo-royal animal, the quasi-kingly beast, the Snug-alias-lion, the lion's-hide-over-joiner's-heart, and stroke the mane of the gentle-terrible one with her plump, white, be-diamonded fingers!

But, alas! this *penchant* of Madame Society for quasi-royal wild beasts is become known to the real lions, and is sometimes taken advantage of for horrible ends. It occasionally happens that a genuine fierce man- (or woman-) eater does simulate the simulation of honest Snug, the joiner, so that when Society, in her charming bravery, has drawn near to stroke his mane (ostensibly; but white fingers look well through a maze of hair), horrors! upon a sudden, in a twinkling, some member of Society (a finger, perhaps, or even so important a member as the head of Society) is snapped off, and gobbled up!

John Cranston was a veritable woman-eater, with neither asinine nor clownish qualities beneath his leonine exterior.

It has for a long time been the peculiar privilege of this glorious country to produce John Cranstons; for the exercise of which prerogative the country at large is responsible to almost as great a degree as the immediate progenitors, or producers, of such articles. For when John C., senior, went about to beget John C., junior, that worthy and prudent man probably embarked in the only enterprise of his life in which he could not see his way clear from beginning to end. Under these circumstances, it being impossible that

John C., senior, could have foreseen the precise result of his action in the premises, he is surely not to be blamed for departing in this one instance from the hitherto unbroken rule by which he guided his conduct; for, as the Prince Rasselas very sensibly remarked, "The world must be peopled by marriage, or peopled without it." Nor can I at all agree with the somewhat sarcastic sentiments contained in the reply of the Princess Nekayah, —

"How the world is to be peopled" (said that pert young lady), "is not my care and need not be yours. I see no danger that the present generation will omit to leave successors behind them!"

A cold-blooded shirking of manifest responsibility, thou Abyssinian maid! In which suppose thine own royal father and mother had concurred, where then had commenced thy search after happiness, thou tawny and o'er-froward minx!

But — John C., senior, having presented his boy to the country, that amiable foster-mother ought to have done much for him, because John C., senior, had done much for the country, with his charities, his dry-goods, and his prosperity on Broadway. Now it was an ill turn of the country to John Cranston, junior, that, at the age of twenty-one, he entered life as if he had been invited chief-guest to a complimentary dinner; and, forgetful even of customary forms of politeness, reached out both his hands for the *crème de la crème* and the *patés* and all the other world-dainties on the table, unheeding that shorter-armed neighbors were starving about him; and that the "Low vulgarities, the children of Rahag, Tahag, and Bohobtayil" were living, or rather dying, upon the smell of the roast beef.

When Cranston thought of virtue and such things, he formed to himself a vague idea that the earth was a mysterious wild-cat bank, doing a very inflated business by brazenly issuing, every day, multitudes of irredeemable bills in the shape of hypocritical men ; and in his heart Cranston was certain that the teller of this bank had long ago robbed its vaults of all the virtue, or bullion, and absconded to very unknown parts. A brave, nervous-souled boy, strong of limb, strong of passion, unboundedly energetic, unconquerably persevering, with an acute intellect to guide these qualities ; but thoroughly selfish, and without even the consciousness that this last was his bad trait — John Cranston was capable of building up many things ; but his life was nothing more than a continuous pulling down of all things.

A terrible mêlée of winged opposites is forever filling the world with a battle-din which only observant souls hear : Love contending with Impurity ; Passion springing mines under the calm entrenchment of Reason ; scowling Ignorance thrusting in the dark at holy-eyed Reverence ; Romance deathfully encountering the attack of Sentimentality on the one side and Commonplace on the other ; young Sensibility clanging swords with gigantic maudlin Conventionality, whose reliance is upon main strength and awkwardness, — and a thousand more. I have seen no man who did not suffer from the shock of these wars unless he got help from that One Man whom it is not unmanly to acknowledge our superior.

Cranston was too proud, that is to say, too selfish, to get any help : he became impure, not loving ; he was unreasonable, passion firing him ; he did no reverence, being ignorant of its objects ; he despised romance,

foolishly confounding it with sentimentality; he killed and utterly destroyed conventionality, instead of merely disarming and subduing it.

Allusion has been made to an occasion in the life of the elder Cranston when he did not precisely foresee the result of certain actions. Twenty-two or three years afterwards, he involved himself in a similar uncertainty. Which is to say, he hung a golden chain about the neck of his young lion-cub, and turned him loose upon Germany.

At Frankfort-on-the-Maine, people said young John was like Goethe. He had Lucifer-eyes; he spoke French and German and English; he walked like a young god; he played them mad with his violin; he accepted invitations with little return-poems that breathed sweetly a satanic despair; he was six feet one; — what more should one want to make one a lion at Frankfort-on-the-Maine?

CHAPTER VII.

"They were together and she fell,
Therefore revenge became me well.
O the Earl was fair to see!"

The Sisters : Tenngson.

"... AND so, since I am left alone for the day, if Herr Cranston will bring his violin at six, he will be considered very kind by his friend, OTTILIE."

To receive such a note as this, from which, as it is opened, a faint violet odor floats up, as if the soul of the sweet writer exhaled from her words ; to know that she is gray-eyed, oval-faced, lissome-limbed, full-souled, rising up to anything beautiful as quickly and as surely as shadows in water rise to meet their falling flowers ; — this is meat, drink, and raiment to a young, untamed, venturesome lion, who is currying himself and curling his mane in the best den of the city, or ere he begins to rampage over Germany.

Young John was not a deliberate man ; he had no *affaires du cœur*, and he had not resolved not to have any.

Young John was accustomed to declare to himself, in a lively way, " Who will say to-day that he will do so and so to-morrow ? Does not man change with time ? The past is gone, it is nothing ; the future is to come, it is nothing ; the present, even while I speak, is gone

—it is become the past, it is nothing ; time is a lie, and clocks do not measure time, they only measure life, and only waking life, for our dreams have no clocks and no time. Of all clocks, clepsydras, Geneva-watches, hour-glasses, sun-dials and Linnæan flower-clocks, commend me ” would say John Cranston “ to thy clock, O Festus, which was a heart, and measured time by throbs. If old Doctor Brain wants to know the time of life, let him look down there and count the beats.”

Of course Cranston knew, because everybody in Frankfort-on-the-Maine knew, that Ottilie had been long engaged to one Paul Rübetsahl whom Cranston had not met, he being away in the mountains on unknown mission ; and of course this knowledge of her engagement only heightened John Cranston’s devotion to her, since it gave her the only additional charm she could have possessed, and crowned her allurements with that sweet necessity-to-be-stolen which sugars the forbidden fruit.

Cranston’s contempt for time-pieces in general, like most such truculent disgusts of youth, did not extend to that particular hunting-case whose chain dangled from his vest button-hole ; and so he did not fail to consult its oracular countenance, nor to obey its warning hands when those members pointed, like the hands of a man in a stretch, to twelve and six.

“ You are punctual : I thank you,” said Ottilie, as Cranston entered her music-room.

“ Fraulein, you make a virtue of what was to me a necessity,” replied he, and bowed.

“ Ah, a compliment ! What necessity is the mother of so pretty an invention as that ? ”

"No less a necessity than the fitness of things. Fair greeting to a fair woman ; like to like !"

"But we Germans say, like *cures* like ; and so your last compliment destroys your first."

"And that is well, too ; otherwise the *embarras de richesses* would cause the Fraulein to suffer."

"Again ! Herr Cranston reminds me of the good maiden in the fairy-tale, from whose mouth, whenever she spoke, there dropped either a pearl or a diamond."

"If it be so, then you are the fairy that has conferred this gem-gift upon me !"

"Du Himmel !" cried Ottilie, and seizing a Chinese-parasol from the *étagère*, spread it out between herself and Cranston. "One might as well be killed with a shower of hail-stones as of diamonds ; it is but death after all."

"Thou rose ! No shower would ever disturb one petal of thine, save to pelt a perfume out of it."

"Ah, well ! one way remains. I will, in the woman's way, conquer you by surrendering to you. So ; I announce myself tired of compliments, Herr Cranston, and I long for some music. See, there is your violin, which your servant brought an hour ago !"

Cranston unlocked the case.

"Poor violin ! Take him up tenderly out of his dark case, Herr Cranston. Ah, when life has played its long tune upon me, and locked me up in my grave-case, I hope the Great Musician will take me out so, and draw a divine love-melody from me. Is not a violin wonderfully like a man ? It can be heavenly, it can be earthy, it can be fiendish ! It can make lark-music that

draws our eye towards heaven, it can make dance-music that keeps our feet moving upon the earth, and it can make Circe-music that allures us to — ”

“ To hell, Fraulein ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Which of these styles does the Fraulein prefer ? ” said Cranston, gravely arranging his bow.

“ O, Mephistopheles ! play what pleases thy satanic fancy.”

Who, being led to the edge of a precipice, has not felt the insidious and alluring desire to leap over it rising stronger and stronger within him, until he draws back, shuddering ?

There are some unaccountable moments when one is wild with insane longing to leap from the rock of what is fixed and known as virtuous, into the terrible mist of the unknown and bad, floating below.

It was this desire that sparkled in Otilie ——’s eyes, and drew her to the very brink.

“ Sound me,” said she, “ some strains from thy native Hades. I do not want any brimstone and agitato and thunder, and all that traditional infernal-music ; but something beautiful and wicked and very sweet.”

“ As if tawny Cleopatra peered wickedly at you over Godiva’s white shoulder ? ”

“ So ; and play, thou Satan in chains, till I bid thee stay ! ”

Let it be said only, that this music which John Cranston improvised was like a rose, with the devil lying perdu in its red heart ; was like a soft, gray eye, with a voluptuous sparkle in it ; was like a silver star-beam, only not cold, but hot with intoxicating perfumes.

Ottilie sat at the open window. Presently the sun sank beneath to the horizon.

“Stop, Herr Cranston, look yonder!”

One modest star had stolen out in the east, and stood, with all its dainty silver-soul a-tremble, in the passionate gaze of the sun. And all the west blushed to see the sun stretch out two long beams, like arms, which drew down a cloud towards him for a kiss. A costly caress! For, as the kiss of the heaven-born Zillah consumed his earth-born beloved to ashes before his eyes, so now the cloud, as it neared the sun, caught a-fire, and flamed with unutterable brilliancy.

Ottilie turned away, with sparkling eyes — into the arms of Lucifer.

O, Ottilie, thou should'st have looked a little longer at the display in the west, yonder! For, presently, the unpitying sun went on his way down the heaven-slope, and left the poor cloud alone; and the cloud gradually darkened from glowing red to a bruise-purple, and then to ashen-gray, dull and dead.

So shalt thou fare, Ottilie, thou poor gossamer summer-cloud; so shalt thou be consumed with bliss, and then left in the ashen-gray of grief that changeth not, of regret that blotteth not out its sin, of crime that hateth itself, and stingeth itself; but never to death.

And that day sank slowly into its night, as into a grave.

CHAPTER VIII.

**"Who cross the sea, but change their sky,
And not their thought."** *Horace.*

POSSIBLY the reason why few heroes are so to their valets, is because full many a hero pulls off his pantaloons and his heroism together. What! That spindle a heroic leg?

Bah!

This is what the valet says to himself, and glances at his own well-developed calf.

I will not pursue this subject.

But, surely, every woman is a heroine to her maid!

Why?

Who knows?

Perhaps it is because the maids are themselves also women; and women have a Hindoo faculty of making idols out of the most commonplace wood and stone, and weaving their beautiful faiths and worship about these like strings of precious beads, and building churches for these in their hearts.

For which faculty let women give thanks; for they have need of it in this world.

"And so, Gretchen," said Ottilie to her maid that night, "thou shalt not kneel to take off my shoes, to-night. It were better I knelt to take off thine!"

Sit here by me. Thou hast been a faithful; good maid. How much dost thou love me?"

"I will go with thee to the end of the world!"

"It is answered as if thou wert the oracle of Heaven! Thou shalt go with me to the end of the world. I must leave my Germany. The glance of my friends will blast me. The Rhine-breeze would scorch my face. I am glad that my father and mother are in heaven, where I cannot see them, and where I hope they have forgotten me. Pack, Gretchen! Let us go where there are strange mountains, and solitude disturbed by none but thee and me — and God, whom alas, alas, I cannot banish!"

In the old poisoning days (I've heard) a delicate kind of Venetian glass was used by the suspicious, which, if poisoned wine were poured into it, would instantly shiver into a thousand pieces. It is so with that dainty world which an imaginative woman builds up in her soul, out of the things that surround her. One drop of poison, concealed in whatever wine of pleasure, does straightway jar the whole delicate fabric into destruction. And it would seem that there is no rebuilding of the old soul-world after this. If she still have pure aspirations, there is for her only a waiting here, to see what the most blessed Christ may do for her hereafter. And, at first, there is not even this. The cry is then, "Fall upon me, ye mountains, and crush me out of sight!"

Ottilie thanked Heaven that no brother or sister bound her to the places which had suddenly become terrible to her. As for her betrothed, she did not dare think of him, except to long that she might get away where she would never again meet his eye.

Gretchen packed, the bankers received instructions under secrecy, and the two thickly-veiled women took departure by night for America.

To the sick soul, rapid physical motion is like a sea-breeze to fevered men.

"Gretchen," said Otilie, as the steam — good genius of our day! — bore them bounding along, "I think I know why the world and the stars move. And the sea — must it not be happy, since it is forever in motion? Poor, unhappy trees on the shore, there — they cannot move. They seem to thank the good kind breeze with swelling whispers and sighs of delight, when it but shakes their unwieldy arms! Motion forever, for me! Gretchen, what is thine idea of heaven?"

"It is to sink into the Everlasting Arms and be at rest."

"And mine is, to dash about like lightning, my soul being unclogged by dull old sins; to move through thousands of worlds, wherever I list, with unlaborious motion which is but the result of a mere volition, yes, to *think myself along* through the Paradises! Perhaps I would stop, sometimes, and dream on meditative wing, feeling myself well and buoyantly upborne by nothing grosser than the atmosphere of sunlight which I breathed. Once I could almost do this; but now — Gretchen, look at that sea-bird, yonder! he can hardly fly for the weight of the fish he is carrying in claws and beak; and it is so with us on earth: we cannot make a flight, without being dragged down by some fleshly provision-for-the-morrow."

Sorrow makes poets. Memnon's statue sang when the morning-light struck it, but I think men and women sing when the darkness draws on. Neverthe-

less those are the best poets who keep down these cloudy sorrow-songs and wait until some light comes to gild them with comfort.

The two women arrived at New York, and travelled on, through Virginia and Tennessee. Otilie had glimpses of the mountains occasionally. These blue distant hills enticed her to them, as the blue distant skies entice a lark upward.

At Knoxville, even patient Gretchen must needs confess she was a little tired.

"Well," exclaimed Otilie, with a sudden resolution, "yonder are the mountains—they look lonely. Let us stop here, and go to them. I yearn to plunge myself into that blue ocean of loneliness over yonder. What a color is blue, Gretchen! I will wear it hereafter. The sea is blue, the mountains are blue, the heavens are blue. One might think blue was good for sick souls as for weak eyes."

The road from the Knoxville depot into the city is a perilous one. As Otilie's hack started, the horses became frightened. In vain coachee cracked whip and jerked rein. The animals became unmanageable, and reared; in another instant they would have backed the carriage over the precipitous embankment, when a tall Indian, in slouch hat and moccasins, who, with folded arms and stolid countenance had been watching the passengers emerge from the train, seized the bridles with strong arm, turned the hack into the road, and at length succeeded in quieting the horses.

Gretchen was half-dead with terror; but Otilie, who had been looking on with a half-smile of admiration at the quivering muscles and magnificent attitudes of

the rearing horses, called to the driver to stop, and beckoned their preserver, who had again resumed his position of apparent indifference, to approach. Possibly her eyes grew more eloquent, as she thought of the melancholy remnant of the fine old Cherokees that once bounded over these hills, while the Indian, a majestic, brawny man, was walking up to her carriage: at any rate, those great orbs beamed in upon the half-tamed soul of the fellow like a beautiful gray dawn. Half-shamefully, Otilie offered him money. Believe that this Indian was in love at first sight: he refused it!

"Do you live here?" asked Otilie.

"No. Way over yonder!"

"When do you return?"

"To-morrow mornin'. We carry books to Obadiah. Obadiah our preacher."

"Listen, Gretchen. Let us go with him!"

"I go with you, Fraulein, anywhere."

"What is your name?" asked Otilie, addressing the Indian.

"Me? Jim Saggs!"

"O Gretchen, what a name for that magnificent creature! He says he lives beyond — what did you call the mountain?"

"Chilhowee."

"Beyond Chilhowee. Let us call him that. I like good names.

"Chilhowee, come to the hotel at twelve, to-day. I wish to make arrangements to be guided by you over to the mountains, where you live. Will you come?"

"Yes."

The arrangements were made, and after infinite

trouble, the two women got themselves transported to a small "cove" in the mountains, a few miles from John Sterling's Valley Beautiful. Here they fitted up a cabin with a piano and a few books and pictures, retaining Chilhowee in their service to supply them with game and be guard for the house. The sparse population of simple mountaineers at first regarded with much wonder the two lone women who never visited, and were always riding and walking about the mountains; but the wonder soon settled into a vague feeling of suspicion and dislike, which vented itself in "them stuck-up creeturs over yan on the hill," and other the like epithets. News does not travel fast in these mountains, and Chilhowee, possessing all the proverbial taciturnity of his race, never tattled. The Thalberg family knew nothing of these singular visitors.

So, the mountains received the lost. To Otilie, a majestic maternity dwelt in the broad bosoms of these hills. They seemed to have swelled and heaved, long ago, in a mighty love-sigh, and been petrified into eternal symbols of an eternal passion. With a delicious abandon she plunged into the deep ferny ravines, or sat upon rocky heights and sung to opposing rocks across the foaming streams far below. If the stern, pure rocks upbraided her with their seams and furrows, got in resisting so long the temptations of the wanton winds, she had only to turn to the trees, that ever lifted their arms toward Heaven, obeying the injunction of the Apostle, *praying always*: the great uncomplaining trees, whose life is surely the finest of all lives, since it is nothing but a continual growing and being beautiful; the silent, mysterious trees, most strong where most gnarled, and

most touching when wholly blasted, for gnarling is but another name for conquering, and they were blasted only by wayward lightnings, for no sin.

Wretched men and women in this world, wretched with the only wretchedness that deserves that name, which is the suffering of one's own transgressions, — have ye ever been “alone with God in His mountains?”

Up along those broad ascents one's thought glances straight to Heaven. These be the kings that fling to the plains kingly largesse of water that is better than gold coins. Here come breezes right from the sea, that have not been low enough to get the reek of the cities nor the malaria of the valleys upon their wings. Here salutes the sun, in the morning like a brother with dewy-pure blessing, in the evening like a lover with warm, passionate caresses. Here grow the strong, sweet trees, like brawny men with virgins' hearts. Here is the baby-hood of the rivers. Here wave the ferns, and cling the mosses, and clamber the reckless vines. Here Falstaff-beeches stand rollicking by straight Puritan-pines and substantial Flemish burgher-oaks, while the mosses and ashes, forest dandies, pose in nonchalant attitudes.

Here old giant Convulsion, horrible ogre that wont to swallow up so many young things, is tamed and humanized into deep and benign Repose.

And here one's soul may climb as upon Pisgah, and see one's land of peace — seeing Christ, who made all these beautiful things.

CHAPTER IX.

"You are very good to put yourself to all this trouble for a young girl!"
Prince Cherry.

SILENTLY, seven months like seven ghosts flitted by our two women in the still mountains. At last came a day which was not ghostly, but which opened its mouth and gave news.

On the day before the deer-drive at Thalberg, Gretchen was stirring before Otilie awoke, and must needs run out to pluck a fern-spray and a heart-leaf, and mayhap a lingering tiger-lily, that her beloved Otilie might be greeted with something beautiful upon the breakfast-table. At about this same hour Mrs. Razor, the nearest neighbor of Otilie, had an exposition of gooseberry-pie come upon her, and the good lady had sallied forth, basket on arm, to gather wherewithal to satisfy her longing.

"Goot morgen, Mrs. Razor." Gretchen was not on good terms with the king's English.

"Mornin', mum. A'ter gooseberries, this mornin'?"

"No. I am come to find some little grün leaf for mein frient. How ish all widh your house?"

"Waal, so 's to git about, thank ye. Th' ole man's jest started over to Mountvale Springs. Gwine to have a mighty shootin'-match thar to-day; an' I *do* hear as how there's to be a treemenjious fancy-ball thar to-

morrer night, *ur* the night a'ter, an' I forgit which, pree-cisely ! Haint a-gwine, I reckon ? ”

“ No, no.”

“ Thought may be you was, like. All the folks from Talburg is a-gittin' ready to go. Mister Cranston —— ”

“ Who ? ” quickly interposed Gretchen.

“ Mister Cranston tole my Jake yistiddy as how they was all a-gwine from thar, an' tole him he must come over an' shoot fur the beef.”

“ Who ish dis Mr. Cranston ? ”

“ Why, massy me, aint you heerd of him afore this ? He seed John Sterlin's gal at the Springs this season, an' follered her over to ther house, in the cove, yan. They *do* say as how he is gwine to marry her, afore long.”

“ Und was für ein man ish Mr. Cranston ? ”

“ Waal, I haint nuvver seed him *myself*, you know ; but my Jake says, he's a maaster tall un', 'ith black beard to his face, an' says he kin play the fiddle jest about as peert as the next un.' Mought know him maybe ? ”

“ Oh no.”

Forgetting fern-leaves and Mrs. Razor, and the conventionalities alike, Gretchen turned and walked rapidly back toward her cottage.

If I could only get them together, what might not happen ? She dies here. Her heart grinds itself to powder, revolving upon itself with its weight of grief.

But she would never go willingly to meet him.

Then I must bring him to meet her.

But she would refuse to see him.

Then I must manage it without her knowledge.

The fancy-ball ; — if she would but go ! The excite-

ment of strange faces would be charming for her pale cheeks. Ah! would Cranston be willing to meet her?

I must mystify him till it is too late for him to retreat.

These thoughts flashed through Gretchen's mind, as she hurried home. Her heart was lighter, because her brain was busier than it had been for many a day. The premonition of some catastrophe which, whatever it should be, would at least change the dreadful monotony of these dead days, animated her soul as she entered and saluted Otilie, just sitting down at the breakfast-table.

"Well, Gretchen, since they do not print any morning paper in Cade's Cove —"

"O Fraulein, the idea!" said Gretchen, glad to speak her German again. "A morning paper here! Imagine the local column: 'We are pained to record that our esteemed friend and neighbor, Mrs. Razor, met last night with a serious domestic calamity, in the loss of two fine chickens and a goose, supposed to have been kidnapped by a wild-cat:' or, 'It is our unpleasant duty to record an unfortunate personal rencontre, which took place late on yesterday afternoon, in the streets of Cade's Cove, between a black bear and four hounds belonging to Mr. Razor, in which, though the bear was worsted, two of the dogs were badly wooled;' and then, Fraulein, the commercial column: 'The market in Cade's Cove has been exceedingly quiet the past week, and commercial transactions extremely limited. Indeed, except in the single article of whiskey, we have to report absolutely nothing doing. We have account of sales of whiskey, yesterday, amounting in all to

twenty-six (26) drinks, twenty-five (25) of which being bought on time or by barter, we make no cash quotations, especially as the twenty-sixth sale might prove a false criterion and mislead dealers, it being a drink paid for, cash, by a stranger going through to North Carolina, who, not knowing the prices of whiskey in Cade's Cove, was charged double rates by our enterprising friend who runs the distillery.' And so forth, and so forth, Fraulein!"

"Why, Gretchen, thy tongue trips it garrulously this morning!"

"Indeed, I am the morning paper to-day! I am just come from 'Change:' that is to say, I have been talking with a neighbor. Do me the favor, Fraulein, to glance down my column headed 'Great news! Grand things toward, not far from us!' Our readers will be thrown into a state of frantic excitement, when we tell them that there is soon to be a masque ball at Montvale Springs, in which, besides the present guests, the whole country-side is expected to take part. The enterprising managers have determined to close the season with an affair worthy of the brilliant company now sojourning at that popular watering-place, and to make this ball one unsurpassed in variety and splendor of costume. Madame So-and-So is to come over, to superintend the costumes;' and so forth, and so forth—you need not read the whole column, Fraulein!"

And then came silence. Gretchen plotted and plotted, the hypocrite! and Otilie became grave and thoughtful, as if a curious idea had presented itself.

Toward the close of the meal Otilie looked up, and with a nonchalance which did not half conceal

from Gretchen the earnestness which underlay it, inquired:—

“How far to these Springs, Gretchen?”

“It is but four or five miles.” Aha, thought Gretchen, my little trout nibbles! Entice thou, O bait, as never bait enticed before!

Ottilie went out for her walk; whereupon ensued a diplomatic interview between Gretchen and the Indian, Chilhowee, which resulted in the departure of that taciturn individual toward Thalberg, where he had arrived, as was related, just in time to kill John Sterling's escaping buck.

He met with no opportunity to speak with Cranston that day, and had lounged idly about the grounds until night came on, when he threw himself upon the grass and slept; that is to say, dreamed of Ottilie.

CHAPTER X.

"I would that each might scrutinise the passion within him, for each passion exacts and builds its own world. Anger wishes that all the world had but one neck: Love, that it had only one heart: Grief, two tear-glands: and Pride, two knees."

J. P. F. Richter.

WHEN John Cranston awoke from the short stupor into which he had fallen, his first feeling was a vague sensation of disgrace, followed by a more defined wish to be alone.

Sending away the servant who had been ordered to remain in his apartment, he sat up in bed, clinched his fists and pressed them tightly against his head, to stop, of course, the giddy whirlpool which was amusing itself in a very noisy way in that member.

Performing that strange operation which seems almost to indicate that each man has two selves — namely, concentrating his mind, — Cranston gradually began to see and hear over again the occurrences of the night. But the sprites that worked the panorama in his brain were tricky elves, and it was long before they would show him the particular scene upon which he wished to fix his attention. A strain of music floated from behind some mysterious curtain in his brain. The music was from Mendelssohn, and, while it sounded, the curtain rose and displayed the face of Felix Sterling, with that shoal of deep-sea shapes floating in her eyes, as she sang.

Cranston shook his head, as who should say, "Tempting, but I'm looking for something else." And so, amid a confused intermingling of sounds and faces, he at length managed to fix his attention upon the face of Rübetsahl, until a full recollection of the whole last scene in the music-room shone before him.

Perhaps anger is the most complex deceit of them all, shifting its wrath from one's self, richly deserving, to some other self, undeserving, upon the most pitiful excuses. Indignation may be just; but anger forever cheats for a victim. And so, John Cranston, instead of cursing his own crime, or gnashing his teeth over the insane folly which had prompted him to betray himself, cursed Rübetsahl instead, and snarled at him.

"Good God! Good God!" he said, setting his teeth and stretching out his hands as he sank back on the bed. "He struck me — in her presence — in presence of them all! The miserable scoundrel — to take advantage of me when the sherry had unsteadied my nerves! And now, I suppose, he'll blab every thing to make capital for himself; and add from his own invention, until he gets capital enough to buy the whole family!" — with a bitter laugh. "And he struck me; he *struck* me; he struck *me*!" An idea hard to grasp!

"I can see the whole tale he'll tell. 'He heard of my —— adventure with this Frankfort friend of his; she had no father or brother; he determines to avenge her' — the dear, chivalrous knight of damsels in distress —; 'he will devote his life to this sacred cause; he thinks he will likely find me in America; he comes over, nay, 'gad, he rushes over, flies over, inquires for

me, tracks me here, and if he can find me again,' — for the fool will know that I'm going to leave to-night — 'he 'll — play the devil,' and so forth, and so on. He's probably gone through the whole tale by this time.

"But, by God," said he, jumping from the bed, a maniac in eyes and face and hair, "and by the devil and all, I 'll kill him, — I swear it, — I 'll kill him this day!"

Cranston walked to his window, and examined the ground outside. It was an easy leap. He turned, and glanced round the room, which was one that Philip Sterling had occupied. Opposite the bed hung two swords, which had been wont to serve his young friend in the peaceful capacity of dream-provocatives, or reverie-superinducers, the said swords being respectively a long, two-handed, naked blade like Richard Cœur de Lion's, and a delicate rapier such as a gallant might wear at court. This huge brand, that looked grim as a battle, and this dainty rapier, that could make one think of nothing but waving plumes and arras and lovely women, seemed strangely opposed, as if war and love had married: a lion lying down with a lamb. Many a long, delicious hour had Philip spent over these two relics of chivalric days; as the Lily Maid of Astolat watched the shield of absent Lancelot: —

"And made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh:
That, ten years back: this dealt him at Caerlyle:
That, at Caerleon: this, at Camelot:
And ah! — God's mercy! — what a stroke was there!
And here a thrust that might have killed, but God
Broke the strong lance, and rolled his enemy down,
And saved him: so she lived in fantasy."

And so had Philip wound his fine dreams, like silken scarfs, about his swords.

But John Cranston, bent on destroying the greatest of all dreams — life — cared little for idler reveries of romantic boys ; and, taking down the rapier, whose use was nearly all he had learned at college, he leaped from the window and strode up the abruptly swelling knoll, as if, upon some height, he could better see what course to pursue.

Like a tear upon an eyelid, wept in a dream, glittering, tremulous, ready to drop, hung the morning-star upon the fringed horizon. A white mist, which had sought shelter in the water-valley for the night, was beginning to wake and ruffle wing for another day's journey.

Cranston had stopped and smiled a bitter smile, that such peaceful things should dare to go on in the world when he was angry. As he turned to mount the knoll, the morning-star was suddenly obscured by a tall form which uprose as if by magic out of the earth, and which loomed gigantically in the dim light before him. All the blood in his frame rushed backward toward his heart, as the reflection flashed across his mind that it was Rübetsahl, waiting for him. For one moment, the consciousness of being in the wrong subdued his natural bravery, and he fairly staggered with the weakness of relaxation.

But his vengeful anger restored his courage and heated his soul. Unsheathing the beautiful taper blade which he carried, and throwing the scabbard as far as he could hurl it, in emphatic token of war to the death, he advanced rapidly toward his opponent, speaking, as

he went, in passionate jerks and crowding eddies of words.

"Aha, you—you waylay me in the darkness, do you?" O Cranston! was it waylaying a man to rise up in front of him and stand still with folded arms as this tall figure did? "Not content with taking advantage of a moment when I was — was —" (he has objections to the word *drunk*), "when my nerves were unsteadied, you—you wait all night to ambush me, do you?" The said ambushade being on the top of a bare knoll, which would reveal a cricket against the sky, to one ascending!

"I suppose you've told 'em all how it was by this time, and got your maw full of praise for your — your heroism and your devotion, you dear good man, you sweet constant man, you — you damned contemptible scoundrel!" thundered he in an irrepressible flood of fury, and leapt forward to thrust, forgetting to put himself *en garde* even.

"Why you kill me?" said the Indian; for it was Chilhowee. He had slept until his light slumbers had been broken by the sound of approaching footsteps. He quickly recognized the man with whom he had in vain sought an interview the day before.

Cranston dropped his sword with an oath, as he saw the mistake into which his blind rage had led him, and took from the Indian's hand a piece of paper which he was silently holding out.

"For me?"

"Yes."

"From whom?"

"No tell."

“ ‘Gad!’ ” muttered Cranston, opening his cigar-case and striking a match, “ but the German is prompt with his challenge! He *might* have waited for it to come from *me*. Maybe he was afraid it would n’t come,” — with a murderous laugh. “ Let’s see what the poor injured man says.”

The note was short. It was written in German. Translated, it said : —

“ Would ’st thou an adventure? Follow the bearer.
(Signed) “ FRANKFORT.”

CHAPTER XI.

*"A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
Of him that utters."*

EDGAR POE declares, with much gravity, that he has often thought he could distinctly hear the sound of the darkness coming over the horizon ; and some one else, perhaps the same poet, has listened to the growing of the grass.

Late in the afternoon of this day when Cranston had plunged into the forest behind the Indian, as the sun was declining behind the ridge which bounds Montvale Springs to the westward, a noise similar to the sound of flying darkness and growing grass might have been borne to the ears of three or four invalids, who had crept out of their cabins to take the cool air and a draught of the Chalybeate.

But this noise came neither from the gathering of dark powers, nor from the struggle of grass-growth.

It was the rustle of silken dresses, and so forth, and the crinkling of sundry coats, and so forth, in which the male and female sojourners at beautiful Montvale were at this moment arraying themselves for the masque-ball of that night.

The impudent and invisible 24,999 may go with me up into room 98, west wing, gentlemen's quarters, of the seven-gabled hotel at Montvale.

B. Chauncey Flemington, a gay representative of a big plantation in Mississippi, is drawing on the left individual of a pair of boots, whose yellow "insides" he has caused to be cut and pulled over, after the manner of the boots that Pizarro wears in the theatre.

John Briggs, whom nor I nor anybody know, except that he was the best fellow in the English language, is tying a blue ribbon round his knee to fasten a flesh-colored long stocking, such as the genteel shepherd wears in the theatre. Alf. Aubrey is tying the thong of a Roman sandal upon his foot, occasionally pausing to glance at an open Shakespeare lying on the table, after each glance throwing back his head and shutting his eyes, while his lips move slowly, as if he were repeating in silent enjoyment the words of the master.

Boots, towels, trunks, trunk-trays, cologne-bottles, and a thousand miscellanea of the masculine toilet, lie scattered in inextricable confusion about the floor of No. 93.

"John," said Flemington, giving a last hitch to his boots, "I wish to direct your serious attention to Aubrey, there. I," — regarding the right boot with intense gaze, — "I wish to remind you that I have known Aubrey from — I may say, from his youth up, or, I *should* say, in view of his present course of life, from his youth down. Now, during all this amazing stretch of time that I have known Aubrey there, it has never been my lot to see him read any book whatever; but adhering with great consistency to his belief that books were theoretical things, he has continued to study human nature in the light of the sternly-practical, without the assistance of written help. I wish to direct your serious

attention (after this short preamble) to the fact that from a period nearly contemporaneous with the first hints that were given of this fancy-ball to-night, my friend Aubrey there, discarding that rigorous practicality which has hitherto distinguished him, has become nothing more nor less than a — bookworm ! The singularity of this change is heightened by the fact that this worm crawls only in one book, — that book, Shakespeare : only on one page of that book, — that page, the page where occurs the ninth scene of the third act of Antony and Cleopatra, about the middle of the left-hand column, beginning with the words — with the words,” — and with an adroit movement, Flemington snatched the book off the table before Aubrey could interpose, and assuming a tragic attitude, continued : — “ with the words, I naturally imagine, which my friend Aubrey there has marked in brackets with a pencil, to wit : —

‘ *Antony* . . . Egypt, thou knewest too well
My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings,
And thou should’st tow me after: o’er my spirit
Thy full supremacy thou knewest, and that
Thy Beck — ’

I entreat you to believe, Briggs, that the capital B which commences this word ‘beck’ is Aubrey’s and not Shakespeare’s, —

. . . ‘ and that
Thy Beck might from the bidding of the Gods
Command me.’

“ John Briggs, have I your serious attention ? ”

“ At your request, I have concentrated my serious attention, like the nozzle of a fire-engine, upon our

friend Aubrey there. It is now spirting against him, full steam. If you do n't relieve it shortly, I have no doubt it'll knock him out of the window !”

“It is well. I wish you to retain this quotation, marked in brackets by my friend Aubrey there, in your mind, while I relate a little circumstance that befell, a matter of ten days ago. While I was one day reading Shakespeare at the big oak out yonder, the sun crawled round and shone too warmly for me, insomuch that I was fain get behind the tree and lie down on the grass, leaving my book open on the bench. In this situation I fell asleep. Being presently awakened by the sound of voices, I perceived a gentleman and lady approaching, down the walk, and my attire being somewhat disordered, I lay still, hoping not to be discovered. It is hardly necessary for me to state that the gentleman was my friend Aubrey there,” — Aubrey leaned his face upon his hands — “and it is almost equally unnecessary for me to state that the lady was the mother of Rebecca Parven, whom Aubrey has been adoring in sight of everybody for a month or more. They sat down on the bench.

“‘And so, my dear Mr. Aubrey,’ Mrs. Parven said, ‘Beck and I (I call my daughter Rebecca, Beck,—you know ‘call me pet names, dearest’—ah !), Beck and I concluded that we would bring you into our little plot for having something recherche in the way of costumes for the ball ; because we want your advice about the dresses, and we wish that you’d get up a little speech to make the characters go off natural like, you know, and so on. Now, Beck wants to come as Cleopatra, because Beck, you know, is a brunette, and Cleopatra was a brunette, was n’t she, Mr. Aubrey?’

“‘ Ah — ah — so far as my recollection of history serves me, Mrs. Parven, — she was ! ’ says Aubrey.

“‘ Very good. Oh, I knew we would get on famously, for our tastes run so together,’ says Mrs. Parven, with a heavenly smile at Aubrey. ‘ Well, now, Beck, as I said, will be Cleopatra, and I thought that I, being her mother, would go as — as Egypt, you know, Mr. Aubrey, represented in an allegorical costume. Now, mind, Mr. Aubrey, this is confidential ; what costume shall I wear to — to represent Egypt allegorically ? ’

“ Aubrey did not reply, Mr. Briggs, for some minutes. I think I can see the exact process which went on in his mind. ‘ Let’s see,’ says he to himself, ‘ Egypt, — Egypt : — Alligators, no, Crocodiles : and Mummies : and — Sphynx ; — yes, and Pyramids : — good ! ’

“‘ Well, Mrs. Parven,’ says Aubrey at last, — ‘ Crocodiles : have you any crocodiles’ skins among your very extensive collection of — of furs ? ’

“‘ Oh, Mr. Aubrey,’ cries she, ‘ I thought they were scaly ! ’

‘ Ah, no, Madame. In my trip to Europe, having of course to pass through Egypt, I often saw them disporting in the cool waters, and would have taken them for beavers. However, it is immaterial. But,’ says he, ‘ Mummies : — ah — have you any mummy-cloth amongst your very extensive collection of — bareges, Mrs. Parven ? ’

Mrs. P., you may remember, does not hear very distinctly, Mr. Briggs.

“‘ Gummy-cloth ? ’ says she, meditatively. ‘ Well, there’s Mr. Parven’s gum-coat he goes duck-hunting in ; and I could rip it up, you know. Would it do, Mr. Aubrey ? ’

“‘Oh, excellently well, ma’am,’ says Aubrey. ‘Splendidly; and, by the way, your naturally fair complexion must be darkened a little, Mrs. Parven; it has passed into a proverb, you know: “black as Egypt,” we say. Your face must be dark — and hands,’ added the atrocious scoundrel.

“‘Dear me, Mr. Aubrey, how in the world shall I do it? Ink, you know, would n’t wash off, after it was over; and I *would* n’t like to lie abed a month to wear it off,’ says amiable Mrs. P.

“‘Cork, ma’am: cork’s the thing. Get one out of a champagne-bottle, you know, and hold it in a candle, and then rub it on. Washes off, too, easy.’

“‘Very well, then. The dress of gum-cloth. I suppose I may relieve the sombre effect of the gum-cloth by trimmings to suit my own fancy?’

“‘Oh yes, certainly. And don’t forget your head-dress, which must be a pyramid. You can make it — like a pin-cushion, you understand, of bran, or something like that.’

“‘Well,’ says Mrs. P., with a long breath, ‘and that’s all. Oh, I’m *so* much obliged to you, Mr. Aubrey. I know I shall make a good Egypt. And *so* kind in you to tell me! I should have asked Mr. Flemington, but —’

“‘Madame,’ says my friend Aubrey there,” (Aubrey slid from his chair and sat cross-legged with his face to the wall); “‘Madame, I advise you, as a friend, not to apply to Mr. Flemington, for the reason that his lamentable ignorance of history and of historical personages would be certain to betray you into some ridiculous mistake. And he’d never admit that he knew nothing

about it. No, madame, leave out Flemington, by all means !'

" 'Indeed, I certainly shall do so ; especially since you've been so kind. And we want it to be a secret, you know, so as to seem unpremeditated. And now, since all that is arranged, could n't you, please, Mr. Aubrey, compose a little address to deliver to us, in character, as we entered the ball-room door, to make it all go off smooth and natural like ?' " Mr. Briggs, my friend Aubrey there was staggered for a moment ; his eyes fell, — and that fall saved him ! For they fell upon my Shakespeare, which was lying open at Antony and Cleopatra. Taking up the book, he commenced to read the identical passage which I have described as marked in brackets, and which I have just spoken. " O Egypt," and so forth, read he, until he came to the line —

" Thy Beck might from the bidding,"

when Mrs. P. cried out, ' Oh, Mr. Aubrey, that's not in the book, and you're just composing, you dear genius, you ! My Beck, indeed ! How could Shakespeare know any thing of my Beck ?'

" 'Madame,' says Aubrey, laying his hand on his heart with that dignity for which his family is distinguished : ' Madame, the Latin word *vates* means at once poet and prophet — a philological observation which most satisfactorily accounts for the striking phenomenon you have just mentioned. For doubtless the prophetic eye of Shakespeare foresaw —

" ' Dear me, Mr. Aubrey, I thought I heard a rustling behind this tree. Maybe, it was a snake, and I *do* fear snakes, so, and I saw one yesterday on the hill yonder,' says Mrs. P., who felt that Aubrey was drawing her

into dangerous grounds, philological and otherwise. 'There's the gong, now, for tea; let's go. Indeed, I and Beck are *very* much obliged to you, and the little speech will make it all go off *so* smooth and nat —' and then they turned out of hearing. Mr. Briggs, have I your serious attention?"

"I am an ear, Flemington," said Briggs, sententious-ly; but looked more like a nose, as he bent, with red face, over his second ribbon-knot.

"I wish you to support me in the demand which I feel I have a right to make upon Mr. Aubrey, after what has passed. That demand is that Mr. Aubrey shall immediately recite his little speech to us, so that our hearts may not forebode his disgrace on the great night; and that, failing in his rehearsal, he shall stand on his head and drink a cobbler. Mr. Aubrey; recite!"

Aubrey, still sitting tailor-wise, had leaned his nose against the wall, and was flattening the end of it thereagainst, as if his soul's happiness depended thereupon. At the summons he rose, and putting his best foot foremost, which was the foot with the sandal on it, the other being nude of sock or shoe, began in deep-tragic voice:

"Egypt, thou knew'st too well
My heart was to thy rudder tied with —"

"No; not 'with': '*by*'!"

". . . was to thy rudder tied by the strings
And thou shouldst oh — should'st oh — oh —"

The prompter pointed in pantomime of deep significance at the nude foot of the speaker; but this latter looked utter ignorance.

"Toe, Aubrey: think of your toe!"

" Ah, yes :

' And thou should'st tow me after: o'er my spirit
Thy full supremacy thou knew'st, and that —
And that — and th — ' "

" Oh, monstrous ! to break down right at the joke. Briggs, he's been cramming it ten days."

" Nine, Flem ; just nine ! "

" Nine days, and can't say it over. I do forthwith adjudge that you, Alfred Aubrey, B. A. of Oxford, Mississippi, do immediately reverse the ordinary position of manhood, and during said reversal imbibe a sherry cobbler. Bute," — to the waiter at the door, " — cobbler for three. John, give me your assistance in drawing out this table to the centre of the room, for my friend Aubrey there to stand on his head on, and have free play of his legs. I were loth, Mr. Briggs, that Mr. Aubrey should receive detriment in the matter of legs. Cobblers here. So ; — time, Aubrey. Briggs, we must have music ! "

Steadily, and without a shadow of smile, Mr. Aubrey reversed himself, head on table and feet in air, while the entire band, through hollowed fist, trumpeted, " Dying, Egypt, dying," with most brilliant intonation ; but as Bute approached with the cobblers, a drop of the lemon and sherry splashed into Aubrey's eye, and that gentleman, with the most natural gesture in the world, attempting to rub his spasmodically-closed optic with his forefinger, suddenly lost balance. As he came down with a mighty crash, he involved in one wide ruin all, bringing down Flemington and cobbler with his legs, and by a wild lunge of arms upsetting John Briggs and cobbler after the most approved style of the clutch-desperate.

Now broke the icy barriers of their gravity, and each lay as he fell, with sides shaking and uproarious torrents of laughter issuing from healthy lungs. When the first paroxysm was over, "John," commenced Aubrey; but broke down, and the rest joined him in a fresh burst. At length with many a fresh jet and eddy of laughter,

"John," said Aubrey, "you ought to have seen Flem and me weigh — oh, I'll die — weighing the old lady, the other day. Flem got — ah — got it up. We invited her to take a walk with us down to the stables to loo — to look at the horses. You know the hay-scales down there. I gently, very gently, guided her course across 'em, Flem being behind; and just as we got on the plat — platform, I stopped, engaging her in a very animated discussion on Duplex Elliptics, while Flem quietly arranged the beam behind and weighed the pair. Presently he coughed, and at the signal we walked on. On the way back to the hotel, 'by the way, Aubrey,' says he, 'I must show you the result of those astronomical calculations I was making last night,' and he handed me this piece of a letter. Look on the back of it.

	lbs.	oz.
" Weight of both - - - - -	407	6
" Mr. Aubrey (as ascertained by previous experiment), - - - -	189	2
Remainder. Weight of Mrs. P. - - -	268	4
Deduct for Dup. Ell. and other hardware outside, say - - - - -	10	0
And exact nett weight Mrs. P. - - -	258	4

At this moment Bute announced the ball in half an hour; whereat No. 93 proceeded to dress itself.

CHAPTER XII.

Gloucester. — “Weapons! arms! What’s the matter here?”

King Lear.

No, 24,999! You shall not witness the enduing of Mrs. Parven with the somewhat remarkable costume which, at some expense and much labor, she had caused to be prepared for herself. The momentous undertaking was accomplished by her daughter Rebecca and her sable handmaiden. It was but once interrupted by a mild remark from Mrs. P.

“Don’t put any more of it into my eye than you can help, Beck, dear!” said she, while the burnt cork was being applied.

“De good father’s sakes alive, Mistis! You iz black az I iz!” observed the handmaiden.

“And you,” exclaimed Rebecca, “are as black as Egypt!”

Meantime, the three jovial habitants of No. 93 had hurried their toilets and moved down to the ball-room, where they had taken a position commanding all the approaches, from which they delivered a steady fire of comments upon each couple as the masquers slowly began to enter and promenade in stately circle round the hall. Aubrey personated Mark Antony; Flemington, Pizarro; and John Briggs, in slippers and tights,

bearing a crook with ribbons, was a very genteel. Shepherd indeed.

“By the nine gods, Señor Pizarro! what have we here?” said Mark Antony, pointing to a couple just entering.

“General, it is as if a Russian bear or Hyrcan tiger had stolen a hawk’s beak, and wore it at the end of his snout!”

“Nay, friends,” interposed the Shepherd, “it is master Shylock, the Jew of Venice. How gracefully locketh he arm, and how amiably converseth he — with no less a Gentile than poor crazy Ophelia, who hath, look! just tied a flower to the end of Shylock’s beard, and is laughing silverly that such grizzled and curling stems should terminate in the bloom and fruitage of a rose!”

“What manner of giant should be he that comes now?” inquired Antony.

“Please your heathen majesty, it is Goliath of Gath, with a spear and a bass voice, denouncing death to a whole army —” replied Pizarro.

“And bearing on his arm, O acme of contrasts! sweet Jeanie Deans, with the gowden hair!” added the Shepherd.

Suddenly Mark Antony unsheathed his sword, and stood *en garde*. “Come on,” cried he, “an thou be Fate, or Cleopatra’s spirit, or other shape from hell, I fear thee not!”

“It is a sheep-murrain embodied in shape of a man!” said the Shepherd, and ran behind Mark Antony.

“It is the Devil!” said Pizarro, and hastily muttered a Pater-noster as he ran behind the Shepherd.

"How daintily he switcheth to and fro his arrow-pointed tail!" observed the Shepherd from between the Roman legs of Mark Antony.

"*Tales sunt inferni!*" quoth the general.

"If all be well," observed Pizarro "that ends well. then is this tail of yon Devil a most excellent good tail; for, it being already of exceeding sharp terminus, the harlequin there is tying, unbeknown to Señor Devil, a copy of Brownlow's Whig to the end of it!"

"By way of envenoming y^e arrow-point, and God pity y^e man who reads this infernal tale, now!" added the shepherd.

"And I could wish," said Mark Antony, sheathing his sword, "that the black cambric were not so tight about his satanic legs; for I do not love your ungraceful Devil!"

"It is in character, General, that the cambric tights should be so tight; for your immortals, being ever young, must show no wrinkles!" quoth Briggs, the shepherd.

"But who is this fair star that steals in, shining, by the side of Lucifer? A dainty girl, by my beard! to be so arm-locked with the Devil!" inquired Pizarro.

"It is Helen of Greece, by her cymar with a battle worked on it, and her silver sandals that seem of a piece with her silver feet!" answered Antony.

"Methinks," muttered the shepherd, "she of Greece should be iⁿ the melting mood, so near this fiery-hot Satan!"

"Aye," groaned Pizarro, "I fear me she hath caught a Tartarus shape!"

"Friends, follow me!" suddenly shouted Mark An-

tony, and stormed, with stage-stride and clang of sandal, across the room.

For, at the door, appeared the face of Egypt.

It was only with a wild groan that Aubrey concealed the uproarious merriment which Mrs. Parven's appearance excited within him.

The warm weather, and Mrs. P.'s abounding flesh, had conspired to make that lady perspire copiously; and as each drop coursed from her benighted forehead across the broad and level plain of her face, it washed away a sort of cork alluvium, and left in its track a sinuous pathway of white, insomuch that the good lady's face showed like the front of a Hottentot tattooed in white.

A crowd of masquers, on the *qui vive* for fun, had followed Mark Antony's rush across the floor, and were now greeting with vociferous applause the extraordinary figure of Mrs. P., as she slowly and deliberately moved a step or two inside the door and there stopped, recognizing Mark Antony, to receive his address; which M. A. was in no sort of condition to deliver, his whole soul being occupied in endeavoring to suppress a fresh insurrection of laughter which broke forth within him, as he saw one of Mrs. P.'s blackened hands stretched back behind her to feel for that of Cleopatra-Rebecca, — who, not unmindful of her white gloves, was with great manual dexterity eluding these motherly overtures of Egypt wishing to lead her daughter in.

Flemington had glided to the side of Mrs. Parven, and stood there like Satan squat at the ear of Eve, ready to make diabolical suggestions; which he felt confident Mrs. P., in her excited state of mind, would immediately execute, however ridiculous.

Aubrey's voice trembled ominously as he began ; but with a mighty effort, he dashed on : —

"Egypt, thou knowest too well
My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings
And thou shouldst tow me —"

"Like a ship, you know, Mrs. Parven," whispered Flemington rapidly ; "tow him — by the nose, for instance : that's it, take hold of his nose, so ! Forward : tow him ! splendid !" he continued, as Mrs. P., deliberately taking the somewhat extensive proboscis of Aubrey between finger and thumb, commenced a stately forward movement.

Aubrey followed, as in duty bound ; and, with a sublime gulp, like an earthquake taking down a city, continued : —

"O'er my spirit
Thy full supremacy thou knew'st, and that
Thy Beck" —

Here Aubrey wrenched loose his nose, and made a profound bow to Rebecca-Cleopatra walking behind —

"might from the bidding of the gods
Command me !"

A storm and salvo of cheers from the masquers testified their appreciation of this sally, and Mrs. P., taking Mark Antony's arm, slowly promenaded on, in the proud consciousness of having attracted more attention than anybody in the room, dispensing liberal smiles. Dispensing not only, alas ! smiles ; for some fiendish harlequin in the crowd had ripped a small aperture in the pyramid which adorned Egypt's head, and the bran was issuing therefrom in a miniature

Nilus along her dress to the floor; whereby already the pyramid was visibly collapsing and had that foolish appearance of befuddlement which a hat has with a brick in it.

So the mirth grew furious and the crowd increased. Turk and Paynim laughed and joked with Greek and Crusader; Cavaliers and Roundheads swore friendship, York and Lancaster embraced; Moses gave his staff to a harlequin who balanced it on his chin, while the Prophet waltzed away with a masqueress in duplex elliptic and heeled shoes; the Devil was dancing with her highness the Abbess of —, and a grizzly bear stood up on his hind paws to pirouette with a delicate Greek Naiad. All nations, all natures, mingled in a mazy whirl; costumes and customs were incongruously scattered together in a parti-colored patchwork; the ball-room wore motley like a clown; the last centuries shook hands with the first, over the heads of the middle ages; it was as if Father Time doubled together the two ends of his course, and shook all the racers against each other in the centre. White bosoms heaved, dark eyes sparkled, blue eyes glowed; soul struck against soul as body against body; spirits grew fierce in the powerful proximity of each other; the arch-genius of all intoxication waved his enchanting wings, and fanned higher the rosy flame of life.

Tall Pizarro, with black, sharp-pointed beard, was everywhere in the thickest of the press; anon leaning down to whisper nothings in the ear of some fair neighbor; anon flashing sallies of wit across the heads of the crowd to some equally tall opponent, as Jura darts back the lightning to a sister peak over the hills.

Presently, he met Mark Antony, who had just left the side of Cleopatra, in search of some Octavia.

"Life! Life! Down with Death!" cried Pizarro, as he saw the glowing eyes of Aubrey.

"Aye," quoth Mark Antony, "John Death hath no part here. Let him go sulk i' the corner of space. But whither away, so quick?"

"Now, by our Lady of Madrid, thou wert better ask that question of this crowd that is rolling me along like a round stone in a river! *Himmel! Potz Tausend!*" exclaimed he as the crowd gave one of those savage lurches that crowds will give inexplicably, and forgetting that Pizarro did not usually employ German expletives.

At the moment that he uttered a German word, however, a short, plumply-made female, closely masked, looked up quickly and asked, in German, if he spoke that language.

"Yes."

"Then I may speak without fear of being understood by others; and Heaven be praised! for I fear I do not know English enough to tell you that which I want."

"Speak freely," answered Flemington, suspecting some jest. "Pizarro's life lies shining in his sword; and that, lady, is at your service!"

"No, no, I do not jest; you misunderstand me," quickly answered his companion, in tone of such evident feeling, that Flemington's attention was aroused. "Lean down your head. Give me your arm, and open a way through the crowd to the door. A life may be lost while I talk to you. Come!"

Flemington put forth all his strength and slowly clove a way through the press, his fair client holding to his arm, and following in his wake. As they walked, she rapidly related her story.

"Herr, I must be very brief. I and the Fraulein — I will not tell you her name — came to the ball with Herr Cranston, and —"

"With John Cranston?"

"Yes. Ah, I am infinitely glad that you know him! We rode with him five miles, from our house in the mountains. He told us he had had a quarrel with one Herr Rübetsahl, and swears he will kill him to-night. Herr Rübetsahl is to come with a party from Thalberg — at least I hope he is not already arrived," — with a shudder. "We would have left Herr Cranston, he was so violent; but we were alone on the road when he told us these things, and we could not come without an escort. He brought us here, saw us in the door, and then left us. But I followed him, to see! Herr, I saw him take his place behind that large oak yonder, which grows near the main gate of the inclosure. I do not doubt he intends to waylay Herr Rübetsahl as he comes in, and kill him. He carries a long, naked rapier. O, Herr, if you would save a life, for God's sake, interpose. Aye," she added, as Flemington bent a somewhat undecided countenance to her; "you will be the murderer, and not Herr Cranston, if, after what I have told you, you do not exert yourself to prevent this deed!"

Near the door they encountered the gentle Shepherd, engaged in animated conversation with a tall, lithe girl, masqued. She was conversing rapidly, but seemed continually harrassed by some recurring idea, which often

caused her to turn her head and glance down the winding white-gravelled walk which led, under fine oaks and between grass-plats, to the gate of the inclosure. It was Otilie, who was already excited by the unaccustomed pleasure of conversation with strangers to such a degree, that she would occasionally even forget the terrible anticipation, under the influence of which she had sent Gretchen, the stronger of the two, into the crowd, with the faint hope of finding some male friend who might avert the impending disaster.

For, on the ride from her cottage, Cranston, half-crazed with revengeful feelings, had given her an account of his quarrel with Rübetsahl. Otilie knew not what to think or say, passive with that feeling which I suppose all of us know — a feeling as if the Day of Judgment, with its astounding crash, its shameful disclosures, and its dreadful dooms, was about to burst upon the world.

“Come, Shepherd,” said Pizarro, “bring your Phoebe there. Let us get into the moonlight. You three shall be the army, and I will lead you to victory. Now pace we down the gravel, here, — how white it gleams! — in column of two and two, conversing upon indifferent topics.”

Laughing and chatting gaily, they strolled on through the moonlight, towards the gate. Presently they came full upon Cranston, who, wild with revengeful brooding and waiting, had abandoned his position near the tree, and was pacing violently to and fro in the walk, twirling his rapier in rapid circles that flashed and glittered with deadly sparkle in the light.

“Ha!” exclaimed Flemington, as, Cranston turning

suddenly, they came face to face. "By the great horn spoon! It's John Cranston that I have n't seen since we did Germany in the same year. How d'ye do, old fellow, — and over again! I'm running the Pizarro rôle to-night, you see. John; but, by Jove! the sight of you converts me into solid Chauncey Flemington in a trice. Come, turn with us, and let's get back to the festivities. We've just left 'em for a little air. You too, eh? Gad, a man might almost suppose you an injured lover, waiting to assassinate his rival! Come on, Cran. By the way, this is my particular bosom-friend, John Briggs, doing the Shepherd very sheepishly. Be acquainted! As for these fair ladies, I would introduce you to them with great pleasure if I had only the happiness to know them, or even to call their names."

It was scarcely possible that Cranston was moved even by the magnificent hilarity, which overflowed from generous, brotherly-souled Flemington; but he was taken aback. Stifling his anger, he muttered to himself, "one more chance, yet!" and then, forcing a smile which was bitter as death, said, with hoarse voice: "I'm glad to see you, Flemington. I was taking the air. Let us go to the ball-room."

A quick glance of gratitude shot up into Flemington's eyes from those of the two women; and, more merry than ever, the party returned, quickly separating as soon as they met the charge of the crowd inside.

It was now eleven o'clock. Lines of grotesque dancers advanced and receded and advanced again, like restless waves full of the wrecks of times and nations. Old gray Reason, the tutor of Fancy's tumultuous children, had given them holiday to-night, and they

bounded forth with frantic gambols to enjoy an unaccustomed liberty. It was as if some gigantic tarantula had in an instant bitten the whole world, dead men and all.

At this moment the whole company paused to hear a loud clear voice proclaiming, "Make way for good King Arthur and his Queen!" All eyes were turned towards the door, through which, the crowd deferentially falling back on each side, entered Rübetsahl habited as King Arthur, in royal vestments, without armor. Upon his arm leaned Felix Sterling, as Queen Guinevere, and behind them, Philip, a most gentle Squire, bore the great two-handed brand, Excalibar.

"Now our Lady keep my heart stout," exclaimed Pizarro, "and stiffen my knee, or I must perforce kneel to this loveliness. Kind Heaven! Look, Antony, at yon Queen with the lissome undulating shape, undulating like a slow and tender no-wind wave of the blue main and —"

"Aye, undulating like the gentle swells the Zephyrs made in Cleo's silk sails, when we voyaged the Cydnus!" interposed Mark Antony.

"Aye, undulating like the distant velvety swell of upland beyond meadow!" added the Shepherd.

"Hush!" exclaimed Pizarro, not more than half in jest, "I speak, to keep from dying of a pent admiration. Look, Mark Antony and Shepherd, at yon Queen-feet; mark you how they show one moment beneath the heavy-trailing robe, then in successive instantaneousness withdraw again; one glitters, then is dark, — then the other, and is dark; like two white mice playing in and out the arras of a silent room! And friends! note ye her neck, how it curves, a stem bending with a rare

flower-face that the botanizing angels have not gathered, I know not why : how it curves, — like a vine-tendril now it seems, so that I am fain offer my stout bosom to support it ; but I look again and it is become regal proud as 't were scorning the protection of any power save the eyes there above it ! O Saxon eyes ! Like two unsounded oval seas at dawn, with silver mists upon them, and sylvan mysteries within them ! And I swear to ye, if the convex side of our concave firmanent be alabaster-white, then is it like yon broad Queen's-forehead, in which white heaven I warrant ye a fairer world than this revolves, she creating. Nay, men," said he, hurriedly advancing, "if loyalty be manhood then am I wholly a man, for here do I homage !" Sinking on one knee, in the path of the slow-advancing Arthur, and doffing his plumed hat, —

"Most puissant Sovereign, most lovely Queen, I know not if in puissance these queenly eyes exceed those kingly arms, nor if in loveliness your kingly deeds exceed these queenly eyes : nor would I solve mine amiable doubt ! I owe no subject's fealty to your throne, but I do render all true homage to your worth."

Quickly Mark Antony and the Shepherd were on knee beside him ; while King Arthur raised up Pizarro, and the Queen reached him her white hand to kiss, he kneeling again to receive this royal grace.

At this moment, two long, strong arms, with gauntleted hands of mail, reached out in front of King Arthur and divided the crowd to right and left, assisting the design by circling a rapier over the heads of the crowd, and gradually lowering its sweep till room was gained for free play of sword. It was Cranston, attired in a

light hauberk and helmet. These relics of the days of chivalry were the only memorials that Otilie had brought with her from Germany ; and, that morning, she and Gretchen had grown almost sportive in midst of their melancholy when, having determined to visit the Springs, they brought out the old coat of mail and casque, and arrayed Cranston in them. He had carried in his hand all day the naked rapier, whose sheath he had thrown away in the morning.

"My glove is there!" said he, throwing down a gauntlet. "I challenge to immediate combat King Arthur and all his Table Round! I am Lancelot of the Lake!"

"By Hercules!" exclaimed Mark Antony, "an I were to judge from the scowl of yon knight-challenger's brow, and the hot sparkle in 's eye, I could swear some dainty slippers in this room would be puddled with blood ere this joust be over!"

"With you there, General," sententiously observed the Shepherd.

Flemington kept his counsel. It was too late to interfere.

"King Arthur condescends to accept any challenge, but stoops not to raise any glove!" said Rübetsahl, spurning the gauntlet with his foot. "Give me the brand!"

On one knee Philip presented the mighty Excalibar.

"Sir Lancelot of the Lake, guard thyself!"

Up rose the long, wide blade and crossed with the thin one. Otilie, with that oppressive doom's-day feeling again overhanging her sluggish soul, like sultry

clouds on hot mornings, instinctively glided close to the inner edge of the living circle, and stood by Rübetsahl : who, indeed, was little aware of those glazed, distended eyes bent on his form ; and well, so, for they would have shaken his heart and relaxed the bow-tension of his muscles, of which he had full need to parry the quick thrusts of Cranston's rapier.

No thought struck the masquers that this sword-play was aught more than a part of the show. Presently all grew still, spelled by that fascination of naked steel which, in the theatres, entrances pit and boxes alike ; which, in the silent room of the suicide, often reveals a razor in the blood next morning ; which, on the field, makes armies stand still from fighting to see the waving and circling and hewing of the falchions of their leaders in single combat. So that now, even had the masquers known the deadly earnestness with which the two combatants were fighting, no one would have broken the spell by interfering in the dangerous, beautiful scene.

Cranston held his left hand aloft, presenting only his right side to his opponent, as fencers use ; but Rübetsahl, wielding his weapon with both hands, like the old rugged Ritters of his native land, stood full-breast to the foe. In at this broad bosom, searching the life lurking there, darted the rapier time and again, a baffled but insatiable lightning. Like an angry serpent's tongue, it leapt back and forth. *Coup de reverse !* No ; the broad blade received it slanting, and the narrow one glanced harmless. *Flanconnade !* No ; the broad blade wound about the narrow, like one serpent twining about another. *Feint, dégagement,* cut, in

tierce, in *cercle*, in *octave* ! No, still no ; the broad blade was there to receive them always, a polished, ubiquitous-hovering shield.

Strange, that the thin and doubtful music of two metal blades clashing against each other should so enchant three hundred men and women ! No one uttered a sound ; they drew breath, even, with an effort to be still.

Queen Felix, who had drawn back to give room for the swing of Rübetsahl's arm, only now began to suspect the fearful reality of what, at first, she had supposed, with the rest, a sham. She felt rise within her a purer and queenlier blood than that of the Guinevere she personated ; the arch of her neck became more regal ; her head rose aloft ; her nostril distended itself, and she looked on with a proud smile, in full confidence that bold Lancelot would lose.

Flemington, who, with Ottilie and Gretchen, alone knew the true nature of this tragedy veiling itself in sport, could not now have interfered if he would. Everywhere within that magic circle gleamed the two blades, in quick parry and thrust, either of which would have taken the life of one in their way.

All this time, the little brook that runs by the arbor-hill of Montvale, kept singing its tiny "road-melody," as it journeyed on toward the great Wave of Death, accepting cheerfully and making merry over the few moon-rays that struggled through thick overhanging leaves to light its way.

All this time, the grace of moonlight lay tenderly upon the rugged majesty of the mountains, as if Desdemona placed a dainty white hand upon Othello's brow.

All this time the old priestly oaks lifted yearning arms toward the stars, and a mighty company of leaf-chapleted followers, with silent reverence, joined in this most pathetic prayer of those dumb ministers of the hills.

And all this time the white stars said with silvery voices, "Benedicite: peace down there! and struggle to give more light to your fellow, not to take away his light!"

All of which remarks of the shiny preachers were, one may judge, unheard by Cranston or Rübetsahl, or any of the masquers. For, presently, Cranston began to grow tired under the unaccustomed weight of hauberk and helmet; and Rübetsahl, who had hitherto acted entirely on the defensive, saw himself able to put an end to the conflict. A mighty struggle, which crowded a month's arguments and replies into a second, flashed through his mind.

Shall I kill this man?

He deserves it.

Shall I not kill him?

It would be generous.

Any man can mete justice, especially when it comprehends his own revenge. The noble man scorns justice and spares. Justice is blind; blindness is not good. Mercy is Justice with the hood off her eyes.

Some one in the crowd whispered a word to his neighbor, and broke the fascination. A hum went about and began to grow; the crowd swayed and grew uneasy. Cranston, enraged at his declining strength, and fearful of interference, determined to risk all on a stroke. He drew his rapier far back over his head, for

a feint-cut and *dégagement*, his favorite thrust; but, quick as lightning, Rübetsahl made a great stride forward, his sword glittered in circle about his head, making him look like a god with a halo, and, stretching clear over Cranston's shoulder, he struck the backward-extended rapier in the centre, sending it spinning in a hundred diamond-bright gyrations to the opposite wall, against which it struck and fell.

"Take thy life, and use it better, Sir Lancelot of the Lake!" said he, as he struck, with his head so close that his breath was hot in Cranston's face.

But the force of Rübetsahl's blow and the weight of his huge sword were so great that he was swung entirely round, by sheer momentum. As he strode forward, Otilie had fallen upon her knees and leaned far into the circle, with arms outstretched. Suddenly she felt a sharp fire leap along her arm, as the point of Rübetsahl's whirling sword penetrated the flesh and ran a long gash from elbow to wrist; and fainted, as the excited crowd rushed in between the two combatants, like a furious wave between two ships.

"Hold, men!" shouted Flemington, standing over Otilie and pushing back vigorously, "a lady is hurt. You trample her to death!"

"Who is it?" cried a hundred people, anxious for sister or wife or daughter. Two or three shrieks, from women overcome by excitement and terror, sounded shrilly through the din.

"I've lifted her up, Aubrey. You and John push ahead through the crowd, and make way for me to bring her into the air. She has fainted."

"Permit me, sir!" said Rübetsahl, grasping the life-

less form which Flemington bore. He had recognized Otilie as her domino fell off. Supposing that some brother or husband claimed his right, Flemington cheerfully yielded his burden, and joined the pioneers who were pressing a way through the crowd.

Quickly Rübetsahl bounded down the steps, and deposited Otilie upon the rustic bench there, near the door. Gretchen glided past him, sat down on the bench, and supported Otilie's head on her bosom. A moment after, John Briggs was up from the spring with a glass of cool water, which he dashed in the fainting girl's face.

Presently the gray eyes opened.

"It is only a scratch, Gretchen, and I fainted. Give me your arm. Let us go back into the hotel. I thank you very much, gentlemen!" she said, to the anxious men bending over her.

In a moment she was gone.

She had not looked in Rübetsahl's eyes.

CHAPTER XIII.

"My vast pity almost makes me die
To see thee laying there thy golden head,
My pride in happier summers, at my feet."

Guinevere.

Swag. — "Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?"

Bottom. — "A calendar, a calendar! Look in the almanac: find out moonshine, find out moonshine."
Midsummer Night's Dream.

"Ladies and Gentlemen: In consequence of the sudden sickness of my operator, I have to run this moon, to-night, myself."

A. Ward, Showman.

JOHN CRANSTON paced to and fro in the dark shade of an oak. A swirl of black shapes whirled in a hideous round through his brain: revenges, angers, self-reproaches, vague remembrances, vaguer bitter-nesses. As he paced, he tottered and came near falling.

"'Gad, I'm weak," said he to himself, "and well might be. Don't think I slept any last night; more by token, was drunk or crazy — God knows which! — and got knocked down to cap it all!" He laughed the bitterest laugh of man. "I'll go sleep a little, and think about the pistols in the morning."

Meanwhile, the band in the ball-room played its most enticing waltzes, in vain. The masquers had lost heart for it, and only one or two couples remained,

endeavoring to get up some spasmodic enthusiasm in a dance.

Flemington and his two friends stood under the big oak, looking at the silvery mountain-crest, rising above its jet-black base in the shade.

"Damned be he who first cries 'Go to bed!'" exclaimed Flemington. "Gentlemen, I'm for a smoke and a long stroll in the moonlight. Black must be the soul of that man that would so affront our Lady Moon, yonder, as to put himself under cover at this time o' such a night. What d'ye say?"

"It's a *nem. con.* business, Flem," said Aubrey. "I'll go. Just wait a minute, tho', till I run up and get on a pair of boots, for these miserable sandal-soles are so thin that I'd as lief walk on my bare feet. Especially the left one, somehow," and he looked at his feet inquiringly. His face grew blank, and his companions burst into a loud laugh. He had loosened his thong while dancing, and in pressing through the crowd, the sandal had fallen off entirely; but the noble Roman, all unconscious of his great loss, had continued to stalk about, one shoe off and one shoe on, with far more ostentatious dignity certainly than his ancient prototype ever possessed.

"Thought the ground was unusually obtrusive on my left foot," said he, and ran off for his boots.

"Think I'll get on a pair of pants, myself," observed Briggs. "These ribbons round my leg make it feel like I had been holding a protracted session in the stocks."

They were not long gone.

"Which way?" asked Flemington.

"I vote for the half-way spring, up there on the

mountain. The view from the rock that juts out there must be charming to-night," said Briggs.

They took the road which winds up the mountain. This road, just beyond the "half-way spring," a mile and a half from the hotel, forks, one branch leading over to Thalberg, the other to Cade's Cove, where Otilie had resided some months.

"It's rather difficult," observed Flemington, puffing his cigar meditatively, "to imagine that this old prim earth, which now seems so demure and starchy and modest in her moonlight night-cap, is plunging along, on a scared nightmare, at the rate of I-forget-how-many-thousand miles a second!"

"What a wake she must make — hang the rhyme!" said Aubrey. "Jove! Would n't it be pleasant, now, to fly up close to her, on a pair of long, rakish wings, and get sucked into the boiling ether-foam behind her, and then fold yourself up like a lazy bird, and let her draw you along for a million miles or so!"

"And then flash out of the whirlpool, and run over and chat with somebody in the sun, and watch Maj. Orion sit in Cassiopeia's Chair and pull off his big military Boötes!" suggested Briggs.

"Pleasant enough," replied Flemington, "if one only had the — the — transportation-facilities!"

"A bad business," continued Aubrey, "this same want of transportation-facilities i' this world. A fellow feels so heavy and clogged like, when he thinks about wings and buoyancies, and such like other-world advantages. If one's body were only as light and as strong as one's thought, now! I'd like, for instance, to catch hold of that straight moon-ray yonder that shoots

through the leaves, and pull up by it right to the moon, hand over hand, like a sailor on a rope ! ”

“ Or to start from a high peak on the night-side of the world, and make five strokes of your wings, and then curve them backward like a keen eagle, and swoop down into the sun and flit about in his fire, like a moth in a candle-flame ! ” said Flemington.

“ And, when you got tired, stretch yourself on the bright top of a cloud, and float through the red, green, and gold of a sunset ; for you could find a sunset somewhere any time you wanted one ! ” quoth Briggs.

“ Aye,” responded Flemington, “ the old royal sun does fare right gallantly through the heavens, with a dainty dawn trumpeting silverly in front of him, and a sunset retinue in scarlet and gold crowding behind him ! ”

And then the three grew still, and walked and puffed their little smoke-clouds in silence.

While they are so — here, 24,999 ! slip along this steep acclivity and align yourselves upon the curving edge of the mountain-road, and take a look at these men by moonlight. It is a better light to see a soul by than sunlight. For sunlight, as an economical gas-saving arrangement, is a good thing and promotes business — but it puts out the stars ! these, dark night discloses, and sacred moonlight purifies them white. As with stars, so with souls. Flemington has a genius, you observe, for commanding ; Aubrey a genius for obeying ; John Briggs a talent for everything, and no genius for anything. Flemington is independent ; Aubrey sympathetic ; John Briggs impulsive. Under given circumstances, Flemington would think the best thing to

be done ; Aubrey would recognize the weight of his opinion ; and John Briggs would *do* something right or wrong immediately. If you were associated with Flemington, his originality would attract you to himself, — with Aubrey, his sympathy would direct your attention introspectively to yourself, — with Briggs, his unselfishness would send your thought away, both from him and you, to something else. Flemington is tall and graceful, with dark eyes ; Aubrey never yet knew what to do with his hands, and has hazel eyes ; and John Briggs — John Briggs — dear me, I have forgotten whether John Briggs was graceful or not, or what was his height or his color of eye ; in fact I don't think I ever knew, or even thought of looking to see, nor would you, if you had known glorious, unselfish, fine John Briggs. Further information as to the parentage, birth, and early life of Flemington and Aubrey can be obtained upon application to this author ; as for John Briggs, I do not think he had any parentage or birth, but the probabilities are strong that, as a man might send a dutiful son without a tutor to do Europe, so God put Briggs down on the earth, confident that he would return Home much improved in his knowledge of foreign life and manners !

The three friends were now arrived at the spring. The water bubbles into its basin, tinkling ; the spring is born to music. It gushes from the solid rock, out of which the road is hewn, flows across this, and pours a tiny stream down the steep channel-way it has worn for itself. On this outer edge of the road, nearly opposite the spring, the rock juts out and overhangs a sheer precipice of some hundreds of feet. It is fine vantage-

ground for a view, being clear of undergrowth and trailing vines that obstruct the sight on other parts of the road. Herefrom went up silently the three smoke-wreaths.

Far away to the left stretched the still procession of the peaks, like pilgrims halted in a curving line, when the foremost has reached a river. The furthest of these hill-pilgrims had reached the Tennessee. In front, if daylight shone, would have been a brave sweep of circular horizon, with its sky fitted in, like a broken piece, to the whole notched and serrated edge of the land; but, to-night, the dark trees under the mountain grew lighter and lighter until they reached the bright trees that were in moon-range, and these bright trees quickly became, further off, a mere silvery indistinctness which blended with silver mists and blotted out the horizon-line, so that on the rock there one seemed to stand in mid-heaven upon a vast slope that shot down away into unfathomable space.

At this moment, the noise of horses' hoofs was heard upon the rocky road. Soon, two voices sounded in the still air as the riders turned an abrupt corner a few yards below the spring. The voices were of women, and the talk was in German.

"O, Fraulein, let us go back to the hotel! It is too far to ride so late; and unaccompanied, too. I wish we had not started."

"No, no, no, Gretchen. I must go. I could not stay there. Gretchen, you forget! He is there! My God, no!"

"But, Fraulein, I am all bloody with helping you on your horse. Your arm should be bound; the wound is

still bleeding. See! You reel in your saddle. Ah, mercy!" shrieked Gretchen, as Otilie leaned far back with weakness, and, forgetting the curb, made her horse rear fearfully close to the precipice. She would have fallen; but Flemington bounded into the road and seized the bridle, while in the same instant Briggs caught the fainting girl in his arms.

This time the swoon was a deathly one, and did not yield easily.

"No wonder!" said John Briggs. "Look here!"

He pulled apart the pieces of cut sleeve, and disclosed the arm. Pearly white shone the upper portion, but the lower was dark with blood that still flowed from a long, lengthwise gash.

"Great God! Will she die, here? It is terrible! Keep throwing the water in her face till I run to the hotel and bring up a physician!"

Flemington turned and nearly ran into a carriage and horses, which had approached unperceived by the excited men round Otilie. The carriage stopped.

"What's the matter, James?" said a cheery man's voice inside.

"Road blocked up wid people and horses, sah! Somebody hurt, I b'lieve, sah!"

A gentleman and lady emerged from the carriage, two horsemen who had been riding behind it alighted, and all came up.

"Ah!" said John Sterling, "it is our poor lady who was wounded in the ball-room. Let me see, gentlemen. I'm somewhat of a physician. It is not a bad wound," he added, examining the arm. "No artery is cut, though blood has flowed profusely. We'll bind it

up. Lend me your handkerchief, Felix, and tear mine into strips. Fan her face, Phil, with your hat, and let some one chafe her hands. She'll recover in a minute."

Cheery words of John Sterling's, that went to Gretchen's heart!

Rübetsahl stood still, with folded arms, intently regarding the white face of his old beloved. As Ottilie, under the vigorous treatment of John Sterling, recovered life, her eyes unclosed full into Rübetsahl's. An expression of infinite yearning and infinite appealing gathered in them, and then they closed again, while a tear slid down one lash, glittered, and fell.

Tall Rübetsahl shook through all his frame.

He did not love her, now, and could not, henceforth. His soul was filled with a "vast pity" for her; and love admits no pity, on either side: it demands awe, which is pity's opposite, on both sides. Rübetsahl felt this. It was for this lost love, which had left only pity behind it, that he shook through all his frame. For it is impossible that King Arthur, breathing a vast pity over Guinevere's low head, should, in the same breath, have sworn, —

"I love thee still,
Let no one dream but that I love thee still!"

Pity presupposes an ugly inferiority in the pitied; but Love demands a beautiful equality of preëminence in both the loved.

Over this thrice-dear dead love, upon whose grave lay pity like a flower, Paul Rübetsahl mourned and mourned, as he stood there gazing upon Ottilie.

"She is recovering. How far is it to your home, madame?" said John Sterling.

"About four miles, Herr!" answered Gretchen.

"Then my house is nearest. We will take her there. Gentlemen, assist me to get the lady into my carriage. Felix, you and the lady's friend ride with her inside. I'll take her horse."

"By the way, Flem," said Philip Sterling, "I can't let old college days go without one talk. What are you going to do, to-morrow?"

"Thought I'd pack up and go home next day. Season's about over anyhow."

"Don't think of it. You'll miss the best part of our year. The autumn is glorious here! I'll make a better proposition. You and the boys there ride over, to-morrow, to Thalberg, and spend a week or more with me. Got plenty of room. We can hunt and fish a little. And I'll show you what father calls Valley Beautiful. What do you say, Aubrey?"

"Good!"

"Briggs?"

"Splendid!"

"It's all arranged then. Come early. Good night!"

"Good night, Phil," — from the three. And so the footsteps passed one way, and the clang of hoofs receded, the other.

The spring bubbled its birth-music and flashed its little stream down the rock, a breeze woke up a minute and rustled the vine-leaves and went to sleep again, a dreamy bird uttered a faint half-whistle half-sigh in his sleep, and the mountain presently became as still as the stars.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Morn in the white wake of the morning star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold." *The Princess.*

THE sun must needs be of an impudent fancy. He alone had boldness to look on fair Godiva at Coventry: and on the morning after the masque-ball at Montvale, he sent peering ray-glances into every chamber-window that opened eastward in our half of the earth. One of these light-bolts struck John Cranston full in the face, and woke him from the deep sleep that had followed two days of exhausting excitement. As if he had been uninterruptedly pursuing the train of thought in which he had fallen asleep, Cranston immediately commenced to discuss within himself the situation.

"If I challenge him, he'll choose swords again; and, by the rood! however reluctantly I confess it, I've got evidence to show that he can beat me at that.

"So, on swords, I lose.

"If he chose pistols, I might kill him; but then inquiry would be aroused, the contemptible quidnuncs would investigate, and the whole affair would be trumpeted forth by the enterprising scoundrels.

"On pistols, I lose again.

"What a fool I am," he suddenly exclaimed, rising up in bed, "not to see that I have lost already! Old

Sterling will never pardon what occurred in his house ; nor — nor Felix either. The whole thing stands about so,” — knitting his brows and falling back upon his pillow : “ first, the gratification of revenge ; said gratification is, however, in the first place doubtful, and in the second place, if successful, will lose me my reputation for life and kill John Cranston, senior : second, the postponement of the revenge till such time as I can call this man out on some other pretext which will not involve the discovery of my — affair at Frankfort. For which, God knows ! God knows ! I’m sorry enough. How white her face was ! ”

John Cranston’s face became half blank, as faces will, when, in endeavoring to avoid a thought, one does one’s best to think of nothing. But he was a man of short arguments and quick conclusions.

“ I’ll go home and wait,” concluded he ; and did so, that day.

The sun sent another ray into the window of a room in the second story of John Sterling’s house. It fell and dwelt lovingly upon the sleeping eyes of Otilie. Large, diaphanous half-globes, blue-veined, dainty, were these white-lidded eyes. Have you ever seen two grand magnolia petals fallen on the ground, convex side up ?

Otilie rose, and walked to her window. From the tranquil river below were rising a thousand rings of mist, which lengthened into soft ellipses, or broke and curled into fantastic curves, or stretched away into wavering, streaming pennants, all glittering suddenly as they floated into range of the straight sun-rays.

"The river prays to God!" said Otilie; and, obeying an inexplicable impulse, she fell upon her knees and burst forth into an agony of tears.

She had not wept in a year; nor prayed either, except to the trees and the stars.

Rübetsahl saw his sun-ray coming. He had not slept all night. He had been silently sitting by his grave, and watching the pale flower that lay upon it.

And poor John Briggs, being in No. 93 of the west wing, got no sunbeam. All the night his dreams had hovered vaguely, yet full tenderly, about Otilie, like clouds gathering round a star.

CHAPTER XV.

"The love of nature seems to have led Thomson to a cheerful religion; and a gloomy religion to have led Cowper to a love of nature. The one would carry his fellow-men along with him into nature; the other flies to nature from his fellow-men."

S. T. Coleridge.

"Nevertheless, that great epoch cannot fail to arrive when the whole family of mankind, by a grand universal resolve, will snatch themselves from this sorrowful condition, from this frightful imprisonment; and by a voluntary abdication of their terrestrial abode, redeem their race from this anguish, and seek refuge in a happier world with their Ancient Father.

A class of Nature-philosophers refuted by Novalis.

THAT day at Thalberg, when dinner was over, the sun had only a half-hour for this side of earth, having an appointment with the Antipodes at half-past six.

"Gentlemen," said John Sterling to Flemington and his two friends, as they rose from table, "you saw the silver side of my valley when you were riding over this morning. Come with me, and I'll show you and these ladies the golden side; for it is like the old shield in the story, only I don't know that any foolish knights ever quarrelled over it. Phil, have chairs brought out on the balcony. Shall we lead the way?" He offered his arm to Otilie.

In laughing procession they filed out, and established themselves upon a fair broad balcony that looked westward and overhung the slope which swept down with all its trees and boulders to the river.

"Our womankind are all used to cigar-smoke, Flem," said Philip, handing them round. You don't object to it?" addressing Otilie.

"O, what a question, — to a German! At home," — ah, my God! Home? What a word is this for me to speak! thought Otilie — "the house was always full of smoke from a half-dozen pipes of as many German kinsmen of mine. I made a virtue of necessity and liked it in self-defense."

Who grumbles that such a dinner should end in nothing but — smoke? You're a dyspeptic; it was n't smoking hurt you, sir; it was the want of exercise, which if you had taken, you might have smoked as much as you pleased!

Be still about this Thalberg smoke. It ascended towards heaven; and drew their thoughts buoyantly upward.

The Thalbergers began to discourse upon high topics.

"How easy is it," — observed Philip, "when one looks on a scene like this, to answer the arguments of those wild disputants in Von Hardenberg's book? 'Intercourse with the powers of Nature,' says one party, 'with plants, animals, rocks, storms and waves, must necessarily assimilate men to these objects. This assimilation,' they go on to say, 'this metamorphosis and dissolution of the divine and the human into ungovernable forces, is even the spirit of Nature, that frightfully voracious power. Is not all,' — they ask, with an earnestness which only makes one smile, here; 'is not all that we see even now a prey from heaven, a great ruin of former glories, the remains of a terrific repast?'"

"I don't feel," said Flemington, with a long-drawn

luxurious puff, "as if I were relapsing into barbarism, just at this particular moment. Though, sure enough, it must have been in some wild hurly-burly of Nature's youth, when she piled up these huge hills so high, and tossed them about so carelessly."

"Yes," said Rübetsahl, "but look! she's sorry she did it! She's done her best to smooth it over! She has covered these same mountain-evidences of folly with picturesque rocks and loving mosses; with stately trees and saintly flowers; with glittering springs that invite people to drink, and with hospitable ferns that allure people to rest. She has converted the boisterous sins of her youth into the enchanting virtues of her age. Her wild oats have blossomed into mountain-roses and tiger-lilies!"

"That's true," chimed Aubrey; "whereas Nature was an earthquake, now she is a flower. Let men tremble with a sublime terror at her old destructions; they can thrill with a sublimer love at her later creations."

"And yet," interposed John Sterling meditatively, "if one attempt to fly from his sins into Nature, expecting to drown the memory and sting of his transgression in her terrors and her beauties, one fails unless he remembers this: that Nature is nothing as an end; that Nature is everything as a means. Nature is finite in herself; she is infinite in her suggestions. We must not fly to her, but to the great Christ she helps us see. Perhaps the mysterious idea of Divinity is like a sentence written backward; we make it out easiest by reflecting it in a mirror. As such a mirror, Nature is a glorious revealer to the sorrowful soul; an infinite-tongued

preacher of the Son who is our Father. I do not know the metaphysics ; but as a practical man, hunting something to live by through day and night, Sundays and all, I do not want other proof of Christ and his purifying faculty through love, than that fair pageantry out yonder," he concluded, pointing to the brilliant west.

Ottillie looked at the far, glowing mountains with wistful eyes. With wistful tone, "What you say, sir," said she, "is charming. But, alas, does not every one carry into Nature an eye either bleared, or long-sighted, or short-sighted, or somehow defective? Is not this vast mirror to some a concave one ; to some a convex one ; to some a cracked one, distorting, all ways, the sentence one wishes to read? Does not each heart interpret Nature its own way, so that to the sad heart this great dew-drop glitters like a tear, while to the joyful heart it seems a diamond at a feast? One of your own poets calls the moon Queen of Heaven, blessing all lovers ; another swears the moon is the Eye of Hell recording the crimes of men !"

"Young lady," replied old John solemnly, "these vagaries of trembling human hearts only exhibit more clearly the sympathy, the *sun-pathos*, the feeling-with, of Nature. The mirror will correct itself and mend itself for any persistent and serious eye. I think, through all phases of wavering distortion, the heart will find behind Nature love as well as terror, and will spring to the most powerful of these, which is love."

"And so," cried Philip, "who can believe all this humbug of Macaulay, that the advance of imagination is inverse to the advance of reason, and that poetry

must decline as science flourishes? It is true Homer was at one end, and Newton at the other, of a time. But how long a time intervened between Humboldt and Goethe; how long between Agassiz and Tennyson? Moreover and what is more, one can scarcely tell whether Humboldt and Agassiz were not as good poets as Goethe and Tennyson were certainly good philosophers! And nothing surprised me more than that even fine Jamie Hogg must needs fall into this folly and say, 'Let philosophers ken causes, poets effects'; but"—

"Hold on, Phil!" interrupted John Briggs, "Honest Hogg, when he said that, had just come in out o' the cold to a warm fire; the poor fellow was sleepy. He did n't mean it. I hardly think, now, you ought to bring that up against Jeems!"

"Well, I won't. But I feel mighty savage against Macaulay!" replied Philip, rolling up his coat-cuffs.

"Your're right, Phil," said Flemington. "One can trace, through the whole literary development of our day, the astonishing effect of the stimulus which has been given to investigations into material nature by the rise of geology and the prosperity of chemistry. To-day's science bears not only fruit, but flowers also! Poems, as well as steam-engines, crown its growth in these times."

"So!" said John Sterling, "the nineteenth century has taken a stroll into the woods and fields, and good is come of it. For every time has its mythology of Nature. The Gheber found, or rather placed, a God in the sun; a strange God, nor human nor divine. The Greek put fauns and hamadryads in the woods, not divine, and yet not human, for they did not suffer; they

had no human hearts. Our poets, God bless 'em! have given to all natural forms that they shall suffer and love as we suffer and love. They have not conquered and made slaves of the rocks and trees; but they have won them over to be friends, neighbors, and citizens; which culminated when Robert Browning declared of a stone church in Italy, that it —

‘Held up its face for the sun to shave!’

The earth, through our poets, is no longer dead matter. She has a soul, and it dreams of God, and one can see this dream in any lake!”

“Hurrah for matter,” quoth Briggs, “mysterious, spirit-hiding matter! I move that the freedom of the city of the universe be presented to this new citizen by a committee consisting of humanity at large!”

“What you say has occurred in poetry has also taken place, I think, in music,” said Felix Sterling. “Why do they talk of pre-Raphaelitism, and not also of pre-Beethovenism and pre-Miltonism? These all mean surely nothing more than the close, loving, broad-minded study of Nature; and meaning this, they mean just what Raphael and Milton and Beethoven must have done. The beauty of our time is, that science has enabled us to do so better than they could! Beethoven is to Chopin as a wild mountain is to a flower growing on it; as the sombre booming of the sea in a cave is to the heavenly murmur of a rivulet in a glen. So Milton to Tennyson and all the sweet house-hold poets of our day; so Angelo to Bierstadt. Those were grand, but these are beautiful; those were magnificent, these are tender; those were powerful, these are human!”

“Wherefore,” said John Sterling, “matter is not so

bad, after all. Verily it is true that matter does imprison our souls; and it is absolutely impossible that these souls can communicate directly with each other. We may talk, sing, write, paint, carve and build; we express our soul, so; but we must use matter each time. We may even, to adopt the most intangible method, gaze into the eye of our beloved, speaking many things silently; yet this requires still an eye, which is matter. Each soul is prisoner in his cell. Yet we can paint on the wall, and it will remain! We can use that mysterious cypher we call language, and the wall will send it along! We can sing, and the wall will convey the song to our brother in the next cell! And so, albeit there is for souls no 'kissing through the bars' of matter, yet matter is a good jailer, and conveys our messages to our fellow-prisoners, and even suggests better messages than we could frame without!"

"And will never cease!" broke in Philip. "Poetry will never fail, nor science, nor the poetry of science. Till the end of time will deep call unto deep, and day utter speech unto day, and poets listen, with eavesdropping ears, to catch and sing to men some melodies from that sounding song-rhetoric of the lights and the waters!"

Philip disappeared, as if to hide a blush. Presently a prodigious rumbling was heard.

"Is that thunder?" said John Sterling. "Surely those clouds over yonder are too far for that!"

The rumbling increased, like an approaching earthquake.

It burst upon the wondering Thalbergers.

"Easy there, Ned. So! Now lift, boys, all, and get

it over the threshold. Roll it along out there, so he can sit with his face to the west. There!"

It was the piano, which four stout negroes had rolled from the music-room out on the balcony.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Philip, distributing manuscript parts of music, "profiting by a suggestion of my wise sister there, I have arranged a glorious thing of Chopin's here, not for an orchestra, as she wished, but for voices. We'll have a vocal orchestra. Sister Felie, here's the contralto part. I know you sing," — to Otilie, — "for I heard your soprano swelling up to-day from somewhere in the house. You and Felie will do splendidly in that duet there that commences the piece. To it there's a four-voiced accompaniment: Flem, you take the bass and Briggs the tenor — here's your part; and mother'll sing one part while I play the other on my flute. Pity you and I don't sing, Aubrey! Mr. Rübetsahl, will you preside, as the show-bills say, at the piano; just throb that bass along, you know, where it's too low for the voice; and play a full accompaniment for this second air, here. Stand up, everybody! All ready? Now; one, two, three, four, five, six;" and they started, everybody infected by the music-full soul that sparkled in his eye and fired his quick movements.

The duet rose and fell, rose and fell again, continually reaching up and continually falling down, like a human soul with its high aspirings and its terrible rebuffs. So rise we, so sink we; one moment gods, another moment beasts.

Then, with a startling modulation, and a short pause during which the singers scarcely dared to breathe, they commenced a full-chorded chorus, sung in strict

time, with little rallentando or crescendo, a solemn, pathetic movement, full of sweet invitation and calm urging, repeating itself in a dozen keys, approached by new, yet simple modulations : it was like religion, importuning men every day. Now came two strains which were utterly indescribable, save by their effect. They were full of majesty and simple sweetness. They bore to you soft breaths from sunshiny woods, mingled with hum of purling waters of life and murmur of angel-talk ; yet, in the midst of all, hinting by wild suggestions of a mystery that cannot be solved and a love that cannot be measured. The whole piece was like life and its end. It started with human yearnings and human failures ; the second part brought religion, and the third part spoke of heaven.

And so, the last notes floated out over the rocks, over the river, over the twilight, to the west. The echoes liked the music, and long after it was over, kept humming little snatches of it, calling to each other to admire, and answering with tiny bravos.

A breeze came like a courier and told all the trees and the river that the great Night would shortly pass that way ; whereat the leaves did stir a moment, and the waters ruffled, as making ready for the King.

Who came, and sat, and administered his tranquil reign over quiet mountain and quiet valley ; and over Thalberg House, not quiet, being full of young and passionate hearts of men and women, some sleeping, some waking, all dreaming.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

"Thou shalt not kill."

"Love your enemies."

"Father, forgive them : they know not what they do." *Christ..*

THE early spring of 1861 brought to bloom, besides innumerable violets and jessamines, a strange, enormous, and terrible flower.

This was the blood-red flower of war, which grows amid thunders ; a flower whose freshening dews are blood and hot tears, whose shadow chills a land, whose odors strangle a people, whose giant petals droop downward, and whose roots are in hell.

It is a species of the great genus, sin-flower, which is so conspicuous in the flora of all ages and all countries, and whose multifarious leafage and fruitage so far overgrow a land that the violet, or love-genus, has often small chance to show its quiet blue.

The cultivation of this plant is an expensive business, and it is a wonder, from this fact alone, that there should be so many fanciers of it. A most profuse and perpetual manuring with human bones is absolutely necessary to keep it alive, and it is well to have these powdered, which can be easily done by hoofs of cavalry-horses and artillery-wheels, not to speak of the usual

method of mashing with cannon-balls. It will not grow, either, except in some wet place near a stream of human blood ; and you must be active in collecting your widows' tears and orphans' tears and mothers' tears to freshen the petals with in the mornings.

It requires assiduous working ; and your labor-hire will be a large item in the expense, not to speak of the amount disbursed in preserving the human bones alive until such time as they may be needed, for, I forgot to mention, they must be fresh, and young, and newly-killed.

It is, however, a hardy plant, and may be grown in any climate, from snowy Moscow to hot India.

It blooms usually in the spring, continuing to flower all summer until the winter rains set in : yet in some instances it has been known to remain in full bloom during a whole inclement winter, as was shown in a fine specimen which I saw the other day, grown in North America by two wealthy landed proprietors, who combined all their resources of money, of blood, of bones, of tears, of sulphur and what not, to make this the grandest specimen of modern horticulture, and whose success was evidenced by the pertinacious blossoms which the plant sent forth even amid the hostile rigors of snow and ice and furious storms. It is supposed by some that seed of this American specimen (now dead) yet remain in the land ; but as for this author (who, with many friends, suffered from the unhealthy odors of the plant), he could find it in his heart to wish fervently that these seed, if there be verily any, might perish in the germ, utterly out of sight and life and memory and out of the remote hope of resurrec-

tion, forever and ever, no matter in whose granary they are cherished !

But, to return.

It is a spreading plant, like the banyan, and continues to insert new branch-roots into the ground, so as sometimes to overspread a whole continent. Its black-shadowed jungles afford fine cover for such wild beasts as frauds and corruptions and thefts to make their lair in; from which, often, these issue with ravening teeth and prey upon the very folk that have planted and tended and raised their flowery homes !

Now, from time to time, there have appeared certain individuals (wishing, it may be, to disseminate and make profit upon other descriptions of plants) who have protested against the use of this war-flower.

Its users, many of whom are surely excellent men, contend that they grow it to protect themselves from oppressive hailstorms, which destroy their houses and crops.

But some say the plant itself is worse than any hailstorm; that its shades are damp and its odors unhealthy, and that it spreads so rapidly as to kill out and uproot all corn and wheat and cotton crops. Which the plant-users admit; but rejoin that it is cowardly to allow hailstorms to fall with impunity, and that manhood demands a struggle against them of some sort.

But the others reply, fortitude is more manly than bravery, for noble and long endurance wins the shining love of God; whereas brilliant bravery is momentary, is easy to the enthusiastic, and only dazzles the admiration of the weak-eyed since it is as often shown on one side as the other.

But then, lastly, the good war-flower cultivators say, our preachers recommend the use of this plant, and help us mightily to raise it in resistance to the hail-storms.

And reply, lastly, the interested other-flower men, that the preachers should preach Christ; that Christ was worse hailed upon than anybody, before or since; that he always refused to protect himself, though fully able to do it, by any war-banyan; and that he did, upon all occasions, not only discourage the resort to this measure, but did inveigh against it more earnestly than any thing else, as the highest and heaviest crime against Love — the Father of Adam, Christ, and all of us.

Friends and horticulturists, cry these men, sticking for the last word, if war was ever right, then Christ was always wrong; and war-flowers and the vine of Christ grow different ways, insomuch that no man may grow with both!

CHAPTER II.

King Henry. — "How now, good Blunt? Thy looks are full of speed."

Blunt. — "So hath the business that I come to speak of.
Lord Mortimer of Scotland hath sent word
That Douglas and the English rebels met,
The eleventh of this month, at Shrewsbury :
A mighty and a fearful head they are,
If promises be kept on every hand,
As ever offered foul play in a state."

King Henry IV.

BUT these sentiments, even if anybody could have been found patient enough to listen to them, would have been called sentimentalities, or worse, in the spring of 1861, by the inhabitants of any of those States lying between Maryland and Mexico. An afflatus of war was breathed upon us. Like a great wind, it drew on and blew upon men, women, and children. Its sound mingled with the solempnity of the church-organs and arose with the earnest words of preachers praying for guidance in the matter. It sighed in the half-breathed words of sweethearts conditioning impatient lovers with war-services. It thundered splendidly in the impassioned appeals of orators to the people. It whistled through the streets, it stole in to the firesides, it clinked glasses in bar-rooms, it lifted the gray hairs of our wise men in conventions, it thrilled through the lectures in college halls, it rustled the thumbled book-leaves of the school-rooms.

This wind blew upon all the vanes of all the

churches of the country, and turned them one way — toward war. It blew, and shook out, as if by magic, a flag whose device was unknown to soldier or sailor before, but whose every flap and flutter made the blood bound in our veins.

Who could have resisted the fair anticipations which the new war-idea brought? It arrayed the sanctity of a righteous cause in the brilliant trappings of military display; pleasing, so, the devout and the flippant which in various proportions are mixed elements in all men. It challenged the patriotism of the sober citizen, while it inflamed the dream of the statesman, ambitious for his country or for himself. It offered test to all allegiances and loyalties; of church, of state; of private loves, of public devotion; of personal consanguinity; of social ties. To obscurity it held out eminence; to poverty, wealth; to greed, a gorged maw; to speculation, legalized gambling; to patriotism, a country; to statesmanship, a government; to virtue, purity; and to love, what all love most desires — a field wherein to assert itself by action.

The author devoutly wishes that some one else had said what is here to be spoken — and said it better. That is: if there was guilt in any, there was guilt in nigh all of us, between Maryland and Mexico; that Mr. Davis, if he be termed the ringleader of the rebellion, was so not by virtue of any instigating act of his, but purely by the unanimous will and appointment of the Southern people; and that the hearts of the Southern people bleed to see how their own act has resulted in the chaining of Mr. Davis, who was as innocent as they, and in the pardon of those who were as guilty as he!

All of us, if any of us, either for pardon or for punishment: this is fair, and we are willing.

But the author has nought to do with politics; and he turns with a pleasure which he hopes is shared by the Twenty-four-thousand-nine-hundred-and-ninety-nine, to pursue the adventures of Paul Rübetsahl and company in

CHAPTER III.

Prince Henry.—"I have procured thee, Jack, a charge of foot."

Falstaff.—"I would it had been of horse. Well, God be thanked for these rebels."

King Henry IV.

ON one of the last days of April, '64, six soldiers in gray, upon six horses in all colors, were riding down the road that leads from Surrey Court House toward the beautiful bay into which the James spreads itself before it is called Hampton Roads.

It was yet early in the morning. The sun was rejoicing with a majestic tenderness over his little firstling — April.

Our six horsemen were in gay conversation; as who would not be, with a light rifle on his shoulder, with a good horse bounding along under him, with a fresh breeze that had in it the vigor of the salt sea and the caressing sweetness of the spring blowing upon him, with five friends tried in the tempest of war as well as by the sterner test of the calm association of inactive camp-life, and with the world's width about him and the enchanting vagueness of life yet to be lived — the delicious change-prospect of futurity — before him?

As they rode on, the beauty of the woods grew, nearing the river. The road wound about deep glens filled with ancient beeches and oaks, and carpeted with early flowers and heart-leaves upon which still dwelt large

bulbs of dew ; so enchanted with their night's resting-place that they slept late, loth to expand into vapor and go back home in the clouds.

Lieutenant Flemington spurred his horse forward and turned him round full-face to the party.

"Gentlemen, there's some mistake about all this!" said he, as the men stopped, laughing at a puzzled expression which overspread his face: "for whereas, this honorable company of six has been for three years or more toilsomely marching on foot with an infantry regiment—but now rides good horses: and whereas, this honorable company of six has been for three years feeding upon hard-tack and bacon which grew continually harder and also less and wormier—but now devours Virginia biscuit and spring-chickens and ham and eggs and—and all the other things that came on, and went off, the table at mine host's of the Court House this morning:"—

"Not to speak of the mint-juleps that the big man-slave brought in on a waiter before we got out o' bed," interposed Briggs.

"And whereas, we have hitherto had to fight through a press of from two to five hundred men to fill our canteens when we marched by a well—but now do take our several gentlemanly ease and leisure in doing that same, as just now when the pretty girl smiled at us in the big white house yonder, where we

'Went to the well to get some water:'

and whereas, we have hitherto dragged along in pantaloons that we could put on a dozen ways by as many holes, have worn coats that afforded no protection to

anything but the insects congregated in the seams of the same, have had shirts that — shirts that — that — at any rate we *have* had shirts — but now do fare forth pranked in all manner of gorgeous array such as gray jackets with fillimagree on the sleeves of 'em, and hussar-breeches, and cavalry-boots, and O shade of Jones of Georgia! with spurs to boot and clean white collars to neck: and whereas, we have been accustomed to think a mud-hole a luxury in the way of beds, and have been wont to beg Heaven, as its greatest boon to man, not to let the cavalry ride over us without waking us up to see 'em do it — but now do sleep between white sheets without fear of aught but losing our senses from sleeping so intensely: and whereas, finally, all these things are contrary to the ordinary course of nature and are not known save as dim recollections of a previous state of existence in itself extremely hypothetical, therefore, be it resolved and it is hereby resolved " —

"Unanimously," from the five.

"That this — figure — at present on this horse and clothed with these sumptuous paraphernalia of pompous war, is *not* B. Chauncey Flemington, that is to say (to borrow a term from the German metaphysics) is Not-Me, that this horse is not *my* horse, this paraphernalia not *my* paraphernalia, that para-ditto not *your* para-ditto, that this road is *no* road, and the whole affair a dream or phantasmagory sent of the Devil for no purpose but to embitter the waking from it, and

"Resolved, further, that we now proceed to wake up, and exorcise this devil. Cain Smallin, of the bony fingers, will you do me the favor to seize hold of

my left ear and twist it? Hard, if you please, Mr. Smallin!"

Cain seized and twisted: whereat went up a villainous screech from the twistee.

"Mark you, men, how hard the Devil clings to him!" quoth Briggs.

"Herr Von Hardenberg says, 'when we dream that we dream, we are near awaking,'" said Rübetsahl, "but I am not awake and I surely dream that I do dream!"

"I remember," said Aubrey, "that Hans Dietrich did dream, upon a time, that the elf-people showered gold upon him, but woke in the morning and found his breeches-pockets full of yellow leaves. *A fortiori*, this in my canteen, which I dimly dream was poured in there for home-made wine by an old lady who stopped me and blessed me the other side the Court House this morning — this, I say, in my canteen, should now be no wine, or at least, if these present events be a dream, should be sour wine. I will resolve me of this doubt!"

The canteen rose in air, its round mouth met Aubrey's round mouth, and a gurgling noise was heard; what time the five awaited in breathless suspense the result of the experiment. The gurgling continued.

"I think Mister Aubrey must ha' fell into another dream, like," quoth Cain Smallin, "an 's done forgot he 's drinkin', an' the rest of us is dry!"

"Ah-h-h-h!" observed Aubrey as the canteen at last came down. "Gentlemen, this is as marvellous like to good wine of the blackberry as is one blue-coat to another. Albeit this be but a thin and harmful wine of

hallucination, yet—I am a mortal man! at least I dream I am, wherefore I am fain exclaim with the poet

‘ Thus let me dream, forever, on! ’ ”

“ I think,” modestly interposed Philip Sterling, “ that I might perhaps throw a little light on the subject ; at any rate, the number of experiments will increase the probability of our conclusions drawn therefrom. Now, as I passed down the road, in this dream, I observed a still where they make apple-brandy ; and propounding some questions as to the *modus agendi* to a benevolent-looking lady who stood in the house hard by, she, if I dream not, begged that I would accept this bottle, which I now uncork, I think, and which, if all end well, will enable me to say, in the words of the song,

‘ I see her still in my dreams.’

But if it should be wild-wine of the Devil, or newt’s-eye and frog-toe porridge, or other noxious *jigots* of hags and witches—stand around to receive me as I fall. I waive the politeness which requires I should offer this bottle first to my fellow-dreamers here, Mr. Briggs and Mr. Smallin, in consideration that the compound might kill, and I were loth the country should lose two such valuable lives. I request that I be decently buried and news sent home, if it prove fatal, as I fear. I drink! Friends, adieu, adieu!”

“ Why, this,” quoth Briggs, “ is surely much adieu about nothing!”

The bottle went up to the mouth, like its friend the canteen, and stayed, like its friend. While it hung in mid-air—

“ Good Heavens!” exclaimed Aubrey, “ the poison

is taking effect! He has not strength to remove it from his mouth!"

"Gentlemen, all is over!" said Rübetsahl, and groaned, and, seizing Philip, dragged him to the green bank of the road, when the draggee fell back in true stage-fashion, not forgetting to spread his handkerchief upon the hillock where he laid his dying head: "I would not die," muttered he, "with my hair full of cockle-burrs!"

"Danged ef this 'ere ham aint mighty nigh as good as fresh ven'zun!" quoth sturdy Cain Smallin, who had dismounted and seated himself on a stump, while his lower jaw worked like a trip-hammer reversed, to the great detriment of a huge slice of bread and ham which he had produced from his capacious haversack. "'Pears like as if I never was so horn'gry sence I was froze up over on old Smoky Mount'n, one Christmas. I b'leeve I haint done nuthin' but eat sence we was detailed f'om the *rigiment*, to'ther side o' Richmond! You better b'leeve now — *Gentlemen!*" he exclaimed suddenly, "look at yan nigger down the road! He travels as peert as ef he was a-carryin' orders to a *rigiment* to come down into the fight double-quick. Hornet must ha' stung his mule; or sumthin'!"

At this moment a negro dashed up on a mule whose pace he was accelerating with lusty encouragement of switch, foot, and voice.

"Halt there, *caballero* hot with haste and coal-black with speed!" cried Flemington. "What's the matter?"

"Good God, Marster, de Yankee niggahs is playin' de devil wid old Mistis down de road yonder! Dey done hung old Marster up to a tree-limb to make him tell

whah he put de las' year's brandy an' he nuvver tole em; an' I seed 'em a-histe-in him up agin, an' I run roun' to de stable an' tuk out ole Becky here an' cum a-stavin'; an' I 'lowed to mysef I'd save *one* mule for ole Marster anyhow ef he lives, which I don't b'leeve he 's agwine to do it nohow; an —"

"Mount, men!" Flemington jumped into the saddle. "How far is it to the house? What's your name?" — to the negro.

"Name Charles, sah: Charles, de ca'ige-driver. Hit 's about a half ur three-quarter thar, f'om here."

"Have they got out a picket; did you see any of them riding this way while the others were in the house?"

"Yaas, sah; seed one cumin' dis ways as I cum de back-way, out o' de lot!"

"T wont do to ride any further, then. Get off your mule, Charles. Boys, dismount and tie your horses in the bushes here, off the road. We 'll go round this back-way. Lead the way; and keep under cover of the hedge and the fence, yonder, everybody, so they can't see us."

While the words were being spoken the command had been executed, and the party struck into a rapid walk down a path which led off from the road in the direction of the river. Presently they crossed a fence; and stopped to peep through the rails of another, running perpendicularly to the path. A large house, part brick, part wooden, embowered in trees, appeared at a short distance.

"Dat 's de place!" whispered Charles, the carriage-driver.

Flemington had already formed his plans.

“Men, they’re all inside the house, except the picket out in the road yonder. I’m going to creep up close to the house just behind that brick garden-wall there, and see how things look. The rest of you keep down this side o’ the fence, and get just behind the long cattle-stable in rear of the house. Wait there till you hear me shoot; then dash up to the house, — ’t is n’t twenty yards — and every man for himself! Come with a yell or two. Cain, you come with me. Here goes over the fence: quick!”

The minutes and the men crept on, like silent worms. Flemington and Smallin gained their wall, which ran within a few feet of the house, unperceived.

“I’ll stop here, Cain. You creep on, close down, old fellow, until you get to the front fence yonder, and wait there till I shoot. Then come on like a big rock tumbling down Old Smoky!”

Under cover of a thick vine which ran along the top of the wall, Flemington cautiously raised his head and peeped over.

An old man was lying on the grass-plat, with a rope-noose still hanging round his neck. Over him bent a young girl. She was dashing water in his face and chafing his hands in the endeavor to restore the life which, by his bloodless face and the blue streak under his eyes, seemed to have taken its departure forever. Near them sat a corpulent old lady, on the ground, passive with grief, rocking herself to and fro, in that most pathetic gesture of sorrowing age.

Inside the house was Bedlam. Oaths, yells of triumph, taunts, and menaces mingled with the crash of breaking crockery and the shuffling of heavy feet.

Just as Flemington raised his head above the wall, four stout negroes staggered through a wide door which gave upon a balcony of the second story, bearing a huge old-fashioned wardrobe which they lifted over the railing and let drop. A wild shout went up as the wardrobe crashed to the ground and burst open, revealing a miscellaneous mass of the garments that are known to the other sex.

"Mo' good clo'es!" cried the four, and dived back into the door for new plunder.

Through the parlor-window, just opposite Flemington, appeared a burly black, with rolling eyes and grinning mouth, seated at the piano. With both fists he banged the keys, while he sang a ribald song at the top of a voice rendered hideously husky by frequent potations from a demijohn that stood on the centre-table. Suddenly the performer jumped from his seat.

"Damn ef you 'll ever play on dat pianner agin, you Becky Parven!" said he, and seized an axe and chopped the instrument in pieces.

The raiders — unauthorized ones, as Flemington knew — had evidently found the brandy. They were already infuriated by it. It was with difficulty that Flemington could refrain from firing long enough to allow the rest of the party to gain their position.

Suddenly a huge negro, dressed in the tawdriest of uniforms, which he had just been decorating with all conceivable ornaments tied to whatever button offered a support to dangle from, rushed out of the house towards the group in front, exclaiming, —

"By de livin' God, I'm de Cap'n and I'm gwine to do de kissin' fur de comp'ny! *You* need n't to shake,

old lady Parven, I'm a'ter dem red lips over yonder !” — pointing to Rebecca Parven.

Flemington could withhold no longer. He fired ; the black captain fell, an answering yell came from the stable-yard, he leaped the wall and rushed towards the house, meeting Aubrey, who exclaimed hurriedly, — “The rest ran into the back-door, Flem ; I ran round for fear they might be too many for you in front, as they came out.”

Almost simultaneously three shots were fired inside the house, and eight or ten negroes in blue uniform rushed through the front door and down the steps. In their ardor Flemington and Aubrey gave no ground. The foremost negro on the steps fell, his companions tumbled over him, the whole mass precipitated itself upon Flemington and Aubrey, and bore them to the earth.

At this moment the black commander, whom Flemington's bullet had merely stunned for a moment, scrambled to his feet, and seeing the other three of Flemington's party running down the steps, called out, “Jump up, boys ; de aint but five of 'em, we can whip de lights out'n 'em, yit !” Brandishing his sabre, he ran towards Flemington, who was just rising from the ground.

The surprised negroes took heart from the bold tone and action of their commander, and commenced an active scramble for whatever offensive weapons lay about. In the undisciplined haste of plunderers they had thrown down their arms in various places inside the house, the necessity of caution being entirely overwhelmed by the more pressing one of arm-room for the

bulky articles which each was piling up for himself. To prevent them from grasping the axes and farming implements about the yard, besides two or three guns and sabres that had been abandoned by the most eager of the plunderers before entering the house, now required the most active exertions on the part of the Confederates whose number was actually reduced to four, since Flemington was entirely occupied in repelling the savage onslaught of the colored leader.

To increase their critical situation, nothing was heard of Cain Smallin; and they could ill afford to lose the great personal strength, not to speak of the yet unfired rifle, of the mountaineer, in a contest where the odds both in numbers and individual power were so much against them.

Affairs grew serious. Flemington, for ten minutes, had had arms, legs, and body in unceasing play, to parry with his short unbayoneted carbine the furious cuts of his antagonist. He was growing tired; while his foe, infuriated by brandy and burning for revenge, seemed to gather strength each moment and to redouble his blows. The others were too busy to render any assistance to their lieutenant. John Briggs had just made a close race with three negroes for an axe that lay down the avenue, and was now standing over it endeavoring with desperate whirls of his carbine to defend at once the front, flank, and rear of his position.

Flemington felt his knees giving way, a faint dizziness came over him, and in another moment he would have been cloven from skull to breast-bone, when suddenly John Briggs called out cheerily, —

“Hurrah, boys! Here’s help!”

All the combatants stopped to glance towards the gate that opened from the main road into the short avenue leading to the house. True! On the other side the hedge appeared a cloud of dust, from which sounded the voices of a dozen men, —

“Give the nigs hell, thar, boys!” shouted a bass-voice. “Here we come; hold ’em thar, Flem!” came in treble, as if from a boy-soldier. “You four men on the right, thar, ride round ’em, cut ’em off from the back-yard!” commanded the stentorian voice of Cain Smallin.

The tide of victory turned in an instant, and bore off, on its ebb, the colored raiders. Their commander hastily jumped over the garden-wall and made huge strides towards the woods, his followers scattering in flight towards the nearest cover.

Too weak to pursue his frightened opponent, Flemington sat down to rest, gazing curiously towards the reinforcing voices.

“Open the gate thar, you men in front!” came from the advancing dust-cloud. The gate flew open; in rushed a frightened herd of cows, sheep, horses, mules, hogs, and oxen, in whose midst appeared the tall form of Cain Smallin. Armed with a huge branch of a thorn-tree in each hand, he was darting about amongst the half-wild cattle, belaboring them on all sides, crowding them together and then scattering the mass, what time he poured forth a torrent of inspiring war-cries in all tones of voice, from basso-profundo to boy-soprano. On comes he, like an avalanche with a whirlwind in it, down the avenue, all unconscious of the success of his stratagem, stretching out his long neck

over the cows' backs to observe the situation in his front, and not ceasing to dart to and fro, to belabor, and to utter his many-voiced battle-cries.

"'Gad, he don't see a thing!" exclaimed Briggs; "his eyes are mud-holes of dust and perspiration! He'll run over the old gentleman there, boys: let's get him into the porch;" and the four had barely lifted the still unconscious man up the steps when the cattle-cavalry thundered by, splitting at the house like a stream on a rock, and flowing tumultuously each side of it towards the back-yard.

"Hold up, Cain! Hold up, man!" shouted Flemington; "the enemy's whipped and gone!"

Mr. Smallin came to a stop in his furious career, and, covered with the dust and sweat of grimy war, advanced at a more dignified pace to the steps where his party were resting.

"You see, boys," said he, wiping his face with his coat-sleeve, "I was a right smart time a-comin', but when I did come, I *cum*, by the Livin'! Phe-e-e-w!" continued he, blowing off his excitement. "Reckin you thought I was a whole brigade, did n't ye? An' I'm blasted ef I did n't make mighty nigh as much rumpus as any common brigade, sure 's you're born to die! Ye see, I was creepin' along to'rds the road out yan, an' I seed all them critters penned up in a little pen just 'cross the road over aginst yan gate, an' I 'lowed to myself 'at the niggers had jest marched along the road an' druv along all the cattle in the country for to carry 'em back across the river. An' so I thought if I could git them bulls thar,—mighty fine bulls they is, too! — git 'em right mad, an' let the whole kit an' bilin'

of 'em in through yan gate down to'rds the house, I mought skeer somebody mighty bad ef I didn't do nothin' else; an' so I jest lit in amongst 'em thar, an' tickled 'em all right smart with yan thorn bushes till they was tolubble mad, an' then fotch 'em through the gate a-bilin'! I've druv cattle afore, gentlemen!" concluded Mr. Smallin, with a dignity which was also a generosity, since, while it asserted his own skill, it at the same time apologized for those who might have attempted such a feat and failed from want of practice in driving cattle.

CHAPTER IV.

"And if a sigh that speaks regret of happier times appear,
A glimpse of joy that we have met shall shine and dry the tear."

Quoted by Charles Lamb.

IN a battle, as far as concerns the individual combatants, the laws and observances of civilization are abandoned, and primitive barbarism is king *pro tem*. To kill as many as possible ; — this, at the actual shock of arms, is the whole duty of man. If indeed there be generals of genius managing the thing behind the lines, it is not less barbarism, but only more powerful barbarism ; it is genius manœuvring the interests of brute strength ; it is Apollo tending swine.

When the battle is over, to emerge from this temporary barbarism is difficult and requires a little time. Kind Heaven ! To see a beautiful woman, to hear her soft tones of voice, to say pleasant things to her, seems *so* strange, just after you have uttered those strange, hoarse cries that men *do* utter, not knowing why, in battle ; — just after you have killed a man, and perhaps felt the sickening warmth of his blood, and turned away from the terrible odor that rises like a curse from the wound. The young men were all moody, and, in spite of their exertions to appear unconstrained, continually relapsed into a half-sullen silence, as they sat at Mrs. Parven's elaborate dinner.

Dinner? So. They had poured some brandy into the mouth of old Mr. Parven, he had recovered, and, though he could not speak, had smiled to the good wife at his bedside to reassure her. Lighter of heart, Mrs. Parven had instinctively bent herself to hospitable deeds, had assembled her dusky handmaidens, had bustled up-stairs and down-stairs and in the kitchen, had removed the wreck of furniture, had restored order out of chaos, had, in short, issued commands whose multitude made Napoleon's feat of three thousand despatches in an hour sink into pale insignificance.

While they were shaking hands, before mounting to pursue their journey, a mournful tone pervaded the forced liveliness of the young men's congratulations to Mrs. Parven upon the good fate which had brought them up in time to save the house. And even while good Mrs. P. was calling out, in her loud, hearty voice, to the scouts, inviting them to ride up frequently and dine with her, she was saying to herself, "God help us! It is but the beginning of the raids; next time, the raiders will be more infuriated, and we may have no friends at hand. God help us!"

And Rebecca, smiling upon Aubrey as he rode away, was moved by those timid apprehensions which love creates in tender hearts, and said to herself, over and over again, "When will I ever see him again?"

CHAPTER V.

Edgar. — "Let's see his pockets. These letters —
May be my friends. He's dead: I am only sorry
He had no other death-man. — Let us see: —
Leave, gentle wax: and, manners, blame us not;
To know our enemies' minds we rip their hearts —
Their papers is more lawful."

King Lear.

A TRAVELLER upon the river-road from Surrey Court-House to Smithfield, towards the last five or six miles of his journey, will skirt the beautiful expanse of Burwell's Bay at two or three hundred yards from the water's edge. From all points of this stretch the water is visible, but the view changes frequently, according to the width and direction of the vistas through the trees fringing the bold bluff that overhangs the beach. About midway of this part of his journey he will meet a road crossing his own at right angles, running directly to the edge of the bluff. If he canters along it a few hundred yards he finds it descending the steep bank, quartering, so as to make the slope gentler. It is nevertheless steep, and the horse will instinctively turn back, not believing that his rider is going that way. Tempted however by the smooth, white shell-beach, which his eye follows for mile after mile, curving in and out the green bluff, and whose hard surface is a delightful contrast to the deep sand through which he has been plodding; tempted by the cool breeze that blows in his face (for this is a May-day), of which the

trees on the main road deprive him ; invited down there by the freshness of the white foam from a tiny surf that escalops the beach like a lace edging, changing every moment its dainty pattern ; — he urges his horse to the descent. With much dubious shaking of his long head, with a dogged I-told-you-so-if-you-get-your-neck-broken expression, with much careful and deliberate reaching out and planting down of the forefoot, the horse will start, and will arrive upon the beach at the bottom, with a deprecatory motion of his under lip which says plainly enough, You need n't say a word about it, sir, it was my prudence in the forefoot business that got you down safe ; mingled with which comes a side-long turn of the large eyes in sheepish acknowledgment that the thing was n't so very steep after all !

The breeze invigorates horse and rider, the green waves break and glossy curves glide smoothly up as if on glass, the traveller bursts into a song and straightens up in his saddle, the horse feels the reins tighten and canters off with a swing and a bound, the bluff face shows a million green mosses and trickling springs, great oaks hold out their arms from the top in a perpetual attitude of blessing, the eye ranges freely down Burwell's Bay, across Hampton Roads, to the Chesapeake, out between the capes, on, to the broad waters, — it is charming for a mile or two.

It is the first day of May, 1864, and this hypothetical course which has just been marked out is being actually pursued by an ordinary looking traveller upon an ordinary looking horse. Suddenly he becomes aware that his horse is sinking over fetlocks in soft sand. He looks around ; the bluff has receded inland, a long

marsh is between him and it, full of marsh grass, of mourning cypresses, of black water and black mud, and, at the further end of it, the bluff is crowned with scraggy and desolate pines. The beach is now, for a few yards, only a narrow strip of sand between the near end of the marsh and the bay. The horse snorts, his feet sink deeper ; as he draws them up the holes fill with water and crumble in. But it is no use to turn ; fortunately the tide is out, the quicksand is somewhat dry ; the horse plunges forward, and arrives, covered with perspiration, and trembling in every nerve, on hard beach again. The broken line of the bluff now recommences, with its fringe of oaks. In the face of the cliff appears an opening filled with undergrowth. A blind road turns off from the beach into it. The traveller wishes now to leave the treacherous beach and regain his main road. He turns into the grassy path, round an angle of the bluff, and instantly is in a Garden of Eden.

He finds himself in a small dell which is round as a basin, two hundred yards in diameter, shut in on all sides. Beeches, oaks, lithe hickories, straight pines, roof over this dell with a magnificent boscaje. In the centre of it bubbles a limpid spring. Shy companies of flowers stand between the long grasses ; some of them show wide startled eyes, many of them have hidden away in cunning nooks. Over them, regarding them in silent and passionate tenderness, lean the ebony-fibred ferns : and the busy mosses do their very best to hide all rudeness and all decay behind a green velvet arras. The light does not dare shine very brightly here ; it is soft and sacred, tempered with

green leaves, with silence, with odors, with beauties. Wandering perfumes, restless with happiness, float about aimlessly; they are the only inhabitants here.

Our traveller has not seen a sign of human life.

Suddenly he stops, recoils, and turns pale with the surprise of it.

He has seen a sign of human death. A corpse, in blue uniform, saturated with water, lies before him in the path. It has evidently been just dragged from the waves. A line of moisture extends to the water's edge through the opening in the bluff; it is where the stream dripped through the wet clothes.

Our traveller gazed around him, he could not see a man or a trace of one. Good God! Can the spirit of death inhabit the balm of this May-air in this little Heaven? Does the Devil dwell also in this rosebud of little glens? Grave-openers get sometimes, one may imagine, a mixed odor composed of the death-smell from inside the grave, mixed with the perfumes of roses growing on it. Our traveller seemed to inhale this odor. The air grew thicker, the silence seemed full of noises as of ghosts flitting about, the horse started at a falling leaf, our traveller spurred him and cantered off. He emerged from the dell, followed a path through an old field, opened a gate, and found himself once more in the road which he had quitted to ride on the beach.

From the time that this traveller descended to the beach, until he entered the dell, that is, for a distance of two miles, an eye was watching him closely and noting every movement.

Upon the edge of the bluff, a few feet above and beyond the point where the blind road enters the dell, is

a sort of niche or shelf made by the uprooting of a tree from the face of the cliff. It is thickly covered with bushes and grasses and trailing vines. In this niche lies a statue, which has seemingly fallen upon its face. In front of its eye is a long field telescope, resting upon two forked twigs driven in the ground. If we watch this statue, it comes to life. Two hands appear from beneath it: they lift the glass from its rests, and place it upon two others, driven so as to point it in a different direction.

This far-reaching eye was not the only one which had been watching our traveller. He had only passed the corpse a few minutes, when a tall form rose from behind a thick vine near the path. Another clump yielded another form, and so on until four men had emerged. They assembled around the corpse.

"Poor Fed," said Philip Sterling, who, notwithstanding three years full of battles, could never keep from being solemn over dead men. "The old remorseless waves must have been taken with a spasmodic fit of repentance. It is not usual that the sea is so just. She renders this time to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. She floats to the shore its own dust. Let's bury him, boys."

"Wait a while, Phil," said Rübetsahl, in a sterner tone. "Let's see if there are any letters or papers in the pockets. This is the very officer who commanded the party that attacked us last night, on the other side. Do you see that long nail on the little finger of his right hand? Here's a sign-manual he made with it on my neck. I knocked his pistol out of his hand while we were fighting there in the water; he then gripped

my throat, and that nail there kept digging in till I thought it would cut the artery."

While he was speaking, Rübetsahl had turned the pockets inside out. A leathern pocket-book, the inevitable photograph of wife or sweetheart, and a pen-knife, were brought to light.

Rübetsahl opened the pocket-book. It contained a few dollars in greenbacks, an official order from "H'd Q'rs., Newports News," and a letter, apparently crumpled and thrust in hastily.

"I'm wondering," said Rübetsahl, "how those fellows got wind of our expedition last night. I'm going to read this man's letter, to find out, maybe. I beg his pardon, and if I don't see any thing to the point in the first two lines I won't go further."

Rübetsahl carefully spread out the damp folds. The letter inclosed a note which ran thus: —

"Lieut. Zimmerman, Com'dg, &c.

"Inclosed is a letter handed me to-day by a neighbor. He does not wish to be mixed up in the business and asks my advice. The writer of the letter is a connection of his. Of course, as a loyal citizen, I cannot leave this letter and its information to pass unnoticed, and therefore send it to you immediately.

"Hoping you may capture the troublesome party mentioned,
"I am," &c.

Rübetsahl raised his brows, and proceeded to read the letter. It had evidently cost the writer some pains.

"To Mister Jeems Horniddy, My deer Cuzzin Jeems: hope you air well and these few lines will find you enjoinin the saim. I lef ole Tennessey some munths ago, I was brought from thar with mi hands tied as you mought say. The Cornscrip brought

me. I was hid whare I thot the Devil hisself couldn find me, but ole man Sterlin he cum and showed whar I was and they took me and sent me to the rigiment. He foun out whare I was hid by a darn ongentlemunly trick, a-peirootin thu the bushes as he is always a-Dooiin. An if I dont root him out for it I hoap I may go too hell damn him and I have deserted from the rigiment and cum down hear to smithfield whare thar aint no cornscrip. Thar is sum scouts down hear and ole Sterlins son is wun of thum, and so is brother Cain I thot he had moar sense and I am agwine to fule em to death i am agwine to make em put me across the river and then see em captivated every wun of thum brother Cain and all and what did thay drag me from hoam and fambly for? which I havent been married to her moar than a year and a rite young babi and they a starvin and me not thar.

"An so git some yanky soldiers and be reddy at Bullitt Pint a tooseday nite nex week and that night I'll git the scouts to set me over in thar boat an as sune as I jump out on the beech you can fire into em or what you pleeze.

And as for ole man Sterlin I am gwine to root him out I am not gwine to leeve enuff of him to sware bi. This confedracy is gone up and ole Bob Lee he is the King of it and I am tole many respectubble and wulthy fambilies in Richmound gits the only meat they do git bi bool-frawgs which they fish for thum in pawns and they aint no mo Salt Peter and so be reddy a tooseday night and my love to all which i hoap to see you all in a short time from

"Your aff. cuzzin

"GORM SMALLIN."

"n. b. bee reddy."

"Where's Cain, this morning," asked Rübetsahl when he had finished the letter.

"Gone to the Point, to look after the horses," replied Philip.

"Glad he was n't here to hear that letter."

"He's got a big heart, and this exposure of his brother's treachery would break it," said Aubrey. "But you boys have n't told me a word about the fight you had on the other side last night. You all slept so hard this morning when I came in from picket that I would n't wake you, until Flem saw this dead man floating out there in the water and called to me to get you up and bury it."

At this moment Flemington came down from his niche in the bluff, to inspect the dead body.

"Flem, the boys had a little brush last night. Sit down and let's hear about it. Phil, you go watch the glass, as you were there and don't want to hear it told," continued Aubrey. "Go on, Briggs."

"Oh, there is n't much to tell. You know we left you and Flem on guard about ten o'clock. We had a fine run across, but just as we got to the other shore, the wind hauled clear round and blew right out of the mouth of the creek. We lowered the sail and had just got out the oars, when a large skiff came dashing out of the shadow of the trees and bore down on us, aiming to run us right under. I sounded with my oar, found the water was n't more than knee-deep, and jumped out of the boat. The rest followed, and as the skiff came by somebody knocked over her helmsman with his gun."

"Modest John!" interposed Rübetsahl. "He did it, himself, boys, and it was a neat trick too!"

—"Knocked over the helmsman of the skiff. Of course she came to instantly. Her crew jumped out and fired a volley at us. We had held our fire, till then, for fear of alarming the pickets on the shore; but

it was n't any use now, so we blazed away and closed with 'em. Well, we made a very lively little splash in the water. After a while I looked around and did n't see anybody but Rübetsahl, Cain, and Phil. I heard two or three of the enemy, though, come out of the water and run along the shore. We did n't lose much time in getting in the boat, I assure you. Wind was fair for this shore, we put up the sail and came home in a hurry. Dead and wounded none; missing none; total none. Enemy routed. Flem, read this document," Briggs concluded, all in a blush at talking so long.

"Boys, Cain must n't know this," said Flemington when he had hastily glanced over the letter. "It'll break his heart!"

"Exactly what I said," exclaimed Aubrey. "But how can we manage it? We must certainly capture this fellow Gorm. It won't do to let him get off, now; and he can find plenty of boats that he can steal and go across in, any time."

"What harm can he do, if he does get across?" said Briggs. "The enemy already knows that we visit the shore there, at night. Gorm Smallin can't tell them any more. He don't know our camp."

"He suspects it, tho'," said Phil Sterling from the niche. "You saw the horseman who came by just now, when we all dodged? That was Gorm Smallin, and he was taking that ride for no other purpose than to discover our camp. If I had known as much as I do now, I would have arrested him: but perhaps it is well enough we did n't betray our hiding-place."

At this moment a man who had been crouching beneath a clump of vines a few yards from the group

around the body, stealthily crept to the top of the hill and walked rapidly away.

“Ye have betrayed yer hidin’-place tho,’ and Gorm Smallin’s too smart for any of ye, any day!” said he, as he moved off.

Gorm Smallin had executed a flank movement upon the scouts of the Lower James.

CHAPTER VI.

"Russet yeas and honest kersey noes."

Love's Labor's Lost.

CAIN SMALLIN was the most indefatigable of scouts. He was always moving; the whole country side knew him. His good-natured face and communicative habits procured for him a cordial welcome at every house in that quiet country, where as yet only the distant roar of the war had been heard, where all was still and sunny and lonesome, where the household-talk was that of old men and women, of girls and children, whose sons and brothers were all away in the midst of that dimly-heard roaring. 'In this serene land a soldier's face that had been in front of cannon and bullets was a thing to be looked at twice, and a soldier's talk was the rare treasure of a fireside. The gunboats in the river, upon which these neighbors looked whenever they walked the river bank, had ceased to be objects of alarm, or even of curiosity. They lay there quietly and lazily, day after day, making no hostile sign; and had lain so since Norfolk fell. And as for the evening-gun at Fortress Monroe — that had boomed every sunset for many a year before the war.

On his way to the Point which terminates between Burwell's Bay and Smithfield Creek, and which afforded store of succulent grass and clover for the horses,

Cain Smallin passed the house of a neighbor who had particularly distinguished himself in kindness to our little party of scouts. The old gentleman was seated in the open doorway, in midst of a pile of newspapers.

"Good mornin'! Mr. Smallin. Could n't stand it any longer, you see, so I sent Dick away up to Ivor yesterday to try and get some papers. Here's another stinger in the "Examiner." Sit down here; I want you to read it."

"Thank 'ee, sir, don't care if I do rest a leetle; tol-lubble warm walkin' this mornin'," replied the mountaineer, and fell to reading — a slow operation for him whose eye was far more accustomed to sighting a rifle than deciphering letters.

"Massy me!" said he, after some silence, "our men's desertin' mighty fast, up yan, f'om the army. Here's nigh to a whole column full of 'Thirty Dollars Rewards' for each deserter. Let's see if I know any of 'em."

Cain's lip moved busily, in what might well have been called a spell of silence. Suddenly he dropped the paper and looked piteously upward.

"May be I spelt it wrong, le'm me look again," muttered he, and snatched the paper up to gaze again upon that dreadful Thirty Dollar column.

It was there.

"THIRTY-DOLLARS REWARD.

"Deserted from the — Regiment, — Volunteers, GORM SMALLIN, who enlisted," &c., &c.

Cain Smallin dropped his newspaper and strode hastily out of the door, unheeding the surprise of his host.

He walked rapidly, and aimlessly. The cruel tor-

ture would not permit him to rest; his grief drove him about; it lashed him with sharp thongs. Across fields and marshes, through creeks and woods, with bent head, with hands idly hanging, with unsteady step, he circled. A tear emerged from his eye. It stopped in a furrow, and glistened. Occasionally he muttered to himself, —

“We was poor. We aint never had much to live on but our name, which it was good as gold. An’ now it aint no better ’n rusty copper; hit’ll be green an’ pisenous. An’ who’s done it? Gorm Smallin! Nobody but Gorm Smallin! My own brother, Gorm Smallin! Gorm, — Gorm.” He repeated this name a hundred times, as if his mind wandered and he wished to fix it.

The hours passed on and still the mountaineer walked. His simple mountain-life had known few griefs. This was worse than any sorrow. It was disgrace. He knew no sophistries to retire into, in the ostrich-fashion wherewith men avoid dishonor. He had lost all. Not only he, but all whom he loved, would suffer.

“What will the Sterlin’s say? Old John Sterlin’; him that stuck by us when corn was so scurce in the Cove? an’ Philip! him that I’ve hunted with an’ fished with an’ camped with, by ourselves, in yan mountains? And Miss Felix! Miss Felix!”

The man dwelt on this name. His mind became a blank, except two luminous spots which were rather feelings than thoughts. These were, a sensation of disgrace and a sensation of loveliness: the one embodied in the name Gorm, the other in the name Felix. He recoiled from one; he felt as if religion demanded

that he should also recoil from the other. He suffered more than if he had committed the crime himself. For he was innocence, and that is highly tender and sensitive, being unseared.

At length the gathering twilight attracted his attention. He looked around, to discover his locality. Leaping a fence he found himself in the main road, and a short walk brought him to a low house that stood in a field on the right. He opened the gate, and knocked at the door. "Here's whar he said he'd stay," he muttered. Gorm himself came to the door.

"Put on your hat, Gorm!"

The stern tone of his voice excited his brother's surprise.

"What fur, Cain?"

"I want you to walk with me, a little piece. Hurry!"

Gorm took down his hat and came out.

"Whar to, brother Cain?"

"Follow me," replied Cain, with a motion of displeasure at the wheedling tone of his brother.

Leaving the road, he struck into a path leading to the Point from which he had wandered. As he walked his pace increased, until it required the most strenuous exertions on the part of his companion to keep up with his long and rapid strides.

"Whar the devil air you gwine to, Cain? Don't walk so fast, anyhow; I'm a'most out o' breath a'-ready!"

The mountaineer made no reply, but slackened his pace. He only muttered to himself: "Hits eight mile across; ye'll need your strength to git thar, may be."

The path wound now amongst gloomy pines, for

some distance, until suddenly they emerged upon the open beach. They were upon the extreme end of the lonely Point. The night was dark ; but the sand-beach glimmered ghastly white through the darkness. Save the mournful hooting of an owl from his obscure cell in the woods, the place was silent. Hundreds of huge tree-stumps, with their roots upturned in the air, lay in all fantastic positions upon the white sand, as the tide had deposited them. These straggling clumps had been polished white by salt air and waves. They seemed like an agitated convention of skeletons, discussing the propriety of flesh. A small boat rested on the beach, with one end secured by a "painter" to a stake driven in the sand.

"Little did I think, when I found it in the marsh this mornin' an' brought it thar, thinkin' to git it round to camp to-night, what use I was gwine to put it to," said Cain Smallin to himself.

As he led the way to the boat, suddenly he stopped and turned face to face with his recreant brother. His eyes glared into Gorm's. His right hand was raised, and a pistol-barrel protruded from the long fingers.

"Gorm Smallin," he said, with grating voice, "have ye ever know'd me to say I'd do anything an' then not to do it?"

"I—I—no, I have n't, Cain," stuttered the deserter, cowering with terror and surprise.

"Remember them words. Now answer my questions, and don't say nothin' outside o' them. Gorm Smallin, whar was you born?"

"What makes you ax me sich foolish questions, Cain? I was born in Tennessy, an' you know it!"

"Answer my questions, Gorm Smallin! Who raised you, f'om a little un?"

"Mother an' father, o' course."

"Who's your mother and father? what's ther name?"

"Cain, air you crazy? ther name's Smallin."

"Gorm Smallin, did you ever know any o' the Smallins to cheat a man in a trade?"

"No, Cain; we've always been honest."

"Did ye ever know a Smallin to swar to a lie afore the Jestis?"

"No."

"Did ye ever know one to steal another man's horse, or his rifle, or anything?"

"No."

"Did ye ever know one to sneak out f'om a rightful fight?"

"No."

"Did ye ever know one to" — the words came like lightning with a zigzag jerk — "to desert f'om his regiment?"

The flash struck Gorm Smallin. He visibly sank into himself like a jointed cane. He trembled, and gazed apprehensively at the pistol in his brother's right hand which still towered threateningly aloft. He made no reply.

"Ye don't like to say yes this time!" continued Cain. "Gorm Smallin, altho' I say it which I'm your brother, — ye lied every time ye said no, afore. *You* has cheated in a dirty trade; *you* has sworn to a lie afore God that's better than the Jestis; *you* has stole what's better 'n any rifle or horse; *you* has sneaked out f'om the rightfulest fight ye ever was in; *you* has deserted

f'om your rigiment, an' that when yer own brother an' every friend ye had in the world was fightin' along with ye.

“ Gorm Smallin, you has cheated me, an' ole father an' mother an' all, out of our name which it was all we had ; you has swore to a lie, for you swore to me 'at the colonel sent you down here to go a-scoutin' amongst the Yankees ; you has stole our honest name, which it is more than ye can ever make to give to your wife's baby ; you has sneaked out f'om a fight that we was fightin' to keep what was our'n an' to perfect them that has been kind to us an' them that raised us ; you has deserted f'om your rigiment which it has fought now gwine on four year an' fought manful, too, an' never run a inch.

“ Gorm Smallin, you has got your name in the paper 'ith thirty dollars reward over it, in big letters ; big letters, so 'at father's ole eyes can read it 'ithout callin' sister Ginny to make it out for him. Thar it is, for every man, woman, *and* child in the whole Confederacy to read it, an' by this time they *has* read it, may be, an' every man in the rigiment has cussed you for a sneak an' a scoundrel, an' wonderin' whether Cain Smallin will do like his brother !

“ Gorm Smallin, you has brung me to that, that I haint no sperrit to fight hearty an' cheerful. Ef ye had been killed in a fa'r battle, I mought ha' been able to fight hard enough for both of us, for every time I cried a-thinkin' of you, I 'd ha' been twice as strong an' twice as clear-sighted as I was buffore. But — sich things as these ” — the mountaineer wiped off a tear with his coat-sleeve — “ burns me an' weakens me an'

hurts my eyes that bad that I kin scarcely look a man straight forrard in the face. Hit don't make much diffence to me now, whether we whips the Yanks or they whips us. What good 'll it do ef we conquer 'em? Everybody 'll be a-shoutin' an' a-hurrahin' an' they 'll leave *us* out o' the frolic, for we is kin to a deserter! An' the women 'll be a-smilin' on them that has lived to git home, one minute, an' the next they 'll be a-weepin' for them that's left dead in Virginy an' Pennsylvany an' Tennessy,—but *you* won't git home, an' *you* won't be left dead nowher; they cain't neither smile at you nor cry for you; what 'll they do ef anybody speaks yer name? Gorm Smallin, they 'll lift their heads high an' we 'll hang our'n low. They 'll scorn ye an' we 'll blush for ye.

“Had n't ye better be dead? Had n't I better kill ye right here an' bury ye whar ye cain't do no more harm to the fambly name?”

“But I cain't shoot ye, hardly. The same uns raised us an' fed us. I cain't do it; an' I'm sorry I cain't!”

“You air 'most on yer knees, anyhow; git down on 'em all the way. Listen to me. God A'mighty's a-lookin' at you out o' the stars yan, an' he's a listenin' at you out o' the sand here, an' he won't git tired by mornin' but he 'll keep a-listenin' an' a-lookin' at ye to-morrow all day. Now mind ye. I'm gwine to put ye in this boat here, an' you can paddle across to yan side the river, easy. Ef ye 'll keep yer eye on yan bright star that's jest a-risin' over Bullitt Pint, ye 'll strike t'other shore about the right place. Ef ye paddle out o' the way, the guard on yan gunboat 'll be apt to fire into ye; keep yer eye on the star. Ye 'll git to the beach on

t' other side, an' lay down under a tree an' sleep till mornin' — ef ye *can* sleep. In the mornin' ye 'll walk down the road, an' the Yankee pickets 'll see yer gray coat an' take ye to Head-quarters. The officer at Head-quarters 'll examine ye, an' when you tell him you air a deserter he 'll make ye take the oath, an' ef he know'd how many oaths ye've already broke I think he would 'n' take the trouble! Howsumdever, I'm gwine to do the same foolishness, for it's all I kin do. Now when ye take the oath the officer 'll likely make ye sign yer name to it, or write yer name somewhar. Gorm Smallin, when ye write that name ye *shall* not write your own name; ye must write some other name. Swar to it, now, while ye air kneelin' buffore God A'mighty! Raise up yer hands, both of 'em; swar to it, that ye 'll write some other name in the Yankee deserter-book, or I 'll shoot ye, thar, right down!"

Cain had placed the muzzle of his pistol against his brother's forehead.

The oath was taken.

"Don't git up yet; kneel thar. Hit would 'n' be right to put any other man's name in the deserter-book in place o' yourn, for ye mought be robbin' some other decent fambly of ther good name. Le'ss see. We must git some name that nobody ever was named afore. Take a stick thar an' write it in the sand, so you won't forgit it. The fust name don't make no diff'ence. Write Sam'l."

It was written in great scrawling letters.

"Now write J, an' call out as you write, so you won't forgit it. For I'm gwine to captur' that deserter-book on' see ef your name's in it. Write J, an' call out."

"J."

"O."

"O."

"X."

"X."

"O."

"O."

"B."

"B."

"B, agin."

"B, agin."

"le, -bul!"

"le, -bul!"

"Sam'l Joxo — Joxy — I cain't call it, but you can write it — hit 'll do. Git it by heart."

Cain paused a moment.

"Now git up. Git in the boat. Gorm Smallin, don't never come back home, don't never come whar I may be! I cain't shake hands with ye; but I'll shove ye off."

Cain loosened the head of the boat from the sand, turned her round, and gave a mighty push, running with her till he was waist deep in the water. He came out dripping, folded his arms, and stood still, watching the dusky form in the receding boat.

Gorm Smallin was a half-mile from shore. Suddenly he heard his brother's voice, across the water.

"Gorm!"

"Hello!"

"Joxo — Joxobabbul!" cried Cain Smallin at the top of his voice, bending down to read the inscription on the sand.

CHAPTER VII.

Edward. — “Dandle mine eyes, or do I see three suns?”

Richard. — “See! see! They join, embrace, and seem to kiss,
As if they vowed some league inviolable;
Now are they but one lamp, one light, one sun?
In this the heaven figures some event.”

King Henry VI.

Prince Henry. — “Go, Peto; to horse, to horse! for thou and I have thirty miles to ride ere dinner-time.”

King Henry IV.

At two o'clock on the morning of May 5th, 1864, Philip Sterling relieved John Briggs on guard. The morning was clear and still, the Bay was fast asleep, the stars were in an ecstasy, the enchanted trees seemed to fear that a stir would insult the night and prevent the day from coming.

“It's beautiful, Phil, beautiful, beautiful — beautiful” — and John Briggs was asleep. He had accomplished it in one time and three motions, as the tactics say. He had spread out a blanket, fallen down on it, and slept. His comrades were sleeping soundly in all wonderful attitudes, as they lay under a magnificent oak close to the edge of the bluff.

The spot was a few yards from the niche which has been described. The scouts had chosen it as a night-post, since it offered a fair view of the Bay, and presented a sward clear of undergrowth, along which the sentinel could pace and relieve the tedious vigil of the night. As Philip Sterling walked back and forth, a

large and luminous star appeared rising over the low point at Newport News. He glanced at it and sighed, and fell to dreaming of another star that had risen upon him when Ottilie came wounded to Thalberg.

Half an hour later, his attention was suddenly attracted to this star, he knew not why. He watched it closely. It had not ascended, but was now shining *between* him and the dim line of trees at Newport News. It had become triple ; three stars shone like illuminated globes in front of a pawnbroker's shop.

Behind these his eye caught another golden light, then a red one, then golden and red ones, close together as dots on a page, stretching in a long curve around Newport News and appearing on the other side of it, until the land rising inland hid them from sight. It was as if a glittering crown of stars had fallen down out of the generous heavens and encircled the dark land. It was as if an interminable serpent, with golden and red scales, lay in an infinite coil upon the top of the sea, and was slowly unwinding his folds and stealthily ringing himself about the earth.

The fascination of these silent lights which moved so rapidly yet so insensibly, which shone so serenely in the tranquil water, which had sprung up so magically out of the darkness, kept Philip Sterling for some moments in a dream. Rather by some instinct of a scout, than with any definite idea, he stooped down over Flemington and shook him.

"Get up, Flem," said he. "Queen Mab's coming up the river!"

"Ah — ah — ugh — umph!" observed Flemington, yawning fearfully. "Phil," he continued, without open-

ing his eyes, "present my complim — that is, if the enemy's not within a few inches give him the bayo — I mean, wait till you can see the white of his — Yes, Phil, wait till then — I'm a little sleepy — umph" — and he fell back and snored.

Philip shook more vigorously.

"Get up, Flem. No fun, boy. The Bay's full of gunboats!"

Flemington caught the last word and sprang to his feet. He glanced down the Bay.

"Butler, Phil, by the Rood! Butler at last!" Flemington could scarcely restrain a shout. Down in the river, there, silently approached the danger which he and his men had been sent here to announce.

Cain Smallin's long legs lay extended promiscuously along the sward. Flemington placed himself between them, as between the shafts of a wheelbarrow, and, seizing hold of the feet for knobs, dragged the living machine furiously round amongst the sleepers, and ran over and crushed four dainty, childlike dreams. The wheelbarrow creaked.

"Thunder and lightnin and — hello!" growled the mountaineer, sitting upon the sward, breathless, and gazing with wide eyes at the thousand lights in the water below. "I thought, Bi 'gemini, a b'ar had me an' was a-rollin' me down old Smoky Mount'in for pas-time!"

"Whillikens!" groaned Aubrey, in a voice that came as if from afar, he writhing under Rübetsahl and John Briggs piled across him in a miscellaneous mass of humanity. "Briggs, which of these numerous legs — which I don't see, but am conscious of — is mine?"

Wish you 'd just feel along, old fellow, and find out which is my leg; one will do — I merely want to use it to get up with!"

"Phil," said Flemington, who had been scanning the line with his glass, and counting the lights, "mount, and ride to Petersburg in a hurry. I see the signal-men up the river yonder are sending up the news, but a fog might stop 'em, or something. It'll be better to go yourself. Briggs, ride with him; it'll be lonesome. Saddle up, boys; and don't mind about killing your horses; ride 'em till they drop and then 'press' some more. Tell the general that forty vessels were in sight when you left, and that I'll send another courier with details in the morning, soon as I can see by daylight a little. The signal-line will be broken up of course, but I'll keep him posted with couriers. Wait a minute till I make another count." He swept down the line of lights with his glass. "Forty-five of 'em, now; can't swear to it, it's so dark, but one or two monitors, I think, in front. Off, boys! Good-by, and come back as quick as you can. We'll have some lively times down here!"

In ten minutes Philip Sterling and John Briggs were spurring lustily towards Petersburg.

The foremost lights had now passed the spot where Flemington and his comrades lay, and were far on their way towards a bold bend in the river, fifteen miles above, which sweeps around the long projection of Hog Island, and incloses the water-view. Fifteen miles above and fifteen miles below — there were thirty miles of lights, and still new ones kept rapidly gliding

into view from behind the dim shore-line far down the river.

"Paul, it looks as if somebody had roused all the *Ignes Fatui* in the world, and they were all going on a pilgrimage to some vast marsh in the west," said Flemington, meditatively gazing on the slow-passing lights.

"Or like a stately Polonaise, with flames for the dancers of it," added Rübetsahl.

"I was just imagining," said Aubrey, "a hundred angels, each with his star on forehead, floating in a wavy file behind General Michael yonder, in front, triple-starred; executing, perhaps, a brilliant flank movement on old Lucifer and his army in the black bend up there!"

"Waal, now," interposed the sturdy mountaineer, "I cain't find it in my heart to look on them bloody Yankee gunboats, an' call 'em angels 'ith stars upon ther heads. To me, now, hit 'pears more like they was a hundred devils, an' every man of 'em was totin' a piece o' brimstone in his hand, ready sot a-fire, for to blow up Richmond and Petersburg with!"

"You see, Cain," said Flemington, "if the Yankees, even in the act of attacking us, show us a pretty sight, why, in Heaven's name, let's take it!—even if we don't say thank 'ee, gentlemen; nor fight any the less for this unintentional beneficence! Indeed, I don't like the gift any more than you: '*timeo Danaos*'—if you'll excuse me, but it's *too* pat! I fear Beauregard has n't reached Petersburg yet; likely as not Butler will gobble it up before he *can* reach there!"

"Nary time, gobble it up!" sturdily rejoined the

mountaineer. "Ef Beauregard don't git thar in time, God A'mighty will! *He* 'll hold 'em in check untwell Beauregard does come up; an 'ith *them two* together, hit 'pears to me likely 'at we kin about tan out anything the Yanks kin bring up Jeems's River!"

CHAPTER VIII.

—“ One that hath been a courtier ;
 And in his brain,
Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit
After a voyage, he hath strange places crammed
With observation, the which he vents
In mangled forms. Oh that I were a fool ! ”

As You Like It.

IN the early morning of May 7th, John Briggs and Philip Sterling lay sleeping peacefully in No. 78 of that charming old Virginia hotel which stands like a reservoir to receive the stream of passengers flowing into it from the great channel of the Petersburg and Weldon railroad.

Simultaneously entered into this room two visitors, one from heaven and the other from the hotel-office.

These were a sun-ray which flashed in through the window, and a black waiter who opened the door halfway and inserted his dark and dignified phiz there-through.

The sun-ray, retaining its *penchant* for windows, continued its course and entered into Philip Sterling's soul by the windows of it. It shone on his eyes, passed through, and produced upon the soul inside some vague impression that darkness was gone and light was about; under which impression Philip Sterling threw open the shutters of his soul-windows. The black waiter, on the contrary, true to his instincts, retained his *penchant* for

doors, — since, if eyes be the windows, surely ears are the doors, of the soul.

“Glad to see you sleep so comfuttuble, sah! Compliment to de house, sah! Bin knockin’ ten minutes or mo’, sah! Note for you; gemplim waitin’ at de door on de hoss send compliments, an’ tell de boys he in a hell of a hurry, sah!”

Philip placed his mouth at the ear of John Briggs and blew strenuously. In his sleep the blowee was straightway nightmared with the dream that all the winds of heaven had drawn to a focus in his ear, where they did yell and hound him on through the world.

“Get up, John. Note from the major. Wants us to ride with him immediately, before breakfast. Horses saddled, at the door,” said Philip, reading from the note.

As John Briggs was pulling on his right sock, his eye fell on the open note lying on the table.

“I see,” said he, laughing, “the major retains his affectionate propensity for calling us pet names, Phil. Did you notice the sweet term of endearment where-with he commences his yepistle? ‘*You damned lazy hounds,*’ quoth he, ‘*I want you!*’” &c., &c.

Oh that I had but time, while these boys are dressing, to submit a little dissertation upon “*Individual Character as displayed in pulling on socks and breeches o’ mornings, together with a View of Humanity at the Moment of Emergence from the general Couch of Slumber,*” but who hath time to say aught while a Confederate soldier was dressing, — a matter of two minutes and less! Moreover the horses wait down-stairs, and Major M—— is fuming, being the most restless of mortals. Yet, oh that I had time!

"Mount, boys!" cried the major, as the two young men descended the steps. "Haygood's out on the railroad, and he's going to have a devilish hard time of it this morning."

As they rode down the street, John Briggs whistled long, like a boatswain i' the calm.

"Phe-ee-ee-w!" observed he. "Phil, I'm hungry! I could eat dog. I could masticate adamant. I could deglutite a fortress, or a chain-shot, or the major's conscience, there, — and I'll stop, for that's the hardest simile extant. Methinks I see the early pies, borne on the heads of the daughters of Afric. Hast in thy purse, my friend, aught wherewithal a gentleman might buy — a pie?"

"That have I," said Philip proudly, — "and thereby hangs a tale. I drew two months' wages t' other day. It was twenty-two dollars. I met three friends, and we four drank: one gill, of *such* whiskey, apiece. Four drinks at five dollars *per* drink, is twenty dollars. The residuum and sweet overplus of my two months' wages thou beholdest there!" he said, and flaunted a two dollar bill like a triumphal flag upon the breeze.

"Here, Dinah," quoth Briggs, "give us a pie. Dinah, these be pale and feeble pies, — how much for one of 'em?"

"Two dollars, sah!"

"Now an I had had Golconda in my pocket, she had surely said Golconda was the price of a pie: which is, in the vernacular, she would 'size my pile!' What, Dinah! This large bill, this most rare and radiant sweet bill, with the pathetic inscription thereupon! '*Six months after the ratification of a treaty of peace, I promise to pay!*'"

quotha ! As who should say, ten days after death I will disburse ! — Here, Relentless ! receive the pathetic inscription ! and give me a pie : and now my money is gone, my future is black as thou, Dinah — till pay-day.”

In silence rode they on. “Methinks,” presently said Briggs, meditatively biting into the last half of his pie, — “methinks I see within this pie” —

“What is it, John ; a fly, or a cockroach ?” tenderly inquired the major.

“Or a lock of hair ?” suggested Phil.

“Gentlemen, it is a most monstrous thing, — it is worse than flies and larger than cockroaches and it stranglenth more chokingly than hair : for it is — the degeneracy and downfall of my country ! Hear me ! Philip Sterling, do you remember, oh, do you remember how, when we passed herethrough two years ago, you and I did straggle into Ledbetter’s bakery, and sat down at a marble-topped table and took a pie and a glass of milk ? Compare that time with this ! Sir,” — appealing to the major as he rose into the pathetic-sublime, — “the crust of that pie (at Ledbetter’s two years ago) was dark with richness ! The crust of it was short, ladies and gentlemen ; short as — as the major’s nose, there ; short as rations ; short as life compared with eternity ; in short, it was as short as pie-crust. It did melt upon the tongue sweetly ; languidly dissolving into a vague deliciousness, as the sweet day dissolves into mysterious twilight. Moreover, between these dainty crusts our am’rous tongues discovered liberal largesse of th’ integrant fruit, — peach, and other the like confections, sugared and spiced. which with the creamy milk did mingle and marry-in rarely, patly, like ‘two

souls with but' — and so forth ; like ' perfect music set to noble words ; ' like dreamy star-light shimmering into dreamy dawn-light i' the early morn. Thinking of those pies I have much contempt for Apicius, Helio-gabalus & Co.

" But alas, and woe is me, Alhama !

" I contrast this pie with those pies.

" I observe with pain and smearing, that molasses, otherwise sorghum, hath entirely superseded sugar.

" I observe that this crust hath a weakly-white and wan aspect, and a familiar tang it leaveth as it departeth, admonisheth my secret soul of bacon-fat that went to the making of it, *vice* lard, deceased.

" And as for the spices, they have shared the doom of Ilium and of the buried past ; *fruit* ; they are not.

" And I do remember that those large pies were vended to the happy at the rate of twenty-five cents each, whereas these small pies bring two dollars : stated generally, the price proceedeth upon the inverse ratio to the size.

" Sir, and gentlemen of the jury ! aside, my lords, from the moral degradation evinced by this low pass to which the once pure pie is come, — how can men be raised to fight upon such villainous coward's-pabulum as this ?

" Is this, O ye delegates of the diet of worms, is *this*" — holding up the last ragged mouthful between finger and thumb — " to be the sweet reward and guerdon of the battle-grimed veteran, just come from the big wars ? Forbid it, Mars ! — which is to say, cook better ones, mothers ! " concluded the speaker, and meekly, in absence of mind, swallowed the last piece.

"*Eheu, Pius Eneas ! I*" —

"Hold your gab, boys ! Listen !" interposed the major.

Stopping the horses a moment, they heard the sound of a cannon booming in the direction of Richmond. Another and another followed. Presently came a loud report which seemed to loosen the battle as a loud thunder-peal releases the rain, and the long musketry-rattle broke forth.

"Haygood's having a rough time of it. Let's get there, hearties ! It'll be three more of us, anyhow," said the major, sticking spurs to his horse.

They approach the outskirts of the storm of battle.

There lies a man, in bloody rags that were gray, with closed eyes. The first hailstone in the advancing edge of the storm has stricken down a flower. The dainty petal of life shrivels, blackens : yet it gives forth a perfume as it dies ; his lips are moving, — he is praying.

The wounded increase. Here is a musket in the road : there is the languid hand that dropped it, pressing its fingers over a blue-edged wound in the breast. Weary pressure, and vain, — the blood flows steadily.

More muskets, cartridge-boxes, belts, greasy haversacks, strew the ground.

Here come the stretcher-bearers. They leave a dripping line of blood. "Walk easy as you kin, boys," comes from a blanket which four men are carrying by the corners. Easy walking is desirable when each step of your four carriers spurts out the blood afresh, or grates the rough edges of a shot bone in your leg.

The sound of a thousand voices, eager, hoarse, fierce all speaking together yet differently, comes through the leaves of the undergrowth. A strange multitudinous noise accompanies it, — a noise like the tremendous sibilation of a mile-long wave just before it breaks. It is the shuffling of two thousand feet as they march over dead leaves.

“Surely that can’t be reserves; Haygood did n’t have enough for his front! They must be falling back: hark! there’s a Yankee cheer. Good God! Here’s three muskets on the ground, boys! Come on!” said the major, and hastily dismounted.

The three plunge through the undergrowth. Waxed May-leaves sweep their faces; thorns pierce their hands; the honeysuckles cry “Wait!” with alluring perfumes; gnarled oak-twigs wound the wide-opened eyes.

It is no matter.

They emerge into an open space. A thousand men are talking, gesticulating, calling to friends, taking places in rank, abandoning them for others. They are in gray rags.

“Where’s Haygood?”

He is everywhere! On right flank cheering, on left flank rallying, in the centre commanding: he is ubiquitous; he moves upon the low-sweeping wing of a battle genius: it is supernatural that he should be here and yonder at once. His voice suddenly rings out, —

“Form, men! We’ll run ’em out o’ that in a second. Reinforcements coming!”

“What’s the matter with the Yanks? Look, Phil!” says Briggs.

The Federals, having driven the small Confederate force from the railroad, stop in their charge as soon as they have crossed the track. Behind their first is a second line. As if on parade this second line advances to the railroad, and halts. "Ground arms!" Their muskets fall in a long row, as if in an armory-rack. The line steps two paces forward. It stoops over the track. It is a human machine with fifty thousand clamps, moved by levers infinitely flexible. Fifty thousand fingers insert themselves beneath the stringers of the road. All together! They lift, and lay over, bottom upwards, a mile of railroad.

But, O first line of Federals, you should not have stopped! The rags have rallied. Their line is formed, in the centre floats the cross-banner, to right and left gleam the bayonets like silver flame-jets, unwavering, deadly; these, with a thousand mute tongues, utter a silent yet magnificent menace.

"Charge! Steady, men!"

The rags flutter, the cross-flag spreads out and reveals its symbol, the two thousand sturdy feet in hideous brogans, or without cover, press forward. At first it is a slow and stately movement; stately in the mass, ridiculous if we watch any individual leg, with its knee perhaps showing through an irregular hole in *such* pantaloons!

The step grows quicker. A few scattering shots from the enemy's retiring skirmishers patter like the first big drops of the shower.

From the right of the ragged line now comes up a single long cry, as from the leader of a pack of hounds who has found the game. This cry has in it the un-

controllable eagerness of the sleuth-hound, together with a dry harsh quality that conveys an uncompromising hostility. It is the irresistible outflow of some fierce soul immeasurably enraged, and it is tinged with a jubilant tone, as if in anticipation of a speedy triumph and a satisfying revenge. It is a howl, a hoarse battle-cry, a cheer, and a congratulation, all in one.

They take it up in the centre, they echo it on the left, it swells, it runs along the line as fire leaps along the rigging of a ship. It is as if some one pulled out in succession all the stops of the infernal battle-organ, but only struck one note which they all speak in different voices.

The gray line nears the blue one, rapidly. It is a thin gray wave, whose flashing foam is the glitter of steel bayonets. It meets with a swell in the ground, shivers a moment, then rolls on.

Suddenly thousands of tongues, tipped with red and issuing from smoke, speak deadly messages from the blue line. One volley? A thousand would not stop them now. Even if they were not veterans who know that it is safer at this crisis to push on than to fall back, they would still press forward. They have forgotten safety, they have forgotten life and death: their thoughts have converged into a focus which is the one simple idea, — to get to those men in blue, yonder. Rapid firing from the blue line brings rapid yelling from the gray.

But look! The blue line, which is like a distant strip of the sea, curls into little waves; these dash together in groups, then fly apart. The tempest of panic has blown upon it. The blue uniforms fly, flames issue

from the gray line, it also breaks, the ragged men run, and the battle has degenerated to a chase.

John Briggs and Philip had started side by side. But the swaying line, the excitement of the chase in which the fastest man, either pursuing or pursued, was the happiest also, had drawn them asunder.

Briggs overtook a color-sergeant.

"Surrender!"

"B'lieve I will. Got me!"

"Hurr—!" It is probable that John Briggs finished this exclamation with a sigh of ineffable delight. For he was at this moment, in the Jean Paul sense, promoted. A random bullet entered his mouth; and, with that eagerness to escape which argues the soul's great contempt for the body, through this small aperture leaped out John Briggs' ascending spirit. Philip was not near to congratulate him upon this heavenly brevet, conferred purely for gallantry on the world's field. But when the day of separated friends comes, then what shakings of the hand, then what felicitations poured on fine John Briggs, that he won his bay so well and with so much less pain of life than we!

Philip was wild with the fascination of victory. It was an enchantment that urged him on. He saw nothing, knew nothing, to right or left; a spell in front drew him forward. He was far ahead of the line. Something behind a smoke called out, —

"Surrender!"

Philip raised his gun. His left arm suddenly felt paralyzed and he was half-blind with pain. The next moment a form which loomed before his hot eyes like a blue mountain, lifted a musket to what seemed an im-

measurable height in the sky, which dazzled him like an infinite diamond. The musket descended with a sidewise deflection and fell upon his eye as if a meteor had crashed into it. He felt himself falling, and fainted.

CHAPTER IX.

"I think there is a fatality in it, — but I rarely arrive at the place I set out for."
Sterne.

PHILIP STERLING attempted to open his eyes. One of them unclosed, but the other refused to do him that good turn : it had swollen fearfully.

"John," said he faintly, without turning his head, "believe I'm hurt a little."

"Humph?" replied a gruff voice.

Slowly and wearily, Philip turned upon his side. A Federal soldier stood near him. Through an opening he saw strange trees and hills whirling past him in a wild gigantic dance. As his eye moved from point to point, his slow ideas gradually shaped themselves into the conclusion that he was lying upon the deck of a steamer in rapid motion.

The surprise of this idea stimulated him. He rose to a sitting posture, remained so a moment, then caught hold of a stanchion and assisted himself to stand. The delicious breeze of the May-morning blew upon his fevered head, cooled him, and strengthened him.

To Philip, a tree was always equal to a dream ; a hill was but a surface that slanted his soul upwards ; a dell was only a vase that brought forth its own flowers, and every stream held truth, white-bosomed, like a naiad, in its depths. To-day he had all these. The hours flew past him as rapidly as the trees on the banks. At four o'clock they rounded the curve which leads into

Burwell's Bay. Philip watched the shore with intense yet furtive eagerness. He wished to discover some trace of his comrades; but he feared to attract the attention of the officers standing about the deck lest they also should discover some sign of the hostile scouts on the shore.

Presently the face of the continuous bluff grew familiar to him. At this moment an officer who had been also curiously regarding the shore, called out, —

“Lend me your glass a minute, quartermaster!”

The quartermaster aye-aye'd-sir, handed him the glass, touched his hat, and resumed his beat.

“Thought I saw a man dodging about amongst those trees over yonder,” said the officer, adjusting the glass to his eye. He looked steadily towards the shore for some moments.

“Well, by old Gideon!” exclaimed he, without taking the glass from his eye; “a cosy spying-nook as ever I saw, and be damned to 'em!”

“What is it, chief?” inquired several voices.

“A real Johnny Reb over there, stuck in the face o' the bluff like a sand-martin, bi-God, in a hole! Got his spy-glass and all, too, and gazing away at us as if he was reading a newspaper! Let's give him the news, what d'ye say?”

He ran to the gun on the starboard quarter.

“Bear a hand; we'll run her out ourselves. How's she charged?”

“Shell, sir; two seconds.”

“Too much. Run in a grape-pill over it. 'Tis n't four hundred yards from here to the impudent rascal yonder. Now then. Let me aim her. So.”

"Fire!"

Philip's heart thrilled and sickened.

The channel makes inward at this point. It is not more than a quarter of a mile from the shore. The shell and the grape-shot howled and screamed in an agony of delight, like bloodhounds long held and just unleashed when a few springs bring them on the victim.

The chief raised his glass.

"Damned if he is n't gone up," said he, "or gone down, more likely. Can't see anything of him."

"Good God!" thought Philip, "who's killed? Was it Flem, or Paul Rübetsahl, or honest Cain, or Aubrey?"

Vague ideas ran through his mind. They were something like this; life — death — friendship — strange — how does God have the heart to allow it — don't understand — insane if I think — wait — wait!

The steamer touched at Newport News wharf. Two passengers came aboard, of whom one was in blue and the other in dirty gray. This was all that Philip noticed as he glanced at them and fell back into his sorrowful reflections. If he had looked more closely, he would have discovered that the man in gray looked at him twice, the last time with a grin of triumph which soon darkened into an expression of hatred and revenge.

Philip must needs moralize.

"The skies," said he to himself, "smile, no matter who frowns. They are unmindful of men. And so are the waters. Two years ago these very waves floated our Merrimac proudly: there are the masts of the frigate she sunk that day. Now they float, full as proudly, the hostile keels of our enemies.

"Ah, Nature has no politics. She 'll grow a rose as well for York as Lancaster; and mayhap beat both down next minute with a storm!

"She has no heart; else she never had rained on Lear's head.

"She has no eyes; for, seeing, she never could have drowned that dainty girl, Ophelia.

"She has no ears; or she would hear the wild Sabian hymns to Night and prayers to Day that men are uttering evermore.

"O blind, deaf, no-hearted Beauty, we cannot woo thee, for thou silently contemnest us; we cannot force thee, for thou art stronger than we; we cannot compromise with thee, for thou art treacherous as thy seas: what shall we do, we, unhappy, that love thee, coquette Nature?"

This inquiry of Philip Sterling's received immediate answer,—from the lips of a dead man. For at this moment he heard some one saying in a low voice, —

"Toes up, boys!"

He looked towards the sound. A wounded prisoner had just died. Philip stepped to his cot.

Winged victory, in the likeness of a smile, dwelt upon the dead man's face. This still smile contained the ineffable repose of a marble statue, and something more, namely, the potential energy and smooth irresistible activity of a victorious soul. Spiritual force, confident, calm, untrammelled, — this is the meaning of such a smile on such a face.

Philip perceived it.

He stood at the bow of the boat looking seaward until she ran alongside the wharf at Fortress Monroe.

CHAPTER X.

York. — "Upon thine honor, is he prisoner?"

Buckingham. — "Upon mine honor, he is prisoner."

King Henry VI.

At a wooden building which bore sign "Provost Marshal's Office," our prisoner sat down in midst of some frightened-looking men, and one or two women, who seemed to be following similar instructions to those given to Philip by his guard: —

"Wait here till you hear your name called."

The guard stepped into a room adjoining the ante-chamber where the prisoners sat, delivered a written paper, and retired after a short colloquy with the clerk at the desk.

Philip was evidently to be shortly disposed of; his turn came first.

"Philip Sterling!" called out the clerk. *Mein Himmel*, Federal conquerors, how greasy, sleek, and complacent was the voice of this clerk in your provost's office there! It was the tone of the spider *after* the fly has walked into his little parlor.

"That your name?" inquired the greasy voice, as Philip stood up.

"Yes."

Without further ado, a spruce attendant in citizen's dress, unarmed, stepped from the next room, politely

(aye, politely; he was a good man — that spruce attendant — let him here receive benedictions!) requested Philip to walk with him, and led the way along a plank sidewalk, which divided an irregular, crooked street from a line of crooked, irregular buildings. Philip's impression, as he walked, was a miscellaneous idea of grayish sand, of whitewash, and of the want of it, of granite bastions, of earthworks of a casemate, — through whose one embrasure peered a cannon like an ennuyée prisoner through his window, — of parapets over which also peeped black cannon-faces, as if the cannon had climbed there to see over, and were holding on by their hands and knees, — of a wilderness of smoke-stacks and masts, — of a strange gassy odor. He turned once to look back. Chesapeake smiled to him, like a maiden inviting him to stay. He disregarded the invitation, as in duty bound, and followed his guide through a sally-port. They emerged from the inner mouth of the dark passage into a brick-paved court. A tall grenadier, in blue with red trimmings, stood at the angle of the wall, bearing at his belt an immense key.

With a half-smile, Philip's conductor made a sign silently. The red-trimmed faced about, turned a key which was in the lock of a wooden door opening out from the wall, and disclosed a huge iron grating which he unfastened with the key at his belt. It creaked open wide enough to admit a man.

"Step in!" growled the key-bearer.

Philip stepped in.

Instantly the iron grating clanged, the sound reverberated through the brick-walled court, the wooden

door came to with a heavy thud, and Philip found himself in darkness, amidst a Babel of oaths, songs, groans, chain-clankings, jars, unmeaning cries, and intermingling echoes.

He had closed his eyes in order to accustom them more quickly to the darkness. When he opened them he saw at first a semicircular line of sparkles gathered around him. A moment elapsed before he perceived that these were human eyes, the shadowy forms of whose owners he could barely trace at the distance of a few feet from him. The noises had suddenly ceased. The occupants of the cell had discovered the new-comer and were peering curiously into his face.

Suddenly a furious clanking and rolling of heavy metal issued from a low-arched corridor, which communicated between the main cell and some subterranean recess. The dusky crowd around Philip opened. Through the opening appeared a tall, thin man, with long hair and beard, and glimmering cat-like eyes. He was dancing a progressive jig toward Philip; his saltatory performances being apparently little impeded by a chain which connected both his legs to a large cannon-ball, that darted about in all kinds of gyratory movements by reason of the vigorous and eccentric jerks of the legs about which its chain was wound. As he approached, his arms and hands lashed the air with fierce and threatening gestures.

Suddenly he made a bound which placed him immediately in front of the new prisoner. Philip was in the act of drawing back to defend himself, when he saw the strange dancer place his hand on his heart and bend in a profound bow, until his peaked face almost touched the floor.

"Sir," said the shadow, "permit me to inquire if you intend to remain in this house for some time?"

"I must confess, I think it extremely likely," replied Philip. .

"Ah! Then I hope I shall be able to offer you better accommodations than is possible to-night. You perceive," — with a stately apologetic wave of the hand — "how crowded I am at present. My guests come faster than they go; but I hope I may do better for you to-morrow. For this time, at least, allow me to point out to you what I consider the softest bed in the establishment. Walk this way, sir!" The host stepped a pace toward the wall.

"There, sir!" he continued, with a magnificent gesture of one hand, while he pointed to the dirty bricks of the floor with the other. "I, myself, having a constitutional aversion to sleeping with the whole Democratic party, have retired to an inner apartment. But you will find these bricks good bricks, soft bricks as ever you slept on in your life, sir. I have tried them. You will repose in the honored consciousness of sleeping, sir, where *I* have slept!"

In this cell the sweet light was niggard of her cheer. Day dawned there about noon, glimmered an hour or two, and the night came on before sunset.

Philip was weary. He stretched himself upon the soft spot indicated by his singular landlord, and clasped his hands under his head for a pillow. But he could not sleep yet. The noises recommenced with their pristine fury. A man would rise and start across the floor. Suddenly he would yell like a fiend, and, as if the inspiration of a howling dervish had rushed upon

him, would set up a furious jig in which feet, arms, legs, and head strove in variety and wild energy of movement. To this the invariable accompaniment was the rattle of chains connecting ankles or wrists, or dragging balls, — sometimes both. A double shuffle and a terrible oath would complete the performance, and the man would proceed upon his errand across the room. It was as if some infernal deity had his altar in the centre of the floor, at which each must perform his hideous devotions before he could pass.

Upon each side of Philip a man lay stretched along the floor. The face of one, in which the eyes rolled restlessly, was turned towards him.

“Who was the man that danced up to me just now?” said Philip to the eyes.

“Oh hell! he’s a fellow that’s been in here some time.”

The eyes looked down, and Philip following the direction, saw two legs elevated at an angle of forty-five degrees. The ankles were linked together by a chain.

“Them things,” continued Philip’s companion, while the feet dangled to and fro so as to rattle the chain-links, “is apt to make a feller sorter how-come-you-so ’bout the head, if a feller wears ’em too long. He” — jerking one foot toward the corridor into which the host had retired, “he’s dam nigh crazy.”

“You are not Confederate soldiers?”

“No, not much. Yanks, all of us. Don’t you see the blue blouses? But you aint got owl-eyed yet!”

“Why in the world do they confine you so rigidly? It is worse than their prisoners fare!”

“Oh, we ’re extra fellers. Bounty-jumpin’, stealin’,

fightin', murderin', desertin', and so foth ! That feller with the brass buttons there, he's a paymaster ; 'counts not square, or the like o' that. Jugged him. The feller inside that skeered you, he's been waitin' some time for 'em to take him out and shoot him. Sentenced !"

Philip remained quietly watching the dusky figures that stormed about the cell. Gradually the noises receded, the shadows flitted silently, the coarse web of the darkness lightened into an airy scarf that inclosed him, and day dawned for Philip in a peaceful dream.

It was about eleven o'clock at night when, oppressed with a vague sense that some alien earth-light was struggling through the pure heaven-light of his dream, Philip turned and sighed and woke. A man was standing over him with a lighted candle, but quickly passed on when he saw that he had roused the sleeper.

Philip raised up on his elbow and looked around. The room was still, except in one spot, where, on a sort of platform constructed of a couple of planks resting on two camp-kettles, sat four men, of whom one was shuffling a pack of cards whose recondite symbols were nearly obliterated with grease and dirt. On his right lay two men close together conversing in a low tone. The card-players talked as the game went on.

" — In *that* lock-up " was saying one, emphasizing the "that" by slapping his card on the plank. "Now, when they *do* put a gentleman in the lock-up, *I* say, treat him *like* a gentleman !"

"'Xactly so !" chimed another. "Some places, they does. There's some lock-ups where they hands your vittles through the bars o' the gratin', a mou'ful at a time, and you has to take it with your mouth. I don't

call that no decent way to treat a gent'man. I *has* been in lock-ups," continued the 'gent'man,' swelling with the pleasing recollection, "where they brung your vittles to you reg'lar and handed 'em to you, slice and hunk, and you could eat 'em then or whenever you dam please!"

At this moment Philip's attention was attracted to the conversation on his right. It had grown louder: one of the speakers was talking rapidly and excitedly.

"— An' when I *do* git thar," he was saying, "jest let 'em stand f'om under, for I'm agwine to root 'em out lively now, sure!"

"But how the devil will you get to Tennessee from here? You'll have to go back the way you came, won't you?"

"Never ye mind about that: I'll git thar. I mought ha' forged a pass an' ha' went to Lynchburg, an' f'om thar I could ha' snaked it thu' the bushes to home, easy. But I thought to myself I mought make a few greenbacks afore I started; it's all Yankee-land, you know, in Tennessy, now. I knowed whar ther was some scouts on Jeems's River, an' I knowed they was a-devillin' you folks powerful, an' I thought I'd come over an' help you all to ketch 'em; an' I 'lowed 'at your officers mought gimme a leetle to make it wuth my trouble."

"Well; how did you come out?"

"Durned ef they did n't want to shoot me fur a spy, a'ter I'd done deserted! Ye see, out o' foolishness, or somethin' — I — I scarcely knows what made me do it. — I did n't give 'em my own name when they tuk me up on this side, thar, at Newport News. 'Stead o' that, I give 'em some dam rigmarole or other, jest

spellin' it to 'em, you know, sorter promiscus like, an' some of 'em said they be darn ef that was any man's name on this yeath, an' said I was tryin' to fool 'em; an' as luck would have it, I seed a man thar 'at I had knowed in Tennessy afore the war, an' he got 'em to send me down here untwell he could see the general an' git me off. Major Cranston, — know him?"

"Yes. He's on duty here."

"A clever man, certin! Know'd me in a minit, an' axed me about a gal in Tennessy, an' shuk hands an' gimme a drink o' mortial good whiskey, an' said he'd see me in the mornin'. An' when he does git me off, an' I git to the Cove," continued Gorm Smallin, rising to a sitting posture in his anger, which seemed always to become inflamed at this idea, "jest let ole Sterlin' git up an' git! He holped 'em to send *me* off to the army whar I never had no house to keep off the rain,—an' I be dam ef *he* shall have ary one! He holped 'em put me whar the bullets was whizzin'; I'm gwine to make *him* hear one whiz, a ole, sneakin', meddlin'," —

"You infernal scoundrel!" cried Philip, and leapt like a tiger upon Gorm Smallin, clutching his throat. His opponent wound his arms about Philip, and endeavored to turn him under. Like two serpents they writhed and agonized. Philip's inferiority in strength was for a time compensated by the indignation which swelled his veins and corded his muscles.

"Fight! Fight!" cried a voice.

"The four card-players tumbled off their platform and ran to see the fun, bringing their light. The other inmates roared and gathered round. It was delightful:

it was a godsend to them; they shouted encouragement to the varying fortunes of the combatants.

"Stick to him, little un!" cried one.

"Why don't you mash his mug?" screamed another.

"Hold yer light higher, I can't see 'em," plaintively begged a third.

"Bet rations on the big un!" said a speculator.

"Thump him, bump him. Hoo-oo-oo-ray!" yelled an ecstatic enthusiast.

Gorm Smallin had the advantage of weight and muscle. He succeeded in getting his throat loose, and grasped Philip's with one hand, while he fumbled in his pocket with the other. He drew out his knife, caught the blade between his teeth, opened it, and lifted it high over the powerless boy in his grasp. He was in the act of striking, — when the butt of a musket came down heavily upon his uplifted hand, crushing the fingers and dashing the knife to the floor. Sickened with pain, Gorm relaxed his grasp, and Philip staggered to his feet.

"Should think you Confeds had had enough o' fightin', outside o' here," growled the corporal, who, with the sentinel on duty, hearing the commotion in the den, had rushed in unnoticed by the excited by-standers. "Sentinel, walk your beat inside for the rest of your watch, and keep a light burning. If anybody else gets to fighting, just take a hand yourself with the butt o' your musket, — or the bullet in it, I don't care much which."

The prisoners resumed their beds, laughingly discussing the fight. Philip attempted to pace the floor,

but his wearied feet refused and he lay down. In spite of the restlessness of aroused tenderness, of unappeased anger, of bitter repining against that most maddening of all feelings to a man — helplessness, his exhaustion prevailed and he slept, at first fitfully, at length soundly.

CHAPTER XL

" <i>Item</i> , A capon	2s. 2d.
" <i>Item</i> , Sauce	4d.
" <i>Item</i> , Sack, two gallons	5s. 8d.
" <i>Item</i> , Anchovies, and sack after supper	2s. 6d.
" <i>Item</i> , Bread	ob."

King Henry IV.

WHEN Philip awoke, the dungeon was as light as it ever became, with the light of day. His enemy of the night had fled with it; and for this reason, if no other, Philip would have hailed the holy light with Miltonic fervor.

If he had known the full extent and sincerity of Gorm Smallin's designs, and how, as they were brooded over, they grew always more diabolically vindictive, he would have preferred the presence of the plotter, since that only disgusted him, to an absence which menaced the safety of those whom he loved better than himself.

At this moment, however, Gorm Smallin was as happy as any Gorm Smallin could be.

Early in the morning a sentry had called his name at the grated door, and conducted him out of the cell, where Cranston met him. After witnessing the solemn ceremony of his taking the oath of allegiance, Cranston had conveyed him aboard the steamer for Norfolk, to the narrow streets of which ancient town a short and pleasant passage quickly brought them.

As they stepped upon the wharf, Mr. Smallin threw his burning soul into one short interrogatory.

"Major," said he, "whar mought a body git a leetle mite o' somethin' to eat, here?"

"That's a fact" said Cranston; "you must be hungry after living on those slim rations at the fortress."

"Waal," replied Mr. Smallin, guardedly, "I don't mean to say nothin' agin them rations o' yourn back yan: but I will say, fur I never was one o' them that's afeard to speak ther mind, that a leetle mite o' break-fas' right now 'ud do a body a power o' good!"

"Well, let's turn across, here. Yonder's the 'United States Restaurant,' over there. I remember when we came in here, first, it was the Confederate States Restaurant: you can still see the C O N under the one coat of paint with which the proprietor scratched out his old patriotism."

"A dam rascal!" observed Mr. Smallin, indignantly. "Changed his flag, did he?"

"Yes; — or rather his colors, like a chameleon. While the ground was gray, he was gray; but the ground changed to blue, and the groundling became a Yankee."

"A mortal sight o' feed and truck o' one sort and another thar, in the windows! Hit makes me hongrier and hongrier the nigher I git to 'em!"

They entered the restaurant, passed through an anteroom which was fitted up as a bar (so delicately intimating that drinking comes before eating, as well in the order of time as of dignity), and approached a long and indescribably greasy pine-table which ran down the centre of the eating-room.

"Now then, Mr. Smallin!" said Cranston, as they took their seats on a bench which ran alongside the table, and which was as like it in all its features (*can* grease be called a feature?) as if it were an infant table-nestling by the side of a maternal one, "what 'll you take to eat?"

Who, with any the slightest knowledge of the habits of the Confederate army in '64, does not know what Mr. Smallin took to eat?

"A cup o' kauphy" said he, "fust and fo'most!"

The war disclosed the fact that kauphy (which, with that independence we have preserved in some matters, we still call so, though the spelling nowise justifies it) was more thoroughly interwoven with our existence than any other institution. Our social life was "like an island in the sea," and the sea was a sea of coffee. This beverage was to us as Malmsey to Clarence, as Falernian to Horace, as the Pierian Spring to poets. We made libations to the coming day in coffee, at breakfast; we sped the parting day with stirrup-cups of it, at supper; we drowned ourselves in it, in the last full ecstasy of good dinners.

As heathens worship their grotesque ideals through grotesque idols of wood and stone, so we; genuine coffee being invisible as any spirit during the war, made hideous images of it and paid our devotions to these, morn, noon, and night. We made decoctions of pease, of potatoes, of pea-nuts, of meal, of corn, of okra, of butter-beans, of rice, of acorns, of heaven knows what else. These we sugared (with sorghum-syrup), and these, our cows having been slaughtered after the manner of beef-cattle in the scarcity thereof, we drank milkless, and called them kauphy.

A cup of genuine coffee!

This in the Southern States, in the year 1864, was alike the Dream of soldiers and of statesmen, of old men and of matrons, of children and of slaves.

Happy Gorm Smallin! He realized this dream.

The waiter brought in the ideal, on a tray. Mr. Smallin sugared and stirred and drank.

"What else 'll you have?" said Cranston, quietly laughing as he saw how the coffee, meandering through the great desert of Smallin, did forthwith cause the same to smile and blossom as the rose.

"What — else?" slowly repeated Mr. Smallin. Question of questions! How should he tell, he, who so long had wanted everything and had nothing, to eat?

Mr. Smallin would have preferred time to think on it, but his pent appetite brooked not delay; it rose and poured over the feeble dam he tried to erect, and he floated upon the stormful current. He eagerly seized the first chance to guide himself into a haven.

"Major," said he with solemnity, as if he were an acolyte questioning a venerable father upon the sacred mysteries, "what air *you* goin' to take?"

"Nothing!!"

Kind Heaven, it was a blow like to the blow where-with King Richard did fell the stout friar of the green-wood chapelle!

It was as if Mr. Smallin's bush, by which he was pulling in to bank, suddenly gave way by the roots, so that he floated out again, despairing, into the stream. Nay, more. That a man, with good serviceable white teeth gleaming through his moustache, a man with a mouth and appurtenances thereunto pertaining, a man with

the ordinary passions of humanity, — that a *man*, in the time of the war, should sit at table, in sight and smell of the very things, — and take nothing to eat ; this was a trifle too much for Mr. Smallin. His mind recoiled from the contemplation of such a phenomenon, and he resolutely closed his eyes upon this “devilish suggestion” which made his brain reel.

With a tremor, as if the devil had flitted by while his eyes were shut, he opened them. At which auspicious moment, sublime luck, even as the goddess in the old Virgilian battle, arrayed herself on hesitating Smallin’s side. At the other end of the table Mr. Smallin saw a thrilling sight.

Four rough sailors, not long ashore, sat there making great ado over their grub. Of these, one’s face showed dim through a cloud of smoke from a hot dish of stewed oysters, like the face of your future husband in one of those charming visions conjured up by the great second-sight necromanceress, Madame — from Paris ; another was attacking, with wild energy and marvellous sagacity in the avoidance of bones, a plate of fried hog-fish ; a third could not see his plate by reason of a huge beefsteak thereupon, and was making successful endeavor to *see* his plate ; and a fourth had just finished squaring, with great nicety of eye and accuracy of handling, a slice of ham that had been sent in circular, and upon which reposed, as yet untouched by this dallying gourmand, three of those most pitiful of all flat squelched objects in nature and art — fried eggs.

“Here, you !” said Mr. Smallin to the waiter, keeping his eye fixed upon the other end of the table as if

he were reading his Bill of Fare : " Fetch me a dish o' eysters, hot ! an' some fish, some o' them, some — pirch, hit looks like f'om here ; an' some beefsteak, 'ith butter on it, an' pepper a plenty ! an' some ham and eggs, an' saw the ham out 'n bone an' all, like yan slice : an' — an' — waal, fetch *them* fust ; an' some bread ; — an' some mo' kauphy ! " he shouted as the astounded waiter vanished into the dark regions where the kitchen lay perdue.

And now again burned the ardent soul of Smallin, and again, as if to cool it, he plunged it into a question.

" Major," said he, " how long, mought you think, 'I take him to git 'em ready ? "

Cold, cold indeed, was the water that Cranston offered.

" I should think," replied he, meditatively, " about three quarters of an hour ! "

An expression overspread the face of Mr. Smallin which can only be described by a paradox — it was a visible groan. This, not long lingering, died away and dissolved into a plaintive look of settled melancholy, during which Mr. Smallin sat and idly struck his horn-jointed fingers upon the table, in his abstraction finishing his kauphy at a draught.

But long-suffering hath an end.

As peace out of grimy war, as sweet spring out from the Merlin-beard of winter, as Æneas from Avernus' smoky pit, issued at last the waiter from the dark regions, bearing gifts which Mr. Smallin did not fear.

Utterly disdaining that his cohorts (Mr. Smallin was a captain of ten — fingers) were not by any means gleaming with purple and gold, Mr. Smallin came

down like the wolf on the foal, with dire intent to utterly mangle and crunch the several vivers.

Sternly, single-souledly, Mr. Smallin devoted himself to the great work before him. He did not, would not, could not talk.

"How long since you were in Tennessee, Smallin?" asked Cranston, seeing him fairly started, impatient for news of those who had made so deep impression on his life, and full of bitter thoughts, of love which fed on absence, of half-formed designs.

"Some — time," chewed out the cormorant, without looking up.

"Was Mr. Sterling living when you left?"

"Umph, humph."

"Was Miss — were the two young ladies still at his house?"

"Umph — 'blieve they was."

"Damned glutton!" ejaculated Cranston.

"Yaas, — umph, humph," abstractedly remarked Mr. Smallin, while egg No. 8 ran partly down his chin, leaving yellow footprints upon that sand, which must have been anything but heartsome signs to egg No. 4.

Cranston gave it up, but his tormentor kept at his work.

Once, and suddenly, the Ravenous surceased a moment.

"Major, hit's the month of May now, haint it?"

"Yes."

"'Feard it's too soon for 'em," said Dalgetty, in a melancholy soliloquy. "Howsomedever; here, waiter! Got any chickens: young uns?"

Of course the waiter had chickens.

"Fetch one; fry him — in batter," guzzled the bibulous voice, resounding sepulchrally from inside the coffee-cup.

But to this trembling soul came its doomsday. At length Dalgetty could no more.

Cranston saw that this man who had sat down at table a sour-faced, half-bowed, scowling son of darkness, arose from it erect, complacent, to all appearance a son of the morning — if it could be imagined, even by a poet, that sons of the morning wound up their ambrosial breakfast with that luxuriant, loud, and resounding eructation wherewith Mr. Smallin trumpeted the fullness of his — satisfaction. Who might believe that out of mere dead flesh of beasts, which hath been also burned, could arise such moral dignity and sweetness as Mr. Smallin's face now displayed beamingly? Indeed, in this moment Mr. Smallin had forgot his revenge. Such flowers from such decay!

Might not the statistics of crime be also called statistics of hunger?

True, Falstaff and Fosco had plenty of sack and plenty of tarts and cream. Yet, the one took purses from mere dread of thirst, the other lied and apostatized from dread of hunger.

That the Confederate army starved, and yet was a confessedly virtuous and patriotic army, — let men give them credit.

The souls of these men did not reside in the stomachs thereof. The soul of this deserter did. Cranston had determined to see Felix Sterling once more. He would procure leave of absence as a spy in the Confederacy.

Mr. Smallin would guide him. To buy Mr. Smallin — this came first. Cranston made a quick bid.

"Smallin," said he, when he had gotten that smiling individual into a room at the hotel, "don't you want to go home?"

"Thar's jest whar I'm agwine."

"How much will you take to get you and me there, through the Confederacy?"

It was not in the nature of Smallin to bite so quickly at bids as at bread.

"You want to go thar, too?"

"Yes."

"Waal, Major, I should think 'at about a hundred dollars in greenbacks mought do a'most any thing now, in that section!"

"Very good. The money's yours when we get there. Make the arrangements. If you betray me, Smallin," he coolly continued, "here's a little dog that'll trail you through every ravine in your mountains till he bites you. Feel his teeth!"

Cranston placed the cold muzzle of a pistol against Gorm Smallin's forehead.

Which action awoke disagreeable memories, and spoiled the fine lingering aroma of Mr. Smallin's dinner. He smiled very faintly, and did not reply.

He muttered to himself something very like, Joxa-bobble.

CHAPTER XII.

"If there is any gentleman in this bull-pen, he will," &c., &c.

Extract from Bulletin-board, Point Lookout Prison.

To go into a prison of war is in all respects to be born over.

For, of the men in all the prisons of the late war, it might be said, as of births in the ordinary world, — they came in and went out naked. Into the prison at Point Lookout, Maryland, were born, at a certain time, of poor and probably honest parents, twelve thousand grown men. Their inheritance with which they had to begin life *de novo* was the capability of body or soul wherewith each happened to be endowed at the moment of this second birth. And so, in this far little world, which was as much separated from the outer world as if it had been in the outer confines of space, it was striking to see how society immediately resolved itself into those three estates which invariably constitute it elsewhere.

For there were here, first, the aristocrats, who lived well but did not labor; second, the artisans, who lived well by laboring; third, the drones, who starved by not laboring. Moreover one could find here all the subdivisions of these great classes which occur in the regions

of crowded civilization. For instance, of the aristocrats, there were the true-gentlemanly sort, the insulting-obtrusive sort, the philanthropic sort, the fast sort; of the artisans, there were the sober-citizenly sort, the mind-your-own-business-and-I-mine sort, the gloomy, brooding-over-oppression sort, the cheerful workers, the geniuses, together with those whose labor was spiritual, such as the teachers of French, and arithmetic, and music, including those who lived by their wits in the bad sense; and of the drones, the kind who swear that the world owes them a living, but who are too lazy to collect the debt; the sentimental-vulgar kind, whose claims are based upon a well-turned leg or a heavy moustache, and are consequently not appreciated by a practical world; the self-deprecatory sort, who swear that Nature has been unkind in endowing them, and who then *must* starve for consistency's sake or forswear themselves; and lastly, the large class of out-and-out unmitigated drones, who, some say, serve the mere purpose of inanimate clay chinked into the cracks of this great log-cabin which we all inhabit, and who, poor men! must endure much bad weather on the wrong side of the house.

Was there then no difference between life in the prison and life in the world?

It is to be answered, — none, generically; the difference was one of degree merely.

For instance, if our every-day world had a catechism, its first question, What is the chief end of man? might be answered, "The chief end of man is either end of Pennsylvania Avenue." Whereas this question in the prison-world catechism would be answered, "The chief end of man is the West End"; — which at Point Look-

out was (for the pleasure of the paradox-loving) at the eastern extremity of the Peninsula.

In the one case the aim was to be President or Congressman, with honor and luxury ; in the other, the aim was to get into a cracker-box cabin, where rain and vermin were not free of the house, as they were in the tents in which ten out of the twelve thousand resided.

So, the stature of the men and the burning of their passions remained the same inside the prison as out of it, only the objects of these passions and exertions were immeasurably diminished in number and dignity. To Philip Sterling this was the terrible feature in the prison-changed behavior of his old army friends. They did not crowd to shake joyful hands with him and hear the news from outside, but met him with smiles that had in them a sort of mournful greasiness, as if to say : Ah, old boy, mighty poor eating in here ! Their handshakes were not vigorous, their souls did not run down and meet Philip's at the finger-tips. How could they ? These same souls were too busy in devising ways and means to quiet the stomachs and intestines, — a set of dependents who show their born inferiority to the soul by always crying out to it when they are in distress, and by always endeavoring to dethrone it when they have waxed fat on its labor.

Some such thoughts crossed Philip's mind, as on the loveliest morning of May, a few days after his night in the cell at Fortress Monroe, he found himself inside the great gate of the prison at Point Lookout. He had recognized and spoken to some friends as they passed by, but had not yet left the rank in which his squad of seventy fellow-captives had been drawn up after being marched into the prison.

A Federal sergeant told them off into smaller squads. Philip stood in the last.

— “Four, five, six, seven, eight,” finished the sergeant. “Plenty o’ room in eleventh division. Corporal, Eleventh!”

“Here, sir.”

“Here’s your squad. March ’em down.”

“Forward,” said the corporal, placing himself with the front file.

Passing a row of small A tents presently, the corporal looked at his book.

“Tent fifteen; think there’s four men in it. Let’s see.” He thrust his head into the low opening. “How many in here?”

“’Bout a million, countin’ lice and all!” responded a voice, whose tone blent in itself sorrow, anger, hunger, and the sardonic fearlessness of desperation.

“Guess *they* want another man in, if *you* don’t,” said the corporal, with a pleasant smile. “You, Number Four, what’s your name?”

“Philip Sterling.”

“Bunk here. Rest, forward,” — and the corporal passed on with his squad, writing, as he went, the name in his book.

A long, cadaverous man sat outside the door of Philip’s tent, sunning himself. He was bare to the middle, but held a ragged shirt on his knees, toward which he occasionally made gestures very like those of a compositor setting type.

“’Fords me a leetle amusement,” said he, looking up with a sickly smile toward Philip. “Jest gittin’ well o’ the feever: cain’t git about much yet!”

Sick at heart, Sterling made no reply, but entered the tent. Just inside the entrance stood a low bench, which held a rat-tail file, a beef-bone, a half-dozen gutta-percha buttons, a piece of iron barrel-hoop, two oyster shells, and a pocket-knife. Cross-legged on the ground before it, sat a huge individual, who was engaged in polishing, with a rag and the grease of bacon, a gutta-percha ring which he held with difficulty on the tip of his little finger.

For this man's clothes, those three thieves, grease, dirt, and smoke, had drawn lots ; but not content with the allotment, all three were evidently contending which should have the whole suit. It appeared likely that dirt would be the happy thief.

"Wash 'em!" said this man one day when the Federal corporal had the impudence to refer to the sacred soil on his clothes — "wash 'em? corp'ral! I'm bound to say 'at you're a dam fool! That mud's what holds 'em together; sticks 'em fast, — like! Ef you was to put them clo's in water they'd go to nothin' jest like a piece o' salt!"

As inside of these clay-clothes a stalwart frame of a man lived and worked, so, inside this stalwart clay-frame lived and worked a fearless soul, which had met death and laughed at it, from the Seven-days to Gettysburg, but which was now engaged in superintending a small manufactory of bone trinkets and gutta-percha rings, the sale of which brought wherewithal to eke out the meagre sustenance of the prison ration.

Sterling threw down his blanket.

"This corner occupied?"

"Wa'al — yes, a leetle, you may say. I should

judge thar was about some sebben or eight thousand livin' thar now. You need n't mind *them* tho'; they won't keer ef you sleep thar," observed the huge ring-maker.

"They are very kind, indeed."

"Sorry I cain't offer you a cheer; jest now loaned out all the cheers."

Sterling squatted tailor-wise upon his blanket, placed his chin in his hand, and prepared to go into a terrible sentimental review of the utter loneliness of his position. Suddenly, however, the ludicrous phase of the situation came over him. He smiled, then chuckled, and at last burst into a long, uproarious laugh.

The eye of the ring-maker twinkled. His lip quivered. He thrust his head through the opening of the tent and ejected from his mouth a surprising quantity of tobacco-juice. It was his manner of laughing. Beyond this he made no sign.

"Hello, Sterling, where are you?" shouted a cheery voice outside.

Philip showed a merry face through the door, and recognized an old "Ours."

"By the poker, but you are merry for a man that's just come to Point Lookout! As a general thing we may say here,

"My cue is villainous melancholy."

And of all men in the world *you*, who were always a sort of melancholy Jacques! Have you, like him, heard a fool moralling on the times?" he continued, shaking Philip's hand, and directing their walk toward the head of the division.

"Aye, that have I," replied Sterling.

"We must get you out o' that hole in the 11th div. some way. Let's see; I think I saw an advertisement yesterday on the bulletin-board yonder, of a fellow in the 3d that wanted to sell out. Let's walk up and see."

The bulletin-board was surrounded by a thick crowd, to whom a lucky man on the inside was reading, in a loud voice, a long list of names from a paper tacked to the plank.

"Letters from Dixie," said Sterling's friend.

They placed themselves on the outer edge of the circle, and gradually moved in toward the centre.

"Do you notice a man over on the other side of the crowd yonder, pushing and struggling this way, with his gaze fixed on you?" said Sterling, to his friend. "His eye has a snaky glare in it. He has n't lost sight of you for ten minutes. Got something against you, has n't he?"

"He is my Nemesis. Every morning at nine o'clock, I come to the bulletin-board. Every morning at nine o'clock he meets me here, and demands of me a" —

"What?"

"A chew of tobacco! He commenced it two months ago. He has not missed a morning since. One day I attempted to dodge him. I sought cover behind every tent successively in the encampment. My meanderings must have been between five and ten miles in length. I thought I had succeeded. Breathless, but with a proud smile of triumph on my countenance, I walked slowly down the street, when he emerged dignifiedly from behind the next tent, and with disdainful compo-

sure inquired if I had ary chaw of terbacker about my clo'es. Since then I have resigned myself. He is a fate !”

“ The Fates, then, have learned to chew tobacco, also ! *cheu* ! what would Pius Æneas have said to see them using spittoons in Hades ?”

They were now at the board. It was covered with a thousand strips of paper, bearing in all manner of chirographies a thousand items of information. Mr. A. had changed his residence from No. 3, 4th division, to No. 7, 10th division ; Mr. B. had a corner to let in his shop, “ splendid stand for the unwanted bean-soup trade ” ; J. Shankins had a blanket “ which he would swop it fur a par of britches, please caul at,” &c. ; the negro minstrels, in big red letters, announced “ an entire change of programme, at 5 o'clock, G. M. Admission ten cents. No Confederate money received at the door ” ; L. Crabbe advertised to meet the eye of his brother, M. Crabbe, who, if in the prison, would call at, &c. ; Jaines Haxley inquired “ ef any gentleman in the 64th regiment seed his son with his own eyes killed at the Sharpsburg fite ” ; a facetious individual, blushing to reveal his name, and therefore writing over Anonymous, perpetrated the enormous joke of “ Help wanted, to assist me in eating my rations. None need apply except with the most unexceptionable reference ” ; to which was appended the replies of a hundred different applicants for the situation ; a sardonic gentleman inquired “ if Dixie and the Yanks was still a-havin' high words. Let dogs delight,” &c., &c. ; J. Shelpole had drawd a par of shues, but one of thum was number six an' wun was No. 10, and “ wished to know ef enny gen-

tleman had a shue, size number 10, please call at," &c., &c.

"Here it is at last!" said Sterling. The legend ran, "Fur privit reasons," (—"to wit," interposed Phil's companion, "a plug of tobacco, or the equivalent thereof in bread, bean-soup, cash, or other commodities,") "the undersined will swop places, fur a little boot, with eny gentleman in the 11th division. Please call at, &c., 8d division. Call soon and git a bargin.

"Sined J. THREEPITS."

"He's your man, Phil. Let's go right up and see him."

"But how do you do it? when my corporal calls the roll"—

"All you've got to do is to answer to the euphonious appellation of Threepits, while Mr. T. will respond to the call for Sterling. The corporal won't know the difference. I can't deny but Mr. Threepits, in the matter of names, will slightly get the advantage in the swap. But it's a very good thing here to have two names; inasmuch as you stand two chances, when the exchange-lists are read out, to go back to Dixie. You must take care, however, that both of you don't answer to the same name, — a circumstance which has several times occurred, and caused no little pleasure to the sharp-witted authorities, as affording a pretext to remand the disappointed prisoner back to his hole."

CHAPTER XIII.

Bot. — "There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword and kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide."

Snout. — "By'r Lakin, a parlous fear!"

Midsummer Night's Dream.

IN mid-May, near sunset, as John Cranston and Gorm Smallin mounted the rocky apex of Chilhowee Mountain, and turned a corner, so as to overlook Valley Beautiful, a question occurred to the former of these two individuals, which might far more appropriately have commenced his journey than ended it.

"What the devil," said Cranston, aloud, "have I come here for?"

He drew rein and sat still on his horse, thoughtfully gazing downward toward where Thalberg hung on the slope like a fruit on a tree.

"Danged ef I know, bless *your* heart!" doggedly remarked Gorm Smallin.

Cranston had early conceived a half disgust for his travelling companion, which, in the irritability of a soul not at ease with itself, had been more than once displayed amid the frets of their journey. Up to this time Mr. Smallin had been too much absorbed by the constant fear of detection and the adoption of precautions thereagainst, to notice this ill-concealed contempt of his employer; but now, when he was out of the long reach of the Confederate provost, when he was upon his native heath, when he had his hundred dollars

in his pocket, and when he was in sight of his triumph, the mountaineer deemed that the circumstances justified him in asserting, at least to a prudent degree, the rights of man.

"Raälly, now," continued Gorm Smallin, "I *can't* see, come to think of it, what in the name o' sense you *air* agwine back thar fur. Ef a man mought judge from some powerful cur'ous tales that's come to him, a man would n't think *you'd* be gwine back thar in a hurry. Seems as if I recomember havin' hearn 'em tell how" — Gorm Smallin sent a sidelong glance toward Cranston's face, as a mariner might look into the sky, to find out if the weather-signs would authorize him to proceed farther; and apparently satisfied himself of clear weather — "how a big fellar thar one night slapped you down in the parlor right afore the women!"

Cranston's treacherous calm, like that of the great deep, tempted the adventurous Smallin too far.

"An' how," continued Gorm, "you left thar betwixt two day-lights, and nervver cum back fur yer trunk, even!"

In a thin, languid, prolonged voice Cranston said only "Ah-h!" Then, quick as lightning, turned and struck Smallin on the cheek such a blow as sent that adventurous individual gyrating to the ground. Cranston's face was of the livid hue that makes the sea-horizon seem deadly, just before a storm. He leapt from his horse, drew his pistol, ran to his prostrate tormentor, and was in the act of firing right into his face, when, as if an invisible hand had dealt him a blow on the forehead, he threw back his head, fired his pistol in the air, glanced undecidedly about him for a moment, then

sprang up the huge boulder that crowns the peak, and sat down, leaning his back against it, looking westward straight into the sun.

A dun-blue cloud, that seemed like a huge bruise on the pearly cheek of the sky, hung over the distant end of the line of peaks. From behind it, the sun shot crimson streaks like veins up the sky; but presently came down out of the cloud, making its edge an insupportable crimson brilliancy, and like a red, flaming heart, throbbed out infinite, pulsing floods of glittering blood-light over world and heaven.

And then the cloud moved down on the sun as he touched the far summits, and lay over him like an eyelid, from under which the fierce Polyphemus-eye of the sun glared back into Cranston's eye along the level peak-line.

It was like the blood-shotten eye of a wild beast, scowling vengeance after you have hurt him, as he retreats to his jungle.

Suddenly, with a great bound, the red sun leapt into the sea.

Cranston turned and looked into the eastern heaven, and lo, Brown Dusk, winged o' one side with a sigh and o' t'other with a smile, and whispering her secret to herself, came trailing up and lit a star in the east.

And then she floated down and walked airily into the valleys, like a kindly, smiling nurse, and whispered the sparrow to sleep on his twig, and put to bed the wren on her sedgy couch. And then she wandered by a curving ravine up the mountain, and came and stood about Cranston on the high rock.

Bad spirits are charming because they are daring. The

evil ones in Cranston's soul could not resist the temptation to show that they were not afraid even in this exquisite presence of the Dusk. They came out and showed themselves to Cranston clearly, in his soul. They hovered before his soul's eye, and flouted their wickedness in his face. His impurities, his angers, his weaknesses, his bitter passions, marched past him. It was like a field-day down Below there, when the Devil reviews his troops. Their martial music was monotonous. It was the uttered word "Never." From somewhere this word uttered itself in Cranston, — "Never!" It is impossible that any human soul should confront this idea calmly. Cranston grew sick-hearted. A cascade of "Nevers" kept falling, falling in the hearing of his soul, whose monotony did not lull him but only sated him. Never — what? Let no man imagine it was the "conviction of sin" which tortured him. He loved Felix Sterling; he knew she was pure and high; he knew he was not. He knew that Felix was queen of herself. He had not been king of *his* self. Could he be king of her?

Never!

His infinite yearning was that his life might have been so white, that he could have stripped the flesh off his soul, and bared that to the sight of men and angels, and sworn in their hearing, while he clasped Felix, "I love her, and I am worth her, and by love! — the deepest oath — she is mine forever!"

"Never, never!" rhymed the evil spirits.

"Ah, I could not endure *now*, even if she were mine, to see her head here" — said Cranston to himself, and smote his breast — "here, where other heads have lain,

and whence they have been pushed away, by wearied hands. Good God, my soul's all scarred and dented and dulled, and her's is smooth and white as her cheek, and glitters trenchantly as her eye when I played for her! What for? why is it?

Cranston sprang upon his feet and tossed out his arms in a wild questioning gesture over the precipice.

"Why," said he, with upturned face, "you that made the world and the men in it, whatever they call you, — God, or Christ, or Jove, or what not, — why have you made me so? Why did n't you make me strong and unselfish and white-souled like her? Why did n't you stretch out your finger and stop me from the acts which have rendered me incapable of winning this woman, or even of gaining any thing but the bitterness of self-accusation, and the consciousness of a foul imposition of *me* upon her too worthy — if I *could* win her? The world condemned and despised the man who saw his worst enemy sleeping and would not run to save him from a serpent that had coiled round his neck. The serpent was allowed to strike, and the man allowing won universal obloquy. But *you* — you, God — you allow every day your men and women to poison themselves with poisons that seem to them sunshine-wine. You stir not to prevent them, and you smile serenely with your skies and your stars over the convulsions of your children. Why didn't you keep me clean and pure like her?"

"Why?" he continued, with a crazied iteration, audibly.

"Why?" shouted he, at the top of his voice, up to the stars.

"Adzactly," muttered Gorm Smallin to himself. In view of all the circumstances, Mr. Smallin had concluded to waive for the present the rights of man in favor of the mights of man. Pursuing which policy he had arisen, and taking the bridle of his horse in his hand, had walked down the steep road descending the mountain, and was now in a path branching to the right from the road, some distance below the summit. Indistinctly he heard the last wild shout of Cranston. "Adzactly," said he; "ye may call thar till ye rot, for all the comin' back I'll do, to show ye the way. I *did* think I'd ride with ye clur to Tolberg, and then come back to my cabin by myself; but I'm derved if ye ha'nt saved me the trouble! I'm glad enough to git shet of ye any way." With which consolation Mr. Smallin pursued his journey in silence and deep meditation. Through the May woods came upon him, rustling, sweet home-influences, as he neared the spot where, some months before the conscription bore him off, he had cleared some ground, built his cabin, and installed his young wife mistress. Here, and then, he had felt his breast expand with that strange responsibility-idea which crowns us kings when we are young, but bends us into slaves when we are old. He pictured the opening door of the cabin when he should knock presently. Sary, God bless the gal! would rush into his arms. The clasp, the strain, the thrill, — all these came to him. They would sit, and give and take the news. With lordly air he would deposit on the brackets over the head of his bed the magnificent silver-mounted rifle which Cranston in a generous burst had given him. Lord of the place, — this idea made Gorm Smallin

straighten up involuntarily, — ‘ King of it, — aye, tittering ladies and gentlemen, — a mere Hesse Darmstadt of a kingdom, yet nevertheless a veritable kingdom, and I, Gorm Smallin, king of it ; a mere log-cabin, yet I

house !
“ Loved it better than many a better ”

Thinking in his ruder dialect some such thoughts, Gorm Smallin emerged into the small cleared space that surrounded his cabin.

Emerged, — and stood suddenly still as a gravestone. No cabin was there. He walked waveringly forward. A black patch on the ground revealed the spot where his house had stood. He wandered slowly across this black blur on the earth. The melancholy crunch of his feet upon the cinders overcame him. His limbs trembled, he sat falteringly down upon the charred remains of his kingdom, and a tear started from each eye.

The Devil, who has tact in these matters, embraced this weak moment. “ What ho, there, Old Revenge, — old Trusty,” — said the Devil, in endearing terms, to his grand vizier. “ Here’s a heart, with gates unbarred. Enter and possess it in my name ! ”

It must be confessed, his Satanic Majesty has also administrative talent, and inspires his servants with enthusiasm. The heart was entered and formally possessed. O lithe Temptation, thou swift tropical tiger of most rare exquisite spots, thou art never more dangerous than when thou hast just retired before a human eye into thy jungle, as if the eye-glance had conquered thee ; for then, when the man hath twice gratulated himself, and whilst he is stooping to pluck one of thy jungle-flowers to crown his victory withal, *then* thou leapest !

Gorm Smallin on this May night had even reproached himself for his vengeful feelings against John Sterling, and abandoned them. To-morrow, other cares and old John's kind face would have dissipated them forever. But listen : —

"I heered," presently he muttered to himself, — "I heered as the Yanks had been burnin' the houses of them that went off to the Confed'ate army. An' whose fault was it *I* went? John Sterling's! An' *he*'s got sons in the Confed'ate army, an' *his* house is a-standin' yit, for I seed it from the rock back yan; why did n't they burn *hit*? Becase *he*'s rich, an' I'm poor."

Gorm Smallin rose deliberately to his feet, while it seemed to him as if liquid steel were slowly diffusing itself through his veins.

"Hit's been a rich man's war an' a poor man's fight long enough. A eye fur a eye, an' a tooth fur a tooth, an' *I* say a house fur a house, an' a bullet fur a bullet! John Sterlin' 's got *my* house *burnt*, I'll get *his'n* burnt. John Sterlin' 's made *me* resk bullets, I'll make *him* resk 'em! An' ef I don't may God-a-mighty forgit me forever and ever, amen!"

Gorm Smallin entered the woods with his face toward Thalberg, walking slowly at first, as if he meditated, and gradually increasing his pace, as his plans grew definite, until his strides were more like long leaps than steps.

On the top of his rock lay John Cranston like a chained Prometheus. It was right that vultures should feed on Cranston's heart, as they were now feeding. He had stolen the fire of heaven, to kindle his kitchen-

fires with. He had stolen a woman's love, — that lambent, lurid, hot-sweet fire of heaven, — and applied it to mere fleshy purposes. Now, when again he urged his daring head up through the sky to steal once more, in spite of the holier uses he designed for it the flame rebelled, and shot its fire-barbed arrows, and scorched and blinded and repelled him. Here was he, a sitter upon lonely rocks, and a prey to that most terrible vulture, himself.

The top of Chilhowee is a long, narrow plateau, level, except where the huge rock rises upon which Cranston sat. Along this plateau, at right-angles to the road crossing the mountain, runs an old, blind, grassy path, surrounded by rocks on either side strewn in all fanciful circles and angles. This path winds about the rock and gives into the main road suddenly.

In the deep twilight Cranston heard hoofs of horses coming along this path toward his rock, and presently began to distinguish the voices of two women in conversation. They quickly ceased, and the women rode on in silence until just under the rock. Felix said, —

“What are you thinking of, Liebchen?”

“I was just thinking,” replied Otilie, “that if we were in a city, amongst men, riding alone at this hour, we should be frightened to death; whereas here amongst rocks and wild beasts, we stray in the night with the most charming fearlessness. Strange, is n't it,” she continued, meditating half-aloud, “that men should be more dangerous to men than all the tigers and storms?”

“So,” cried Felix, “and women are as dangerous to women. Look! With your German enthusiasm, and

your dear, dainty-hearted German Heine, that you read to me at the spring yonder, you 've made me leave my veil and my brooch there. Sit on your horse here, dear, till I gallop back and get it. 'T won't take me ten minutes."

"Indeed, I'd rather go with you," said Otilie, half turning her horse.

"No, you sha'n't. You look pale and tired enough now. Here! see; I've tied your horse! Walk up this winding path to the top of the rock, and see how Valley Beautiful looks by night. Obey me, my darling Otilie!" said Felix, and kissed her, and galloped away.

Otilie dismounted, and walked up the rocky steps.

Cranston stood erect behind an abruptly rising ledge of the rock, with folded arms.

It was quite light up there. The white rock reflected the thousand star-rays that fell upon it; and a faint halo, which was more a memory of the sun than a light, yet diffused a mild and mysterious half-twilight around the mountain-top.

As Otilie stepped upon a broad, flat plateau, Cranston advanced a pace to meet her. Oh conventionality! He was in the act of extending his hand and saying, "How are you?" when her white face, in which he could almost see the sweet blue veins that in these days began to glimmer through the delicate skin, smote upon him like a sheet of white lightning. In an uncontrollable agony he threw himself on his face and grovelled at her feet.

Presently he heard her dress rustling, and the long train trailing softly over the rock. He raised his head. Otilie was standing on the very verge of the ledge,

where the sheer precipice sank straight down many hundred feet, with arms stretched far upward and hands clasped.

Fearful that a noise would startle her into destruction, Cranston crawled like a snake close to where she stood, and grasped the long train of her thick riding-dress.

“O God!” she said, in a voice ineffably soft, “I thank thee that this pain in my heart, which so long hath been dull as ashes and yet burnt like fire, which so long hath been leaden and yet cut sharp like steel, which so long hath refused even to throb in its monotonous ache,—O God, I thank thee for even a small variation of it which makes it sharper and hotter and livelier for one moment.”

“O God,” she said in a pathetic inquiring tone that went jagged into Cranston’s heart,—“O God, hath not sorrow its dandy-moments, hath not sorrow its time when it would prank itself for a show to others? hath not sorrow its whim and its caprice? doth not sorrow, like a maiden, forever regard her image in the clear pool and take her maidenly pretty attitudes; and wilt Thou deny sorrow this little comfort ere it drown itself in the pool of Thine eternity? and have I not yearned that this man whom thou seest grovelling now on the rock should be here when I cast myself from this place, and hast thou not brought him here for this, kind God?”

“O God,” she said, “have I not failed of life, and art Thou not done with me here, and can I do any good thing save maybe to die in this man’s sight, and so perhaps strike a new regret into his soul which may save some other from my wretchedness?”

"And yet," she said, with still softer voice, "perhaps I wrong him,— I erred too ; I will not go, with a wrong for my last act ; I forgive him, and I throw him this kiss of forgiveness," and she drew down one hand, kissed it, and waved it back to where Cranston lay.

"Thou star, there," suddenly she cried, "in one second I will be waving my wing in thy sweet fire !" and threw her hands apart, and sprang.

But Cranston had clasped her about the waist, and in an instant had borne her back, down the irregular declivity. She had closed her eyes in a momentary faintness, but opened them quickly ; and, lying in his arms taunted him, —

"Coward, cruel, cruel coward ! how dared you place your false arm around *me* again ? How " —

"Pity, pity, pity," said Cranston hoarsely, and a great shiver went through his frame.

"Who asks *me* for pity ?" She raised herself up and stood. "You ? you ? O, —*you* ?"

"She is coming. For God's sake collect your strength. Can you sit your horse ?" said Cranston, and lifted Otilie into the saddle ; "I cannot meet her, *now* !" He ran back behind an angle of the rock.

For one moment the woman's jealousy rose in Otilie's heart. She looked at his retreating form with a scornful expression, but quickly the tight lip trembled in a bitter smile. "O Heaven !" she said, "a jest, an infinite jest : I *jealous* ! I !"

"How the little night-breeze groans sometimes" through these pines !" said Felix as she cantered up. "I could have sworn I heard a man talking !"

"Yes, yes. Did you find the brooch ?"

"Oh yes. Let's go home; and get a good rating from father for staying so late! But he'll kiss us twice when it's over, and bless us, and put his hand on our heads; and that's worth a little scolding. Is n't it, you dear white flower-petal?" and Felix leaned over and kissed the cold lips of her friend as they rode off down towards Thalberg.

Cranston emerged from his hiding-place and followed them, afar off.

A few yards from the edge of his clearing, Gorm Smallin stumbled and fell over a small long hillock. It was a grave, with a plain head-board. The mountaineer never travels without his tin match-box. He made a light, and read on the board:—

"S. S."

"Sary Smallin!" he said to himself. "Wife dead, too?"

He strode on, with unutterable thoughts straining his soul. Presently Thalberg rose grimly before him. The house was dark on that side. The negroes were gone with the Yankees. "*They* won't bother me," he said to himself, as he thought of it. He walked round the house. One room was lighted, on the other side. He had but time to jump behind a tree as John Sterling passed into the house.

"Hear the girls coming down the road, wife!" said the cheery voice. "Let's get 'em some supper ready. They'll eat like young hyenas!"

Gorm Smallin went back to the dark side. A low window was open. He pulled off his shoes and climbed into it. It was the same by which Cranston had left Thalberg. Disgrace left it; Revenge entered it.

Revenge is ingenious. Gorm Smallin dug a hole in the plastering with his knife, and cut through a half-dozen laths. In the space between the laths and the inner wall he deposited a charge of powder, upon which he carefully rested the corners of two or three book-leaves which he tore out of Phil Sterling's *Carlyle* on the table. Upon the other corners of these leaves he deposited a pile of paper, and splinters of laths split off with his knife. He then lit one end of a twig of rotten-wood and placed it in the opening, the other end resting on the powder. Deftly and quietly he locked the door on the inside, and dropped from the window. No danger of any body's seeing the fire from outside,—he said to himself, and grinned. He stole round to the very edge of a lane of light that shot straight out from the window of the music-room, among the black tree-trunks. He selected a tree, and stood behind it: then pointed his gun so that the rifle-sight was in the glare and his eye in the shade. "Mought blind me," he muttered: "shines the bead splendid, though. They 'll likely set thar, a'ter the women's had supper. Hit 'll do!" He took down his rifle, folded his arms upon the muzzle of it, and stood still as a statue.

Two hours Gorm Smallin stood. His hope began to fail him when John Sterling entered the music-room, Ottilie, Felix, and wife following.

"Well, girls," said he, "if it is n't too soon after supper, let's have some music."

John Sterling paced about, noiselessly, while they sang.

Gorm Smallin's eyes must needs play unceasingly in

all directions. He saw a tall form cross the lane of light from the other window. It placed itself against a tree, and fixed eyes upon Otilie, and stood, statue-like. It was the poor Indian, Chilhowee, worshipping as he worshipped nightly. Presently another dusky figure appeared on the other side of the light-bar, and took stand, and gazed upon Felix from among the trees. Gorm made it out to be John Cranston ; whereat his soul shouted with a hellish exultation.

"They 'll all see Gorm Smallin's revenge!" he said to himself. Nature, probably upon the same principle that her sharks can't bite without turning over and giving time, has ordained that the revengeful man, if deliberate, must always make a little speech, at least to himself, before he commits the fatal act. Gorm Smallin began to gloat, and menace, and taunt, and chuckle, and prematurely triumph.

John Sterling sat between the girls, and his wife just behind him, with head lovingly over his shoulder. Alternately his tender hand stroked hair and cheek of all three.

"Wife and daughters," he said, "I feel, somehow, as if the world would end to-night ; but I've often felt so before, when the music roused me."

"And so we need n't pack our trunks?" interposed Felix, with a roguish twinkle of the eyes.

"No. But listen," continued John with a tender solemnity — "Listen. God, help us all. Wife and children, life is Force. Now, Force effects motion and resistance. Time and space are measures of resistance, and motion varies inversely to them, so that,

resistance being abolished, Force becomes infinite and time and space nothing. Now, after death they say time and space are abolished ; but as our Force does not become infinite, therefore resistance continues. What shall take the place of time and space as its measures ? Your young minds may dream of it.

“ Motion is change ; science is the observation of the changes or motions of mind and matter. Art effects changes or motions of mind and matter. All men can see, and all men can effect, and therefore all men are *savans* and all men are artists. The good savant sees correctly what is low and what is high, and the good artist effects higher results from lower ones. There will come times in your life when you will find this generalization not wholly unhelpful to you.

“ Now passing by the million million savans and artists that by day and by night through the world are seeing and doing, I wish to speak to you of some particular artists.

“ Seven motions of matter belong to the painter, and seven motions of matter belong to the musician : these be the seven colors of the spectrum and the seven tones of the scale. And as the prism analyzes light into seven colors, and the string analyzes sound into seven tones, so life analyzes time into seven days of the week.

“ Whereby hangeth a fancy, which being but a fancy, yet will not hurt you to dream upon it. For inasmuch as there be living motes that hover in the seven colors or float in the seven tones ; so may we be living motes that hover and float through the seven days, and these seven days may be to some higher folk in the universe but seven colors, and to other higher folk but seven

tones. Aye, this present life may be but a wavering ray, seven-colored, thrown from above. Runs not the spectrum from red up to violet, which is to say, advances not life from red Hades up to violet Heaven?

“And this present life may be but a seven-toned sound, struck from above. Runs not the scale from Do to Si, — from a groan to a joy-cry?

“So, *exeunt* fancies, all! Enter facts!

“The facts are: there be five channels through which the artist receives lower effects, and through which he returns forth higher ones. These be taste, touch, smell, sight, and hearing. Now, by common consent of all men, it is agreed that taste, touch, and smell, poor devils, shall be forever engaged principally as scullions and waiters for humanity, since eating, feeling, and smelling are considered as the (so to speak) mere domestic necessities of the flesh, and their pleasures rank as high only as table-pleasures, and vary according to condiments, sauces, and the quick-waning activity of the said scullions and waiters.

“But sight and hearing, as they are highest by physical measurement, are also highest by spiritual rank. For while, one moment, the eye and the ear with their less happy brethren, perform the offices of scullions and waiters, yet the next moment they may be performing the offices of genii and angels. For these have power beyond the flesh and the earth, over the spirit of man.

“As, for instance; in a morning, our ear will bring to us the sound of the breakfast gong, and our eye will cunningly superintend our steps and show us the way to the breakfast-room. Base scullions and waiters, so far, but remarkably useful! Wait, though. We sit at break-

fast-table and read the paper. Eye informs us there will be a concert to-night, and Liszt will play some of Chopin's best music. Bravo, Eye! thou art advancing from thy scullionship and art already a private secretary! And bravo, again; for thou art lending a helping hand to thy poor brother Ear, and arranging fine things for him!

"Wait, though.

"Night comes; we go to the concert-room. Liszt plays; we writhe under the music like the old priestess under the divine afflatus, so that our souls prophesy good things; and we shout in glory that the man there with his piano and his wondrous fingers has made conquest over the grim kingdom of the unutterable,—has spoken the otherwise unspeakable; and as we leave the concert-room, brave Sight flashes up to the skies and lets down the star-beams, upon which, as upon a swaying golden ladder, our souls mount up to the very hem of the garment of God, we hearing, as we pass, the infinite music of the worlds singing while they spin the thread of time. And so, bravissimo, O Eye and Ear! This morning ye were but scullions and waiters; to-night ye have become fair heavenly friends, by whose airy guidance we wander through the morning glades, by the clear rivers, and across the mysterious wonder-chasms of the super-sensuous Unknown Land!

"This morning ye conducted us to breakfast; to-night ye have wafted us to heaven!

"And so, dear wife and daughters, eye and ear are ever willing, either as swineherd or as Apollo, to serve and befriend the kings that paint and sing.

"But it would seem that there will be some difference

of dignity between these two. For surely, the Art of to-day is music! I cannot now talk of photographs, which are *in omnium manibus*. But the art of painting has not struck its infinite roots into the domestic every-daynesses of life, as the art of music has. There are not many homes in the land where one finds a painter's palette or a camera; but where is the cottage or hovel in which one will not find either a piano, a guitar, a flute, a violin, a banjo, a jew's-harp, a whistling faculty, or a singing faculty? To go to the lowest form at once, do but look at the ten-year-old negro balancing his bucket on his head as he carries it home from spring or pump! Oh never, never would he 'tote' it safely, an he did not whistle all the time! He balanceth his burden safely, as the circus man his iron balls — to music. Every man might better balance his burden wherewith he is laden, if he kept time to music! Is any here that hath no burden, of water-buckets or of sins? If any, — forever let him hold his peace, nor whistle nor sing!"

At this moment a breeze came through the tree-tops, and swelled, and died away; making noise as if the maidenly bosom of the night heaved and panted with some fright of a dream, till the maid woke, and sighed for satisfaction that it was only a dream-fright, and rustled her night-drapery and composed herself to sleep again.

At this moment Cranston in the dark was devouring with his eyes sweet bending Felix in the light. "My queen, my queen!" he said, and yielded himself to the ecstasy of love and the luxury of gazing.

And Gorm Smallin even, after all, was growing softer-

hearted each moment, and at the same time nerving himself, with curses and taunts and broodings upon ashes and death, to shoot.

And the Indian, gazing upon Otilie with folded arms, had now no soul, but only a mist instead, which was interfused in all its folds with an intense undeveloped lightning of pure worship.

And the air was full with floating May-balm of buds and young leaves and mountain-flowers, and every moment ten thousand May-germs thrilled into life, and emitted each an odorous sigh in salute to cool bulbous brethren and grave trees and leafy neighbors.

"And this, dear wife and daughters," continued John Sterling, "brings me to the practical application of my little sermon. Remember now all I have said; especially that the artist's business is to effect higher motions from lower ones. Now, Adam the first man, and Christ the second man, did grieve and grieve. It is to record this that the Bible comes to us. This is the one Fact of humanity. My dearies, let us shoot right up behind the lark, on the brightest morning, and see what we shall see! The hills and mountains first flatten and then vanish, in the common level of the plain; and, exactly so, those moral hills, — political distinctions, social inequalities, moral superiorities, ethnical disparities, — all vanish in the common level of humanity.

"As we go up, first die out the songs of birds and the murmur of brooks; then the roar of seas, the howl of great winds, the grind of polar ice-fields, the stound of earthquakes and volcanoes, faint away into silence; and, exactly so, the din of battles, the iron clangor of

labor, the hum of commerce, the turmoil of life, all mingle, and we hear them not.

"Let us now leave our lark, whose wings refuse already to bear him in this thin air to which we are arrived, and let us ascend to where the atmosphere is rare enough — rare enough — well, rare enough, my girls, for the lungs of spirits to inhale.

"Here let us pause and look down.

"Upon the glimmering plain of human life we discern one huge pyramid which overglooms the whole desert.

"Up from this desert floats to our ears one single sound.

"This pyramid is a fact: it is suffering; and the sound is a moan!

"Brave Eye and Ear, therefore, withdrawing themselves to a convenient hearing and seeing point, inform us of suffering, of suffering, of suffering, alone.

"Now suffering being the result they bring to us, it is our duty, as good artists, to return forth a higher result, through eye and ear.

"How?

"Leaving aside Eye, for I have not time to talk of him, specially,—the great part of this suffering which comes to us is no better than mere physical suffering, mere sensual pain of appetites and disappointments, mere regret for a bad conscience whose principal disturbance is that it keeps us from sleeping well o' nights, mere dyspepticities and humors. All these base metals, music, a magic stone, transmutes into pure gold; into the strange sorrow *you* spoke of once, Felix. Know ye not the pain of music? It is composed of all other

pains, fused and purified into a great, pure, unanalyzable yearning after God. This is what music does.

“Details?”

“Well: to make a *home* out of a household (for instance), given the raw materials, to wit, wife, children, a friend or two, and a house — two other things are necessary. These are, a good fire, and good music. And inasmuch as we can do without the fire for half the year, I may say music is the one essential. After the evening spent round the piano, or the flute, or the violin, how warm and how chastened is the kiss with which the family all say good night! Ah, the music has taken all the day-cares and thrown them into its terrible alembic, and boiled them and racked them and cooled them, till they are crystallized into one care, which is a most sweet and rare desirable sorrow — the yearning for God. We all, from little toddler to father, go to bed with so much of heaven in our hearts, at least, as that we long for it unutterably, and believe it.

“My daughters, ye are both beautiful, and men will love you, and likely some strong hearts will halve a life with you. I wish you to show that the artist-life is not necessarily a Bohemian life, but that it may coincide with and *be* the home-life.

“And when ye play to your strong hearts, whether it be daytime music of wheels, needles, and household work, or night-music of pianos and voices, *play well*; that the listening folk beyond us may detect your note in the grand tone of the day, and may recognize it as a full, clear, round tone, well and featly and strongly struck from life, or from piano, or from voice.

“Amen!” said John Sterling; and fell instantly dead

upon his wife's shoulder, who fell instantly dead upon his shoulder, both slowly sinking to the floor. For Gorm Smallin's bullet had passed through Sterling's right eye full into the forehead of his wife, which she had just laid lovingly against his temple. Terrified at his own act, Gorm's mind became almost a blank. There was but one definite idea in it — to keep still.

Cranston and the Indian, hearing the shot and seeing the deaths, emerged into the light-lanes from the windows and simultaneously became aware of each other.

"O scoundrel, was it you?" hissed Cranston, and drew his pistol and fired at the Indian. Poor Chilhowee, believing in his turn that Cranston had committed the bloody deed, was in the act of raising his rifle as he received Cranston's ball in his shoulder. He dropped the gun, but continued running to the house, and he and Cranston rushed up the low steps and in at the open balcony window of the music-room together.

As Cranston, with the Indian just behind, dashed into the room, he stopped a moment to collect his thoughts. Felix had thrown herself upon the two corpses and was alternately pressing the yet-warm lips of her loved ones convulsively to her own. She raised her head a moment, and as she saw the haggard countenance and yet smoking pistol of Cranston, exclaimed, "O murderer! O my darlings!" and fell back upon the corpses, mute, with wild kisses.

Ottilie, involuntarily shrinking from the wild-eyed face which so suddenly appeared, had knelt near the bodies. She was praying, in a deep, husky voice. "Liebe Gott, liebe Gott," said she, "why dost thou not burn with lightning this fiend who ruins and mur-

ders, and then insults with his presence the living form of the ruined and the dead forms of the murdered ? ”

These words conveyed their meaning slowly to Cranston's mind. It was not till he had stooped by the bodies and placed his hand on the hearts and ascertained that no throb was in them, that the still-ringing words of the women flashed upon him the natural mistake into which they had fallen.

“ I left here in disgrace,” thought he rapidly ; “ they have not heard from me since ; I reappear, at night, with pistol in hand,” — he dropped it in horror, — “ just after the shot. Ha ! ” he said aloud in his bitterness, “ just as I am on the verge of repentance, the merciful God bans me from my love with this hideous mistake, which every circumstance seems to justify, and which I cannot possibly disprove ! ” He staggered to a chair, and sat, and clinched his burning forehead in both hands. His reason began to strain and crack ; brilliant sparkles commenced to shoot before his closed eyes, — sparkles known to the delirious. But the necessity for action warned him to dismiss the thoughts that were driving him towards madness.

A similar reflection had already brought Otilie to her senses. She was half-aimlessly smoothing the dress and straightening the arms of the dead, when Cranston rose from his chair.

“ Lend a hand,” said the latter to Chilhowee. “ It is done. Let's carry them where they can be cared for as the dead should be.”

Up the broad stairs the bodies were borne, Otilie leading the way and Felix following, mute, with stony eyes, blank-faced, broken-hearted, pathetic in her grief

that had grown too scornfully great for demonstration.

Honest Gretchen, busy as any bee all day, had slept through it all, peacefully. Just as the bodies were being deposited in the apartment of John Sterling, loud screams were heard from the other side the passage, and, a moment afterwards, Gretchen came running in, heedless of night-dress.

"Thalberg is a-fire!" she said, wringing her hands. "Thalberg is on fire!"

"Great God, is the whole house doomed? Show me where! Can it be put out?" exclaimed Cranston, dragging Gretchen back in the direction from which she came. A heavy volume of smoke was issuing from the open door of her room; a tongue of flame occasionally licked up through the smoke, and quickly the whole house roared with the angry murmur of the long-smothered fire.

"Down, all!" cried Cranston, darting back to the death-room. "Can you carry one body, Chilhowee?"

"Up with it then; follow!" With many a stagger and lurch, they got the dead out, and laid them upon the turf.

"Where is Felix?" Not doubting but she would follow, all had hastily descended.

But she had not seemed to hear the commotion. Seated, with hands patiently folded, she was gazing into vacancy, when Cranston returned to look for her.

"Come, Felix!"

She remained still as a statue.

There was no time to lose. The pine staircase was already blazing with frightful violence.

Cranston clasped the unheeding woman, and rushed, half-blinded with smoke, down the flaming stairway. His face was full of a fierce joy. He smiled, tossed back his long black hair, looked upward as he leapt along, and strained unconscious Felix to his bosom. One time, he thought, if never again!

On the way down, he passed Chilhowee, going up. Practical Gretchen! Just as Cranston had started back for Felix, Gretchen called Chilhowee.

“ You know Otilie’s room ? ”

Did he not know it? It was his church. He had spent nights gazing at it.

“ Yes ! ”

“ Her jewels! She left them to-night on the bureau. Get them ! ”

The faithful Indian ran on his mission. As Cranston deposited Felix in Otilie’s arms, they saw him coming. As he neared the group, he staggered. Loss of blood from Cranston’s bullet-hole had weakened him. He barely mustered strength to advance and hand the jewel-box to Gretchen, when he reeled and fell. Presently he opened his eyes, and fixed them upon Otilie, and lay still. Long ago her woman’s heart had divined his secret. She laid her hand upon his, and pressed it, in reverence for his long devotion. He smiled; and, ere long, death made rigid the smiling lips and glazed the smiling eyes. “ Thou faithful heart ! ” murmured Otilie, and leaned over and kissed the dark forehead.

Burning Thalberg did not long linger. A neighbor or two — neighbors were scarce in the Beautiful Valley — had arrived; but each stood in stupid bewilderment

as he gazed at the dead on the ground and the fire leaping aloft.

The unsparing flames worked their will; and the mansion was gone.

So, upon the smoke of their home, floated up to heaven the souls of John Sterling and his wife.

So, in the ashes of this home, fell and was lost utterly, the Hope of John Cranston.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

Chamberlain. — . . . "As I live,
I 'll lay ye all by the heels, and suddenly!"

King Henry VIII.

ONE day towards the last of March of 1865, Cain Smallin's appetite was immeasurably sharpened by untoward events. The scouts had been recalled from their operations on the Lower James. With Mrs. Parven and family in charge, the party had made their devious way to Petersburg and rejoined their regiment on the Petersburg lines, after parting with the wagons which contained the *Lares* of the Parvens, and which drove on to Richmond to deposit the said *Lares* in their city domicile.

Cain Smallin, provident man! was making biscuits. His culinary facilities consisted of a (technically so-called) skillet. *A bas* that upturned nose, thou French cook! A skillet? What could not one cook, or do, in or with a skillet? From a coffee-pot, to a Mambrino's helmet to keep the infernal rain-strokes out of one's eyes o' nights, the offices of the skillet ranged.

The skillet was the soldier's *Lar*.

Around Cain's fire reclined in various attitudes peculiar to the old campaigner, Rübetsahl, Flemington, and Aubrey. Of whom Flemington, as he lay flat on his

back, was singing with his whole soul a most pathetic ditty, beginning : —

“Three foot one way, six foot t’other way,
Weighed three hundred pound !”

Aubrey was dreaming of fair Rebecca Parven, and Rübetsahl read a letter.

Now, by direction of the perverse fates, it had come about that, some days before the building of Cain Smallin’s fire, a wandering shell had fallen upon the ground in that neighborhood, and had buried itself and smothered out the fuse. Moreover, the treacherous earth showed no sign of it, and Cain Smallin, being doubtless under ban of the sisters three, had selected the identical spot of the said burial for his culinary operations.

Rübetsahl’s letter was a long one, and an old one. It bore date two or three months back. It was from Otilie.

“— So, I have told thee all. Friend, by that which hath been — and from *me* to *thee*, could there be holier oath of oaths than this? — I charge thee deal with me mercifully.

“ But there are yet more things I must say. Art tired? Thou knowest we came here, to Richmond, with Cranston, from Tennessee. Wilt thou wonder that we came with one that seemed the murderer of our friends and the destroyer of our home? Well, *I* wonder, too; but what could we do? Despair had us; and I wished that Felix might be near her brother.

“ So we came, at last. Some days after we had been at the American, Cranston came to our parlor.

“ Ah, his countenance was so mournful, Rübetsahl !

“ ‘ I leave,’ he said, ‘ to-day.’

“ ‘ Well ?’ I said, after some pause ; and yet I pitied his sad, sad glance.

“ ‘ Ah,’ he broke out, ‘ you still believe I did it. Think ! Did I not save Felix from the flames ? ’

“ ‘ Yes.’

“ ‘ Did I not risk my life, defending yours, when we were attacked on the borders by the ruffians ? ’

“ ‘ Yes.’

“ ‘ Am I not in hourly danger that I be taken and hung for a spy ? Have I even asked *you* not to betray me ? ’

“ ‘ Yes, and no ! ’

“ ‘ Have I discharged all your commissions ? Have I found all your friends for you, and put you in communication with them ? ’

“ ‘ Yes.’

“ ‘ You still believe,’ said he, with sinking voice, ‘ that — that I did it ? ’

“ He spoke to me, but gazed all the time upon Felix, who sat near me.

“ O Rübetsahl, was I wrong that I suffered my heart to be a little touched ?

“ Felix said nothing.

“ ‘ Felix,’ said I, ‘ perhaps he is innocent.’

“ Felix said nothing : would not even look towards him.

“ ‘ At any rate, sir,’ said I boldly, ‘ we will give you the justice of the courts — the benefit of a doubt.’

“ ‘ I thank you,’ he said with grave courtesy, ‘ for even so much. Farewell ! ’

“‘Farewell,’—but I did not take his hand, and Felix still was dumb and vacantly gazing otherways. He descended the stairs, slowly, with downcast face. Shouldst thou meet him, be as I was to him: do not kill him, do not kill him, for the sake of the doubt!

“I must also tell thee that Felix is again alive; for she was surely dead, till three days since. The vacant calm of her grief was immeasurably pathetic. Ah, how I suffered!

“But, last Sunday, we went to church; for she would follow me like — *Du Himmel* — like a dumb spaniel! We arrived in time for the voluntary.

“Can it be that *thou* wast playing the organ that day? I could have sworn it. It was our Chopin that the organist played. As the first notes struck, Felix shuddered, and her eyes began to enlarge and to grow intelligent, and to gaze as if they *saw* something. Presently the rigid lips trembled, and trembled; and a tear, a blessed, blessed tear fell, and another, and then burst a storm of weeping so passionate that I led her from the church. Good friend, what a tempest was there when we were returned to the hotel! I was terrified; I feared her frame would go to pieces, like a vessel! But she ‘rained her skies blue,’ and was afterwards calmer, and slept; and she is now my own grave great-hearted Felix again. And she has thy letter; — thou seest, I can write it!

And one more little corner to myself.

“God be praised! At length, I ‘lean upon our fair Father, Christ!’ How, and why, I know not, I care not; but I lean, and am strong. ‘The wind bloweth whither it listeth, and thou canst not tell.’ Perhaps it

is because I am a necessity to Felix. To lavish upon her all tender cares and caresses, — this is my aim of life. And one lives not easily, nor long, thou knowest, without an aim of life.

“Rübetsahl, perhaps thy heart will be a little lighter for me, if I say again :

“God be praised!

O——.”

Rübetsahl slowly folded his letter, and drew another, already well-worn, from his breast. Felix had learned to “thee” and “thou” from German Ottilie, till it was like mother-tongue to her.

“Thy letter is come,” she wrote, “and mine shall meet it on the threshold like a hurrying kiss.

“And oh my king, my king, I do utterly love thee — and having written so, this pen shall never write another word, and I, this moment, cast it into the fire ; whose yearning flames fly upward, as to thee flies thy

“FELIX.”

Cain Smallin sat, stiff-backed, upon the ground, sternly regarding his packed circle of biscuits in the skillet.

“How do they come on, Cain? Most done?” inquired Aubrey, from the other side of the fire, relapsing — how low, sweet Venus ! — from his love-dream.

“Bully ! brownin’ a little, some of ’em. ’Bout ten minutes, yit,” gloomily and sententiously replied the mountaineer.

. . . “Six foot t’other way.
Weighed three hundred pound !”

And what the devil *are* the next words?” sang Flemington for the fortieth time.

The next words are lost to history, probably ; inas-

much as Vesuvius *in petto* suddenly opened a crater immediately beneath Mr. Smallin's skillet; with consequences. The buried shell had exploded. Aubrey, being small, continued to gyrate for some time at varying distances from the centre. Flemington, a long man, rolled longitudinally to an amazing distance, and with dizzy rapidity.

Cain Smallin, receiving impetus from his feet upward, described six distinct and beautiful somersaults — six — and a half. The result of the half being that, at the immediate period of stoppage, Smallin's nose was penetrating the earth, and his eyes were sternly fixed upon the same, as if he were upon the point of detecting some agricultural secret of our ancient mother.

"Cain's perusing the 'volume of Nature!'" shouted Aubrey, who had risen first.

"'Sermons in stones;' he's reading one of 'em," echoed Flemington, holding his sides. Tweaking his own nose, to get the dirt off, Mr. Smallin arose with a dignity that struck awe into six admiring messes that had assembled.

"Boys," said he, in a broken voice of indignant but mournful inquiry, "have any of ye seed the skillet?"

CHAPTER II.

Edgar. — . . . "List a brief tale:
And when 'tis told, O that my heart would burst.
This bloody proclamation to escape
. . . Taught me to shift into a madman's rags."
King Lear.

LATE in the afternoon of that day, Flemington got leave and strolled into town, — into poor, desolate Petersburg. He wandered aimlessly about through the upper part of the city. Flem was working off, as he was accustomed to say, his sentimentalities.

As the night comes on, one feels as if one approached the shore of life. Upon this shore, the receding wave of the day left phosphorescent sparkles. Lights began to glimmer in homes.

Occasionally, as a door opened to admit some late father or brother or other stay of a family, the laugh of children — for children did laugh, just as flowers bloomed, amid this desolation — escaped and saluted him like an unmeant caress. It was as if a bird sang while one hurried to a battle raging in the next woods.

Flemington wandered on, into the lower city. Here were no lights. The houses stood with doors open and windows up; and this, not by neglect of "careless tenants." There were no tenants. The whole' quarter had been abandoned. Terrible Battery No. 5 had

spoken a doom-word, and at its sound all these houses had been emptied of their souls. Like a cemetery of untenanted graves stood they, while hobgoblin shells screeched and chattered and made the emptiness hideous.

The night had come on gloomily, and the clouds were now black and threatening. The lines were quiet, and even Hoke's pickets were firing slowly and feebly. As Flemington turned, at the lower end of Bolingbroke Street, intending to go back to Jarratt's, the rain-storm broke upon him, and he ran up the steps of a brick house by which he was passing, to get shelter. He tried the door, found it unlocked, entered, and passed on into the parlor. The carpet was still on the floor. It had a soft "feel"; Flemington was tired of the pavements; he stretched himself out on the Brussels, and gave himself up to luxury.

He had listened to the rain but a few minutes when he heard the front door open. Almost immediately two persons entered the room in which he lay. "Somebody else got the sentimentals?" thought he, and peered curiously through the darkness. An inexplicable impulse forbade him to discover himself. As the figures passed him, a woman's dress brushed over his outstretched feet.

The strange visitors opened a door and went into an inner apartment.

"Jane," said a man's voice, "ye 'll find some light'ood out thar in the passage. Git some an' kindle a fire, fur I'm wet an' cold. I 'll strike a light in a minute."

Flemington saw that the light shone through, on one side the partition, into the room where he lay. He

crept noiselessly that way, and found an alcove with a rack for flower-pots, on which were yet standing some rose-bushes. Glass-doors were between this alcove and the inner room. He leaned on the rack and peered through.

"A familiar tang is about that face," thought he; "where the devil *have* I seen it before?"

"If you'd 'a' had as much trouble as I have, gittin' out o' Norfolk, and 'd 'a' brought all these things strung about you, to boot, you might talk about bein' tired and cold!" said the woman, rising from the fire-place where she had been kneeling.

"Jane, don't git mad. Don't scold me, for God's sake! I'm a mizzable man. I'm gittin' skeery. I'm afeard to hide myself down hyur all day any longer. Forty shell, an' more, 's been a-whizzin' over my head to-day, an' hittin' the houses an' a-scatterin' the bricks down like it was rainin' brickbats fur good! Ef I was n't afeerd o' meetin' some o' Sterlin's crowd I'd go back to the rigiment an' tell 'em some lie or other, 'bout bein' captured like, an' jes' got back, an' never deserted, an' all. But I can't do it. I'm mizzable, Jane!"

Gorm Smallin was lying on the floor with his feet to the fire, his head resting on a round stick of wood which he had rolled from a corner of the room. A black bottle stood on the floor, in arm's reach. He took a long pull and a strong pull at it. His spirits rose a little.

"Come, old gal!" said he, more cheerily. "Let's see what ye've got, this time, f'om Norfolk!"

The woman had already begun to disrobe, and having

removed her outer cloak, was now unwinding a variety of scarfs, of all colors, from a waist capacious enough, naturally, to dispense with the assistance of smuggled goods. Carefully laying the scarfs upon an outspread cloth, she proceeded to divest herself of skirt and hoop, and presently produced, from beneath an inner skirt, a sort of half-hoop, from which dangled a miscellaneous array of vials and packages.

"Quinine, by the Rood!" said Flemington, enumerating to himself the articles, as she untied them and arranged them on the floor. "And—what is it?—sewing silk, I reckon, and three pair o' shoes, ladies' size, price one hundred and fifty a pair, so — needles, morphine, lunar caustic, lace — and — and a hundred other articles too numerous to mention! 'Gad, she must have sailed, overland, from Norfolk, with assorted cargo of dry goods and medicines!"

Whilst the vessel (weaker) was getting herself "light," Gorm Smallin had been taking on freight. Right whiskey in the real present, and good comfort in the near prospective, these had power upon the man. Up from the waves of sorrow, all dripping with the brine, arose the head of Smallin.

He became patronizing, grandiose, braggart.

"Jane," said he, surveying complacently the array of merchandise just landed, "thar aint no manner of doubt but you 're a sharp un an' a strong un! An' I *will* say, altho' I say it myself, 'at I don't know 'at I ever seed ary another 'oman besides yerself 'at could 'a brought out a whole store, dry goods an' all, f'om Norfolk, right thu pickets an' gyards an' all, under her skyurts an' roun' her waist! I *will* say, Jane, ef I *do*

say it myself, bully for you! I'm a deferent man to what I was afore I seed you, Jane" —

"A Janus-faced scoundrel!" quoth Flemington from the rose-bushes.

"I recomember when I was in the rigiment I used to say to myself, Gorm Smallin hit aint no use to fight the military! 'Cause why? Why 'cause every time I run the block' to town, every single time, here cum extry roll-call, and drum beatin' long-roll away in the middle o' the night! and 'Smallin absent f'om roll-call' next mornin', an' then, shore as shootin', dubble-de-dute!"

"An affectionate pet name for 'double duty,' ladies and gentlemen," whispered Flemington, gravely bowing to the roses.

"I did cum it on 'em awhile, tho', a-playing off sick on 'em! An' it *did* work elegint, *elegant*, Jane, untwell one Monday mornin', Jim Sunnypond, a mean sneak, swore 'at I was the only man 'at had the priv'lege of gittin' sick in the whole rigiment, an' said it was axin' *too* much of my comrades for me to want to be sick *all* the time, an' said fa'r play an' equal rights an' division o' labor! An' said Monday was *his* day to git sick; an' then every man in the whole rigiment got to havin' his sick-day, an' the military smelt a rat, an' so 'sick' played out!"

"Or, as the Latins have it, *sic transit*; if my audience will pardon so much pedantry!" commented Flemington, with a deprecatory gesture which nearly betrayed him by overturning the most substantial of his audience from the rack.

"But, Jane, hit takes you an' me together, you an' *me*" —

"Oh that I had a stone-bow to hit him in the mouth!" quoted Flemington.

— "To fool 'em, don't it? Mind what I tell you, no man don't fool with me, for nothin'! The military fooled with me; but you an' me has fooled *hit* to death, aint we? An' ole man Sterlin' " — his voice sank involuntarily — "he mus' go an' try to fool with me! Jane, he better had n't 'a' done it!"

Even in his drunken maundering, Gorm Smallin paused a moment.

"Jane, sometimes a fellow's brains seems to git actyve and peert, like, all of a sudden! I tell you what, I done that thing, that night, jest as well as ef I'd been to college all my life! Ye see, I tried, an' tried, an' studied, while I was gittin' to Thalberg"—

Flemington bent close and listened, almost without breathing.

— "To think how I could fix a slow-match 'at would burn untwell I had — untwell I had—had done the other thing. Fur I was afeared there'd be sich a stir an' rumpus about, a'ter that, 'at I could n' git a chance to build the fire. At last, I cum to think about punk, as we used to call it when I was a boy, which it 'll burn in a coal, 'ithout blazin', as slow as you please. And so I fixed it, 'ith powder an' punk an' some book-leaves an' laths; an' I even did n' forgit to dig two or three extry holes 'ith my knife in the plaster, for the air to git thu an' feed the fire, like!

"An' then I slipped aroun', Jane, roun' to t'other side the house, an' I seed a light shinin' out like"— Gorm Smallin arose unsteadily to his feet, grasped a piece of lightwood to represent his rifle (having risen into the

high-tragic), and backed slowly towards the glass-door where Flemington stood ; who, drawing his breath hard, had laid his hand on his pistol and was wildly debating which outweighed — the justice of killing this murderer of his friends, or the deadly sin of sending this inebriated soul to perdition.

— “ Like this, Jane, an’ I got me a tree an’ stood thar, God A’mighty knows how long I stood thar, a year, may be, or two of ’em, an’ at last in come Sterlin’ an’ his wife and the gals, an’ then they played the pianner an’ sung an’ hullabalood another hour, an’ then they all sot down together, ’ith Sterlin’ in the middle, an’ he talked an’ talked ; an’ all the time I could n’ shoot somehow, my arms was weak, an’ my eyes was dim, an’ I thought onst or twiced ’at I was a gwine blind. An’ a’ter a while the ole ’oman laid her cheek agin *his’n*, an’ somethin seems-to-me-like screeched in my ears like a car-whistle, ‘ Why aint *you* settin’ ’ith *your* wife, an’, may be, child, in your house, enjoyin’ yer comfort ! ’ and afore I knowed it, Jane, God knows afore I knowed it, jest as ole Sterlin’ was a sayin’ ‘ Amen ! ’ I up gun an’ shot an’ seed ’em fall on ”—

Suddenly a shell tore through the room where Flemington stood, into the next apartment, and exploded just over Gorm Smallin’s head. Blinded and half-stifled by the thick sulphurous smoke, Flemington, with a great effort, conquered the stun of the concussion and staggered through the door, which had jarred open, into the fresh air of the street.

He revived, and listened. No sound came from the interior of the house save the occasional drop of plastering shaken loose by the explosion.

But the heavens had cleared, the stars were glittering through the humid air with a sort of rainy fire. The batteries on the lines had reopened, and the night was full of that unquiet strange thrill which runs through an army before a battle: for the long lines were like two strips of gold-foil, and always trembled and wavered with a certain unaccountable agitation, which prophesied victory, as the photometer light, afar off.

Time is a lens which should be clear. Gorm Smallin was a dust-speck upon it. God had blown him off. Who prays for dust-specks? and yet who will swear that he himself is aught more?

Serious of soul, questioning his heart, Flemington hurried to his camp.

CHAPTER III.

Albany. — "The weight of this sad time we must obey ;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say."

King Lear.

LATE in the night of the first Sunday of April, 1865, passion and circumstance — those two accomplished wire-pullers—were not so busy in manœuvring hundreds of people away from doomed homes in Richmond but that they could also find time to arrange, in the centre of that devoted city, a most unexpected meeting between three parties not unknown to the readers of this chronicle.

Philip Sterling had escaped from prison, had lain in a fever some months at a country-house, had recovered, and late in the afternoon of this day had entered Richmond, emaciated to a skeleton, down-hearted for want of news from home, down-headed for weariness, tattered like an unsuccessful beggar, unnoticing the stir of life in the streets. As he made his slow way through the Capitol-grounds, the splash of a fountain met his ear ; he dragged himself to the brink of the basin, lay down, and yielded himself to the caresses of that Sunday's balmy air. He fell asleep, and dreamed that he saw big wars standing up in ranks, like men, and fighting with thunders and wild-fires. On the flanks hovered airy pestilences skirmishing, and anon loud world-

calamities exploded, jarring all space. Which dissolved; and he was walking upon an immeasurable plain where lay old dead universes, like skulls whitening on a deserted battle-field; but presently these faded out of sight, and the whole plain blossomed with vast odorous violets. He plucked a petal of one, wrapped himself in it, lay down, and fell into a dreamless sleep-within-a-sleep.

Later in the night, John Cranston, sitting in the Federal line north of the James, heard a loud explosion in Richmond, and saw a great glare shooting up from that direction. Love, which laughs not only at locksmiths but also at pickets and special orders, at this moment laughed and frowned at once, in Cranston's soul. The memory of a night when he had borne Felix Sterling in his arms down a blazing stairs still flamed in his heart; and the anticipation of another such ecstasy was too much for duty.

John Cranston started for Richmond.

At an hour something earlier, also, Paul Rübetsahl displayed more excitement than had been visible in him during the war.

"Friends," said he to the three, "Richmond will be sacked by infuriated men, inhabitants and soldiers. The women whom we all love are there, alone; the thought that they *are* there, at such a time, burns my heart. No battle will be fought *here*, and if I knew one *would* be fought, I still would risk the apparent dishonor of absence from it. I, for one, am going to Richmond, to bring out the beloved, or die. Who else?"

"I!" said Aubrey without an instant's hesitation.

"I, too!" cried Flemington.

Cain Smallin grasped Rübetsahl's hand, in silence.

How they strode, those four!

"By two to-night, men!" cried Rübetsahl, striding in the van.

Meantime Felix and Ottilie, hearing the news late in the day, had made great attempts to move, that they might get to Petersburg. But what chance stood two women in Richmond on the 2d of April, 1865? At last, after dark, they had sent Gretchen to Mrs. Parven's, beyond the Capitol, to beg her assistance. Gretchen had not returned; they feared she was killed at last. They sat still, pale with apprehension, and shuddering at the terrible cries that resounded from the streets.

Suddenly, a tap sounded on the door, and a voice said, "Come, come!" impatiently. Ottilie ran and opened the door.

"It is Rübetsahl, Felix!"

Without a word, they descended the steps. At the front door a wild figure rushed in and nearly overturned big Rübetsahl. Unnoticing, Paul kept on; but the other turned, with a quick cry, and then silently placed himself in the phalanx which the four had formed around the women.

Slowly, they marshalled the precious charge across the street. Front, flank, and rear, the phalanx struggled hard to keep the princesses in the centre from insult or blow of hurrying rascaldom, hurrying to or from the raging fires, laden with booty and seeking more.

At length they neared the Capitol gates. As Rübetsahl

sahl opened it, Gretchen, with a whine, like a faithful spaniel, grasped Otilie and drew her on.

"Oh, I could not get back to you," she cried, "and I was about to die! Here are our friends — the Parvens — they came with me so far."

Cranston had stopped at the gate, and stood in the shadow, for the whole grounds were lit, as with daylight, by the fires that were consuming the city. He saw Felix, with a yearning smile as of a lost goddess finding heaven, twine her arms about Rübetsahl's neck. He grasped the iron pillar; it shook with his trembling a moment, then he folded his arms and remained still, in the Shadow.

"For God's sake," cried Flemington, "let us draw breath here 'a moment," and sank down exhausted, by the fountain.

Philip Sterling opened his eyes. He refused to believe them, at first; but quickly sprang upon Rübetsahl, the first he saw; then discovered Otilie, and drew her to him.

She instantly released herself, and sank upon her knees.

"*Himmel!*" said Paul Rübetsahl.

The contagion grew. Aubrey caught Rebecca Parven by the hand, and whirled her to a bench that was in the shade of a tree.

"*Cospetto!*" exclaimed Paul Rübetsahl.

"Cain, they're all paired, and nobody left save you and me. But, Old Bony Fingers," continued Flemington, grasping Cain's extended hand, "you are more faithful than many a woman, and so I keep this hand by me, till I find one fairer and half as true!"

"Oielo!" Then, looking down into the deep gray eyes that yearned upward passionately into his own, "I, the wanderer among mountains, pray: May we build our nests upon the strongest bough of the great tree Ygdrasil, and may love line them soft and warm, and may the storms be kind to them! Amen, and Amen!" said Paul Rübetsahl.

THE END.



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